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Gendered Crises, Gendered Responses

The Necessity and Utility of a Gender Perspective
in Armed Conflicts and Natural Disasters:
An Introductory Overview

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Abstract

Armed conflicts and natural disasters are inherently gendered crises; they can affect women, men, girls and boys in profoundly different ways. It is increasingly accepted that understanding these differences—or adopting a gender perspective—improves the effectiveness of responses to these crises, as well as the efforts of policy-making, advocacy, research and training institutions that focus on them. A gender perspective is more frequently recognised as a core requirement for all personnel involved in these efforts. However, there are many who are expected to engage with gender issues, yet remain unfamiliar with them. For this audience, there is a dearth of literature that provides an introductory overview of gender issues in crisis environments.

This paper is intended to be an educational and awareness-raising resource for those who are beginning to engage with gender issues in crisis environments, whether they are civilian, military or police. It examines gender dimensions commonly observed in conflict and disaster environments, such as differences in casualty trends, risks, threats, vulnerabilities, needs, opportunities and stresses. It provides examples of the operational benefits of a gender perspective and the harmful consequences resulting from the absence of a gender perspective.

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Executive Summary

Armed conflicts and natural disasters are inherently gendered crises. They affect men, women, boys and girls in ‘significantly different ways’ (Mazurana et al. 2011: 2). Differences in casualty trends, risks, threats, vulnerabilities, needs, capacities, capabilities, opportunities and stresses—explored in this paper—make this point irrefutable. To be effective and to ensure relevance and legitimacy, the operations sent to respond to these crises, and the policy-making, advocacy, research and training institutions that focus on them, must demonstrate a sound understanding of these differences. In other words, they must adopt a gender perspective. A gender perspective is increasingly recognised as a core requirement for all personnel involved in operations, whether civilian, police or military. It is also increasingly understood as an established minimum standard supported and mandated by a large body of international legal and policy documents (Appendix B).

‘Gender’ terminology (Appendix A) is rife with confusion and misunderstanding. In particular, it continues to be misunderstood as a ‘women’s issue’. As a result, gender issues are dismissed as ‘soft’ issues, of secondary concern in situations of crisis, as an added burden to operational personnel, and as an idea ‘imposed from the outside’ (Selimovic et al. 2012: 57). There is a large and ever-expanding community of operational personnel, activists and scholars who engage with gender issues in crisis contexts at global, regional, national and local levels. However, there are many who are increasingly exposed to and expected to engage with gender issues, yet remain unfamiliar with them.

This paper is intended to be an educational and awareness-raising resource for those who are beginning to engage with gender issues in crisis environments, whether they are civilian, police or military. As part of this effort, the paper is also intended to support the mandate of the Australian Civil-Military Centre (ACMC) to ‘support the development of national civil-military capabilities to prevent, prepare for and respond more effectively to conflicts and disasters overseas’, and to support ACMC’s recent and expanding gender programming as part of its contributions to the implementation of the *Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012–2018*. It is hoped that this paper will enhance understanding of gender issues and their importance; improve gender ‘literacy’; and generate interest in gender issues among the wider, non-gender specialist community of civilian, police and military personnel who work in conflict and disaster settings. With its focus on improving understanding, literacy and interest in gender issues, this paper aims to strengthen and expand the community of actors who proactively engage with gender issues in crisis environments.

Armed conflicts and natural disasters can affect women, men, girls and boys in profoundly different ways. Gender dimensions commonly observed in conflict environments are:

- men are ‘more likely’ to die during conflict and more women die from the indirect consequences of conflict
- conflict causes an increase in female-headed households
- women and girls constitute the majority of victims/survivors of sexual violence in conflict environments

- > male sexual violence is ‘regular’ and ‘widespread’ in conflict.
- > sexual violence has profound physical, psychological and social consequences for female and male victims/survivors.
- > the end of conflict brings complex and challenging prospects for female and male combatants and those associated with fighting forces.
- > women are at the forefront of conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding efforts, yet they are consistently underrepresented or excluded from formal peace negotiations.
- > during and following conflict, men may experience loss of traditional roles leading to a ‘crisis of identity’.
- > crises can create opportunities for improving gender relations but also trigger a return to the status quo and a backlash against women and efforts to improve gender relations.

Gender dimensions commonly observed in many natural disasters are:

- > women are more likely to die during natural disasters.
- > masculine and feminine norms can disadvantage men, women, boys and girls during disasters and their aftermath.
- > women and girls have specific health needs and face specific health-related risks during disasters and their aftermath.
- > gender inequality in many societies creates gender-specific vulnerabilities during disasters and their aftermath.
- > disasters create environments where violence and exploitation can thrive.
- > women are often at the forefront of post-disaster community recovery and rehabilitation efforts, which can create opportunities for their advancement and changes in gender relations.

While the gender dimensions of crisis environments point to the necessity of a gender perspective in operations sent to respond to these crises, it is also increasingly accepted and understood that adopting a gender perspective improves the effectiveness of these operations and will pay dividends in both conflict and disaster environments. A gender perspective enables enhanced understanding of the risk and threats to the local population, as well as the vulnerabilities, needs, strengths, capacities, priorities and interests of the local population. The operational benefits are significant. A gender perspective can also assist operations to prioritise their tasks; develop targeted programming; ensure more accurate, effective and equitable service provision; decrease the chance of ‘blind spots’ (Olsson and Tejpar et al. 2009: 111); reduce the likelihood of unintended harm to beneficiaries (Anderlini 2010: 33; Delaney and Shrader 2000: 10); and reduce potential backlash against the operation (Olsson and Tejpar et al. 2009: 117). Participation and consultation with all segments of a population—women, men, girls and boys—are essential components of adopting a gender perspective in any program.

For civilian, police and military actors newly engaging with gender issues in crisis environments, the gendered experiences explored in this paper encourage action on multiple fronts (see Appendix C for a list of practical tools to guide adoption of a gender perspective in the field):

- > recognise and acknowledge that the vulnerabilities and needs, capabilities and strengths, opportunities, stresses, priorities and interests of women, men, girls and boys are not the same, and often are significantly different
- > avoid the trap of gender stereotyping that relies on often simplified narratives about female victims and male perpetrators
- > build a body of basic reliable sex-disaggregated data, using ethical collection methods, which enables a more nuanced picture of crisis settings and enhances an understanding of gender issues
- > pay careful attention to the dynamics of participation in crisis and post-crisis settings to ensure that all segments of the local population have the opportunity to safely share their concerns, interests and priorities, whether in peace negotiations or consultations on the design of refugee camps and temporary shelters
- > be appropriately sensitive to the potential impact of interventions on gender relations and power dynamics in communities and families, without disregarding our responsibilities regarding human rights
- > recognise the continued critical need for programs focused on women's empowerment and human rights while also ensuring that men are consulted and considered in all such programs and that men's own needs, vulnerabilities, rights and opportunities are addressed.

The gendered dimensions of armed conflicts and natural disasters often reveal a complex 'story'. This complexity does not mean that the integration of a gender perspective has to be a difficult and burdensome exercise. In fact, it suggests the opposite. A gender perspective facilitates an operation's efforts by helping to build a clearer picture of the impact of conflicts and disasters on women, men, girls and boys, and guides more effective response efforts.

Introduction

Armed conflicts and natural disasters—wherever they occur and whatever form they take—are inherently gendered crises. While women, men, girls and boys may share similar experiences in these crises, they are also affected in ‘significantly different ways’ (Mazurana et al. 2011: 2). They are exposed to different risks and threats, they demonstrate different vulnerabilities, needs, capacities and capabilities, and they face different opportunities. In the words of one group of experts, ‘natural disasters and armed conflict are...deeply discriminatory processes’ (Mazurana et al. 2011: 2). The ‘differentiated impact’ (McAskie 2000) that characterises conflicts and disasters is due in large part to the different socially constructed identities, roles and responsibilities of women, men, girls and boys.

Just as conflicts and natural disasters are gendered crises, the operations sent to respond to these crises—whether domestic, regional or international—must demonstrate a sound understanding of these differences to be effective. Put another way, they must have a gender perspective. As peace and stabilisation operations and disaster response have become increasingly multidimensional and complex civil-military efforts, a gender perspective is more frequently recognised as a core requirement for all personnel involved, whether civilian, police or military, and as a pre-condition for effective operations. These operations are not alone; to ensure relevance and legitimacy, policy-making, advocacy, research and training institutions are increasingly expected to base their own respective efforts on a gender-sensitive understanding of the circumstances on the ground. A gender perspective is also increasingly understood as an established minimum standard supported and mandated by a large body of international legal and policy documents (Appendix B), and, in some countries, by the adoption of national legislation and national action plans on women, peace and security (Appendix C). This recognition and understanding is reflected in the ongoing evolution of institutional gender architecture across national and multilateral organisations, operations and systems, including: gender adviser posts, gender units and gender focal points in peace and stabilisation operations; gender capacity advisers¹ in humanitarian operations; and the establishment of UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and the the position of UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

‘Gender’ terminology (see Appendix A)—including ‘gender sensitivity’, ‘gender perspective’, ‘gender mainstreaming’ and ‘gender equality’—is rife with confusion and misunderstanding. ‘Gender’ is frequently conflated with ‘sex’. It is also regularly misunderstood as a ‘women’s issue’. This situation is partly because analyses and research on ‘gender issues’ often focus exclusively on women, while men’s gendered identities, roles, experiences and vulnerabilities are ignored or simply an add-on. This is beginning to change. Greater attention is being given to the need for an inclusive, more coordinated approach to working on gender with women and men, also termed ‘gender synchronisation’,² as well as greater attention to men’s gendered experiences in various contexts, including conflicts and disasters.

Confusions and misunderstandings that persist around gender terminology have wide-reaching consequences. In crisis environments, gender issues are dismissed as a ‘soft issue’ of secondary concern to the ‘hard’ issues of security and infrastructure, as well as pressing concerns around the

provision of humanitarian assistance. In difficult crisis environments, it is not uncommon for gender issues to be considered an added burden to operational personnel, or a ‘luxury’, best suited for recovery and development interventions (Wilton Park 2013: 2; Brun 2010: 2). This situation is the result of what is known as the ‘tyranny of the urgent’ (Delaney and Shrader 2000: 7 37).³ Activities focused on gender issues, including efforts to address gender inequality, are viewed as an imposition of Western norms and cultural values on communities where such ideas and values are not considered relevant or appropriate.⁴ Linguistic differences also affect how the concepts are translated—if at all—and understood.

There is a large and ever-expanding community of operational personnel, activists and scholars who engage with gender issues in crisis contexts at global, regional, national and local levels. At the same time, there are many who are increasingly exposed to and expected to engage with gender issues, yet remain unfamiliar with them. While there is an exciting and ever-expanding array of more specialist research and writing on gender issues, there is a dearth of literature that provides an introductory overview of gender issues in crisis environments for wide and non-specialist audiences.

It is hoped that this paper will enhance understanding of gender issues and their importance, improve gender ‘literacy’, and generate interest in gender issues among the wider, non-gender specialist community of civilian, police and military personnel who work in conflict and disaster settings. With its focus on improving understanding, literacy and interest in gender issues, this paper aims to strengthen and expand the community of actors who proactively engage with gender issues in crisis environments.

This paper is structured into two main sections. The first section explores the necessity of a gender perspective. It provides a broad overview of some of the gender dimensions that are commonly observed in conflict and disaster environments. The second section examines the utility of adopting a gender perspective in operations sent to conflict and disaster environments, and provides examples of how a gender perspective can improve the effectiveness of operations, as well as concrete examples of the harmful consequences of failing to adopt a gender perspective. The conclusion proposes a number of actions for civilian, police and military actors who are newly engaging with gender issues in crisis environments. The paper is supported by a number of appendices. Appendix A examines the terminology around ‘gender’. Appendix B situates work on gender in conflict and disaster environments within an international gender framework of legal and policy documents. Appendix C provides a list of practical tools developed by national governments, non-government organisations, United Nations bodies and other organisations that offer detailed guidance and tips for adopting a gender perspective on the ground; this list is intended to complement the recommended actions featured in the conclusion.

Gendered Crises, Gendered Responses is the result of desk-based research and draws on a broad sampling of literature that exists across academic disciplines, news sources, non-government organisations, think tanks, the United Nations and other organisations. It examines experiences from a multitude of different ongoing and past conflicts of varying types, including in Syria, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Bosnia and the Rwandan Genocide. The paper also explores experiences from a number of natural disasters, including Hurricane Mitch, which

struck Central America in 1998, the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the 2010 Pakistan floods, the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, and the 2011 Great East Japan earthquake and tsunami. The disproportionate number of natural disasters examined from the Asia Pacific region reflects the disproportionate vulnerability of that region to natural disasters.⁶

The introductory scope of this paper precludes detailed analysis of the issues covered. Gender dimensions of conflicts and natural disasters represent very rich and active fields of research, analysis, and publication.⁷ There is also a large body of literature that examines how a gender perspective is being integrated into operations across different environments as well as within national, regional and international institutions. To encourage further reading and show the wider context in which this paper sits, references to additional literature are included in relevant endnotes.

Necessity of a Gender Perspective in Armed Conflicts and Natural Disasters

This section provides a broad overview of gender dimensions that are commonly observed in crisis environments. These gender dimensions reflect the differentiated impact of crises on women, men, girls and boys. It is these types of gender dimensions that confront civilian, police and military actors participating in operations as well as those staffing organisations like ACMC that conduct work in the fields of training, education, research and doctrine.

Women, men, girls and boys are far from homogeneous groups. Their experiences and needs differ, based on factors such as race, age, ethnicity, religion, class, disability and urban/rural living. The intersections of these different factors warrant—and are gaining—increased attention.⁸

Though this paper does highlight some examples of girls' and boys' experiences in conflicts and disasters, by and large the focus is on adult women and men. Suggested reading for those wanting to know more about girls and boys is highlighted in relevant endnotes.

Gender Dimensions in Conflict and Post-Conflict Environments

Discussions and portrayals of armed conflicts have often featured and relied on a gendered narrative in which women are represented as victims and often considered as part of the category 'women and children' or 'women, children and the elderly', and men are portrayed as perpetrators. The realities in conflict environments feed this victim-perpetrator narrative to some extent: men are more often combatants and are the majority of perpetrators of sexual violence, and women—and girls—constitute the majority of survivors of sexual violence. This more simplified narrative has been crucial in drawing attention to the particular vulnerabilities of women and girls to sexual violence. However, this simplified narrative is being increasingly replaced by a more complex one as our understanding of conflict environments improves.

Recent research and analysis, for example, has drawn attention to the complexity of wartime sexual violence (Cohen et al. 2013; Wood 2006; Baaz and Stern 2010; UNOCHA 2008a; HSRP 2012), and revealed that 'much remains unknown about the patterns and causes of wartime sexual violence' (Cohen et al. 2013: 1).⁹ There is significant variation in the perpetration of sexual violence across and within conflicts and even within armed groups. This variation relates to a wide range of factors: type of sexual violence, type of victim, prevalence of sexual violence (whether widespread or more limited), location (in private, public, detention), and type and number of perpetrators (Wood 2006). Drawing on the question of perpetrators specifically, some armed groups, for instance, have been ordered to use rape, some tolerate it, and others have limited or explicitly prohibited the perpetration of sexual violence (Cohen et al. 2013; Wood 2006). There is also significant variation in the motivations for sexual violence. It has been used as a strategic tool of ethnic cleansing in the Balkans (UN Security Council 1994); a form of genocide in Rwanda (ICTR 1998: para. 731); a means of promoting displacement internally and across borders in the Balkans (UN Security Council 1994), Darfur (International

Commission of Inquiry on Darfur 2005) as well as Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, Mali and the Syrian Arab Republic (UNGA/SC 2013: 3); and a tool of political repression as in Guinea-Conakry (UNIFEM and UNDPKO 2010: 10). More often, sexual violence is likely ‘much less strategic and far more complex’ (Baaz and Stern 2010: 16). It may be opportunistic and linked to a breakdown in law and order, including acts of looting (UNGA/SC 2012: 5; Baaz and Stern 2010: 33). It also may be linked to low morale and alcohol and drug abuse among military forces, or to poor relations between armed forces and the civilian population, as has been documented in the case of the conflict in the Congo (Baaz and Stern 2010: 23-24, 29, 33; Jones and Smith 2012).

Widely used statements such as the ‘disproportionate impact of conflict on women and children’ conceal a more complex ‘story’—one in which women, girls, men and boys can be both victims and perpetrators, and multiple roles in between. As

is noted in the *Human Security Report 2005*, ‘women are more resilient and less vulnerable to the impacts of armed conflict than much of the literature that focuses on women as victims suggests’ (HSRP 2005: 102). They adopt coping mechanisms and demonstrate resilience, surviving against the odds and seizing opportunities unavailable to them prior to the conflict. Women and girls also encourage and perpetrate violence, including sexual violence, against women, men and boys.¹⁰ Conversely, men are not just perpetrators of violence. Men

and boys have their own specific vulnerabilities in conflict, some of which are related to their socially constructed gender roles and sex. They are also victims of sexual violence. The lack of attention given to these vulnerabilities explains why the Inter-Agency Standing Committee has described male civilians as the ‘invisible vulnerable’ (IASC 2002: 175). To further complicate this picture, male perpetrators of violence—whether rebels who rape women at checkpoints or husbands who assault their wives and children in the home—may also be victims. To see the whole picture, these violent acts need to be understood as part of a larger set of experiences of trauma, dislocation and loss.

This paper draws on experiences from a variety of different types of conflict from various geographic regions. It is, however, beyond the scope of this paper to analyse differences in conflict settings and their impact on the gendered experiences of women, girls, men and boys.

The following subsections explore the differentiated impact of conflict and post-conflict environments on women, girls, men and boys.

Men are ‘more likely’ to die during conflict and more women die from the indirect consequences of conflict

Little is known about the ‘conflict-related mortality of both women and men in contemporary wars’ (Ormhaug et al. 2009: 23). According to some researchers, ‘[w]e have no good data on the causes of

‘Just as we ask the world not to stereotype women, we must recognize when we are guilty of making similar assumptions about men.’ – *Zainab Salbi* (Women for Women International 2007: 5)

The fact that women may be perpetrators of sexual violence, as well as victims, is ignored almost completely in the mainstream narrative. (Human Security Report Project 2012: 32)

‘On 14 June, a large group of militiamen arrived in search of Tutsi men to kill, particularly businessmen, professionals, students and any able-bodied male who they thought would join the RPF...’ – *Rwanda* (African Rights 1995b: 587)

death in modern wars’ (Ormhaug et al. 2009: 23). Calculating direct deaths may be ‘straightforward in theory’, but is often challenging in practice (HSRP 2011: 106; Ormhaug et al. 2009). Understanding and calculating indirect deaths represents an even larger challenge (Ormhaug et al. 2009; HSRP 2011). While few specifics are available, recent research conducted by the Oslo

International Peace Research Institute has concluded that men are ‘more likely to die during conflicts’ as a direct result of the violence, while women die ‘more often of indirect causes after the conflict is over’ (Ormhaug et al. 2009: 3). A study of female to male life expectancy across 18 ethnic and non-ethnic conflicts has further examined the indirect effects of conflict and indicated that ‘the direct and indirect consequences of wars combined either kill more women or that the killed women are younger on average than the killed men’ (Plümper and Neumayer 2006: 747). Based on these results, the researchers have determined that women are more adversely affected than men over the ‘entire conflict period’ (Plümper and Neumayer 2006: 723).

Despite the lack of data, there are some factors which contribute to the heightened vulnerability of men to conflict-related death. For one, male adults and youth represent the ‘overwhelming majority’ of combatants (HSRP 2005: 102; Mazurana et al. 2011: 55)—whether as members of state armed forces or non-state armed groups, whether voluntary or forcibly recruited. Past conflicts point to their vulnerability to forced recruitment into fighting forces (Carpenter 2006); as is the case with the Lords Resistance Army where males represent the majority of abducted combatants (Mazurana et al. 2011: 58), and with factions from Liberia’s war, including Charles Taylor’s National Patriotic Front of Liberia, which included Small Boys Units (Human Rights Watch 2004: 8, 14). Past and ongoing conflicts also have demonstrated the particular vulnerability of fighting-age non-combatant men and boys to sex-selective mass executions, massacres and disappearances (Carpenter 2006: 89-90; HSRP 2005: 102; IASC 2002: 175). The *2011 World Development Report* calculates that men comprise 96 per cent of all detainees and 90 per cent of the missing (World Bank 2011: 6). Male vulnerability to sex-selective killing has been seen in Timor-Leste, Bosnia-Herzegovina (UN General Assembly 1999), Colombia, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Syria, and with the recent resumption of atrocities in Darfur (Gendercide Watch; Carpenter 2006: 89-90; HSRP 2005: 102; Amnesty International 2012; Kristof 2013). This vulnerability is a consequence of men and boys being automatically identified as ‘potential’ combatants (and infant boys as future combatants), and thus ‘legitimate’ targets (Carpenter 2006: 88; African Rights 1995a). Rwanda’s post-genocide population comprising an estimated 70 per cent women (Human Rights Watch 1996: 3) reflects this targeting.

‘Wartime life is gendered. So is wartime death.’ (Enloe 2010: 222)

More data are needed to understand women’s particular vulnerabilities to the indirect consequences of conflict; however, some factors are worth highlighting. Reduced access to food, clean water, health services and infrastructure are common examples of the indirect consequences of conflict (Plümper and Neumayer 2006: 724), and women are often more acutely affected by these consequences

than men. For instance, physiologically, women are more vulnerable to vitamin and iron deficiencies (Rehn and Sirleaf 2002: 37). These deficiencies may be aggravated by reduced access to food, and by cultural practices that give men and boys preferential access to food at the expense of girls and

According to data gathered by the Human Security Report Project, most indirect deaths in conflict environments can be attributed to four ‘killer diseases’: acute respiratory infection, malaria, diarrheal diseases and measles. Children, refugees and internally displaced persons are ‘particularly vulnerable’. (2011: 106–07)

women (Plümper and Neumayer 2006: 730). These vitamin and iron deficiencies weaken women’s physical resilience and increase their susceptibility to disease and death, particularly for pregnant women (Rehn and Sirleaf 2002: 37). Women and girls of child-bearing age are also uniquely vulnerable to pregnancy-related complications and trauma, made worse by often-reduced access to health services and conflict-related damage to health infrastructure.

The vulnerability of pregnant women is well illustrated by statistics from Afghanistan where there is ‘one female health worker per 23,000 Afghan females’ and ‘4800 certified mid-wives for 28 million people’, when WHO standards call for approximately 8000 [certified mid-wives] (WHO 2012: 2).

Conflict causes an increase in female-headed households

When men leave home to fight (whether coerced or willingly), or when they are killed, detained, injured, forced to flee, migrate or disappear, women and girls must often assume responsibility for the household and become the breadwinners or primary income earners (including while in flight themselves). As it is widely observed, conflict-affected communities often have ‘large numbers of female-headed households’ (World Bank 2011: 258). Some estimates place the number of female-headed households at 30–40 per cent in post-conflict settings (International Alert and Women Waging Peace 2004: 63). In Sri Lanka, it is estimated that the decades-long civil war has left behind 89,000 war widows in the northern and eastern regions of the country, and the northern region alone has approximately 40,000 female-headed households (IRIN 2010). In Nepal, 90 per cent of the 1300 missing from the country’s conflict (1996–2006) are men and 81 per cent are married (ICRC 2009a: 1,2).

When women and girls assume responsibility for their household this often represents a significant shift in gender roles. This shift is an opportunity for them to develop new skills and assume decision-making power within the household. For instance, among internally displaced Ugandans, some women who have assumed responsibility for their households have acquired hut construction skills, including brick-making – a traditionally male domain – to avoid having to pay others to do it (Katwikirize 2001: 30–1). This shift, however, can also create significant burdens and stresses for women and girls and increase their vulnerability to violence and exploitation. Their new responsibilities are often added to existing carer’s responsibilities. Diminished household income may make it impossible for them to seek healthcare for themselves and any dependants. Women may be denied access to inheritance and kicked out of their homes, due to discriminatory laws, practices and cultural norms that deny women ‘the same rights to property or inheritance as men’ (UN Women 2011: 39).¹¹ Explicitly discriminatory property and inheritance laws can be found across the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia and the Pacific, and to a lesser extent in Latin America and the Caribbean (UN Women 2011: 39). For women whose husbands are missing, the absence of an official declaration

of death can further impede their access to inheritance and property as well as government assistance programs for widows (Haeri and Puechguirbal 2010: 115–16).

In combination with high rates of illiteracy, these various circumstances may force women to assume risky survival strategies to support their families, including begging and prostitution¹² (Kesselaar and Hoenen 2009: 51; Ward 2005: 190). In more conservative societies such as Afghanistan, where there are very high rates of widowhood,¹³ women’s income earning efforts are further encumbered given prohibitions on their movement outside the home without a suitable male chaperone (mahram) (Human Rights Watch 2012b: 7).

Women and girls constitute the majority of survivors of sexual violence in conflict environments

Women and girls constitute the majority of victims/survivors of sexual violence in conflict environments.¹⁴ An accurate quantitative picture of the scope of sexual violence against women and girls is difficult if not impossible to capture (see footnote 9); some scholars have described estimates that do exist as ‘often unreliable’ and ‘highly educated guesses’ (Peterman et al. 2011: 1; Cohen et al. 2013: 11; HSRP 2012: 20). Nonetheless, a larger picture of the disproportionate impact of sexual violence on women and girls is clear and widely accepted, drawn from the well-known cases of rape in Bosnia, Rwanda and more recently in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as reports from Darfur, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Mali, Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Central African Republic, Libya and Syria, to name a few (UNGA/SC 2013; UNGA/SC 2012).¹⁵

The proximity of many contemporary conflicts to the everyday lives of civilians heightens the vulnerability of women and girls to sexual violence. They are attacked while conducting their daily activities such as working in their fields; walking to and from market or school; while using the lavatories in shelters and camps; and collecting firewood, water and other staples away from their homes or shelters. Of 297 rape victims treated by Médecins Sans Frontières in West Darfur between October 2004 and February 2005, for instance, 82 per cent were attacked while ‘pursuing their ordinary daily activities’ (MSF 2005: 3). Women and girls are subjected to sexual violence at checkpoints; during attacks on their communities by armed groups—a continuing problem in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; in house searches and sweeps of residential neighbourhoods, as has been reported in Mali (UNGA/SC 2013: 12) and Syria (Human Rights Watch 2012a; BBC News 2012); and in the context of detention and interrogation. Women and girls—and boys—are also vulnerable to sexual violence from inside fighting forces.

Sexual violence encompasses

- > rape
- > sexual slavery
- > enforced prostitution
- > forced pregnancy
- > enforced sterilisation and
- > ‘any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity’ (ICC 2002: Article 7).

Sexual violence can constitute a war crime, a crime against humanity, an act of torture or a constituent act of genocide. (UNGA/SC 2010: 2)

Displacement increases the risks of women and girls—and boys—to sexual violence. They are targeted while fleeing to camps, as has been reported recently in Somalia (UNGA/SC 2013: 3), and upon arrival in camps. Camps—especially when they are established quickly to cater for sudden influxes of people—can be overcrowded, lacking in privacy, poorly lit and insecure (Women’s Refugee Commission 2009: 11-12). These conditions, combined with the realities of unemployment and shortages of food, money and other basic necessities, create fertile ground for rape, sexual harassment, forced marriage, prostitution, sexual exploitation and abuse—including by peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel—trafficking and domestic violence (UNHCR 2008a).¹⁶

Women and girls are also particularly vulnerable when violence spreads into the private sphere during and especially following conflict. Domestic violence, including intimate partner violence—part of a broader spectrum of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)¹⁷—is a widely reported problem across many conflict-affected environments (Selimovic et al. 2012), enabled and aggravated by the continued presence of small arms and light weapons (Pytlak 4). Recent research by the Human Security Report Project suggests that domestic sexual violence—perpetrated in the household or extended family by intimate partners, household or family members—is more pervasive in wartime than sexual violence perpetrated by combatants (2012: 20, 21, 36).

According to experts, within the female population, among those who are most at risk of sexual violence are refugee and internally displaced women (UN 2002; UNHCR 2008a) and girls,¹⁸ unaccompanied girls, displaced women and girls in urban settings (Ward 2005: 186), girl mothers, and women and girls with physical and mental disabilities (UNHCR 2008a: 202; Women’s Refugee Commission 2012; Save the Children 2012: 2). In addition to these groups, Save the Children has identified members of child-headed households, working children and children born of rape as facing heightened vulnerabilities to sexual violence, and has indicated that more research is needed on the issue of sexual violence against girls and boys in conflict (Save the Children 2012: 2; HSRP 2012).

Out of 162 unverified reports of sexual violence in Syria compiled by the Women’s Media Center and covering the period from March 2011–March 2013, 80% involved female victims (ages 7–46), and of those 85% involved rape. (Wolfe 2013)

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, due to the frequency and scale of gang rape, doctors began classifying ‘vaginal destruction’ as a ‘crime of combat’. (Ward 2005: 190)

Between 2001 and 2009, 489,687 women were victims of sexual violence in Colombia across the municipalities that had a presence of state and non-state fighting forces. (Oxfam 2010: 1)

‘Sexual violence against women is meant to demonstrate victory over the men of the other group who have failed to protect their women. It is a message of castration and emasculation of the enemy group.’ – *UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences* (UNECOSOC 1998: para. 12)

Gender inequality and ‘entrenched discriminatory attitudes and practices’ toward women (UNGA/SC 2012: 5), feminine ideals associated with the need for protection, as well as masculine ideals associated with the ability to protect, provide for, and fight (Baaz and Stern 2010: 41) are all factors that may contribute to the perpetration of sexual violence against women and girls. Some experts argue that rape and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls ought to be understood also as a critique of the men who are unable to protect those being attacked; a ‘comment on the weakness of men’ (Refugee Law Project 2008; UN 2002: 16). This motivation is made particularly obvious when men are forced to watch while female family members, including wives and daughters, are raped, or when they are forced to rape female relatives themselves.

Male sexual violence is ‘regular’ and ‘widespread’ in conflict

In the words of one expert, male sexual violence is ‘regular and unexceptional, pervasive and widespread’ (Sivakumaran 2007: 259, 260). Although there is a dearth of hard data, sexual violence against both men and boys has been reported in more than 25 conflicts over the last decade (UNOCHA 2008b: 1; Sivakumaran 2007: 257–58; UN Security Council 1994: Section IV, F), and more recently in the conflicts in Libya (UNGA/SC 2012: 12) and Syria (Human Rights Watch 2012a; Wolfe 2013; UNGA/SC 2012: 23), as well as the post-election violence in Kenya and Guinea (Grey and Shepherd 2012: 128; UNGA/SC 2012). Research indicates that approximately a third of the male population in Liberia may have been sexually abused during the conflict (UNFPA 2010a: 27). In a 2010 survey of 1005 households in the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, 23.6 per cent of men reported exposure to sexual violence (and 39.7 per cent of women), and for 64.5 per cent of these men the sexual violence was conflict related (Johnson et al. 2010: 558).

While male sexual violence has been gaining more mainstream attention over the past decade and especially in the past few years,¹⁹ until fairly recently male victims of conflict-related sexual violence—including boys²⁰—were largely invisible, mentioned if at all in a footnote or as an add-on sentence. Existing research suggests a number of reasons for this invisibility. Sexual violence is often conflated with violence against women and girls, in part because they constitute the majority of victims (Carpenter 2006: 86). This trend has been helped by the fact that in the recent past, investigative bodies, courts and human rights organisations have often recorded male sexual violence ‘under the rubric of torture’, ‘abuse’ or ‘physical injury’ (Sivakumaran 2007: 254, 256; UNOCHA 2008b: 2; Cohen et al. 2013: 10; Grey and Shepherd 2012: 128;

‘80 per cent of 5,000 male concentration camp detainees held near Sarajevo during the Bosnian conflict were sexually abused.’
Kosovo, UN report (Stemple 2011)

‘Everywhere we go, people say men are getting raped, too.’ – *Aid worker, Panzi hospital, Bukavu, Democratic Republic of the Congo* (Gettleman 2009)

Gender stereotyping suggests that men cannot be victims, only perpetrators.
(Sivakumaran 2007: 270)

Carpenter 2006: 95) rather than associated explicitly with sexual violence. Limited awareness among medical practitioners and humanitarian workers, perhaps due to a lack of training, may prevent recognition of the signs of male sexual violence (Russell et al. 2011: 4). In some

countries, national legislation on rape excludes the possibility of male victims (UNHCR 2012: 6). A clear sign of the lack of recognition given to male experiences of sexual violence is the fact that in some countries, medical services for sexual violence survivors are located in gynaecology departments (UNHCR 2012: 4). Pervasive under-reporting is another critical factor. This is due largely to victims' shame, confusion, guilt, fear, isolation, ignorance and the stigma associated with male sexual violence (Sivakumaran 2007: 255; Russell et al. 2011: 4; Russell 2007: 22; Baaz and Stern 2010: 44). Also, in countries where sodomy and homosexuality are illegal, male victims of sexual violence are vulnerable to imprisonment if they report the crime (UNHCR 2012: 10).

Men and boys are vulnerable to a range of forms of sexual violence in conflict situations. They may be raped themselves, forced to perform sexual acts on the perpetrator, forced to rape other civilians, including their own family members—what might be called 'enforced' or forced rape (Sivakumaran 2007: 263)—or forced to watch the rape of their kin (Carpenter 2006: 95–96). Men also are the victims of enforced sterilisation through castration and other forms of sexual mutilation (Sivakumaran 2007: 265). Other forms of male sexual violence include genital violence not intended to sterilise, enforced nudity, and enforced masturbation of the victim and perpetrator (Sivakumaran 2007; WHO 2003: 16). Male sexual violence is particularly prevalent in detention settings (WHO 2003: 16; UNOCHA 2008b: 3; Russell 2007: 22). It is also perpetrated in the context of military operations, military conscription and abduction, as well as in camps and shelters where boys are particularly vulnerable (Russell 2007: 22).

The motivations for male sexual violence vary widely but may include:

- > the desire to demonstrate power and dominance over the 'enemy', the disempowerment of the victim's group, and 'complete victory' for the perpetrator (Sivakumaran 2007; Russell 2007: 22; Zawati 2007: 33, 35)
- > emasculation and feminisation of the victim (Sivakumaran 2007): according to an article in *The New York Times*, one Congolese victim was told 'You're no longer a man. Those men in the bush made you their wife.' (Gettleman 2009)
- > the homosexualisation of the victim, in which a man or boy is 'stripped' of his heterosexual status (Sivakumaran 2007; Russell et al. 2011: 3)
- > the prevention of future sexual pleasure (Russell et al. 2011: 2)
- > the prevention of future reproduction through the destruction of a victim's procreative capability (Sivakumaran 2007: 270-4; Russell et al. 2011: 2).

As some of the above motivations suggest, incidents of male sexual violence may target socially constructed ideas and ideals about male identity, roles and responsibilities, and as such constitute gender-based violence (Carpenter 2006: 86).

'Serb torturers would beat us, step or jump on us until they tired out. They were deliberately aiming their beatings at our testicles saying "you'll never make Muslim children again".' – *A male survivor of Serbian concentration camps* (International Court of Justice 1993: 14)

Sexual violence has profound physical, psychological and social consequences for female and male survivors

Sexual violence has short and long-term physical, psychological and social consequences for female and male²¹ survivors. These consequences may be exacerbated when medical services and treatment are unavailable or inadequate and when impunity is rife and legal redress difficult.²²

Physical consequences include both genital and non-genital physical injury; increased risk from sexually transmitted infections; infertility; and for women and girls in particular, unwanted pregnancy, self-induced and unsafe abortions,

and death due to pregnancy or delivery complications. (WHO 2003: 12; UNHCR 2012: 10). If not treated in a timely manner, some sexual attacks may lead to death. In a 2009 article in *The New York Times*, it was reported that two Congolese men who had experienced genital trauma had died after being 'too embarrassed to seek help' (Gettleman).

In a study of over 1,000 [Rwandan] genocide widows undertaken in the year 2000, 67 percent of rape survivors were HIV-positive. (Ward 2005: 190)

The psychological effects of sexual violence may include rape trauma syndrome, a type of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), as well as depression and suicidal behaviour. Male victims are often particularly concerned about their masculinity, their inability to prevent the sexual attack and the opinions of others (WHO 2003: 16). They may experience confusion over sexual orientation, a sense of loss of control of their body and humiliation (Russell et al. 2011: 3). Female rape victims—and

In a study conducted by the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture between 1997 and 1998, symptoms of PTSD were present in 30% of men who had been tortured but not sexually assaulted, in 55% of those who had been sexually assaulted but not raped, and over 70% for those men who had been raped (Peel 2004: 67).

any offspring born of rape—may be affected by the stigma associated with rape and face rejection, abandonment and ostracism from their families and communities (UNGA/SC 2013: 3; Ward 2005: 190; Amnesty International 2004: 17).²³ Male rape victims may also experience social ostracism (UNHCR 2012: 10) and marital and family problems; it is not uncommon for the partners of male victims to seek a divorce (Russell et al. 2011: 3). Such stigma and rejection can have the effect of denying female and male

victims the very support structures they require, making them economically and socially vulnerable (Amnesty International 2004: 18), and forcing them into poverty, risky survival strategies such as prostitution, and further vulnerability to violence (UN 2002; UNHCR 2008b: 202).

For girl and boy survivors of sexual violence, the consequences may include learning problems, loss of self-esteem, and a long-term sense of insecurity (Save the Children 2012: 3-4). In addition, studies have shown that experiences of sexual violence tend to make children more vulnerable to future violence—through risky coping and survival strategies—and more prone to perpetrating sexual violence as adults (Save the Children 2012: 4).

The end of conflict brings complex and challenging prospects for female and male combatants and those associated with fighting forces

Men, women, boys and girls²⁴ become involved in state and non-state armed forces and groups during conflict for a wide variety of reasons. They may have joined voluntarily to avenge the death of a loved one or their own victimisation; to seek protection, including from sexual violence; for support; to prove their manhood (in the case of men and boys); or to demonstrate their support for the ideals and ideology of the fighting forces (Anderlini 2010: 9; Women’s Refugee Commission 2009: 6; UNIFEM 2004; Human Rights Watch 2004). Or, they may have been abducted or forcibly recruited.

Just as the reasons for fighting are varied, so too are the roles they assume in fighting forces. Beyond active fighting roles (which men, women, boys and girls all may play), women and children especially fill a range of supporting roles (voluntarily and coerced)—often overlapping—including as cooks, cleaners, porters, nurses, spies, looters and messengers (McKay and Mazurana 2004: 24). They may also be simultaneously assigned explicit roles as sex slaves (boys as well) or ‘bush wives’ forced to marry commanders and other combatants. Sexual slavery is a common practice by the Lord’s Resistance Army (Ward 2005: 182, 185) and among some armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (UNGA/SC 2013: 9). While women and girls are the primary victims of sexual violence, they are not alone. Sexual violence has been used against men and boys during conscription and abduction as part of integration and initiation rituals (Russell et al. 2011: 5). A survey conducted in Liberia in 2008 of 1666 adults revealed that 32.6 per cent of male combatants had experienced sexual violence, including 16.5 per cent who had been forced into sexual servitude (Johnson et al. referenced in Sivakunaram 2010: 263).

Former combatants face significant social reintegration challenges following the end of conflict. Men may struggle to reintegrate into civilian life and to families in which their breadwinning and decision-making role has been taken over by women during their absence (O’Neill and Vary 2011: 89; Steinberg 2007). Women and girls face particularly severe stigmas—‘double stigma’ in the words of one report (Suthanthiraj and Ayo 2010: 68); their experiences of fighting may be considered ‘unwomanly’ and they are often considered ‘likely’ survivors of sexual violence. As a result they may be ostracised from their families and communities (UN 2002: 134; Anderlini 2010: 29; O’Neill and Vary 2011: 80). Female ex-combatants from the People’s Liberation Army in Nepal, for instance, ‘who were treated as equals in the PLA and bore

Girls in Fighting Forces Forced to Provide Sexual Services, 1990–2003

- > Africa: Angola, Burundi, DRC, Liberia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Uganda
- > Americas: Colombia, Honduras, Peru
- > Asia: Burma, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Timor-Leste
- > Europe: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo (Yugoslavia)
- > Middle East: not known

(McKay and Mazurana 2004: 26)

For the majority of combatants, namely men and boys, a generation of fighting has left them largely unable to articulate their identities and gender roles in peacetime, and without weapons. (UNIFEM 2004: 19)

arms, are now encountering rejection from their communities’ (Suthanthiraraj and Ayo 2010: 68). Female ex-combatants in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are facing similar challenges in their efforts to reintegrate (Suthanthiraraj and Ayo 2010: 70).

Post-traumatic stress disorder and other forms of conflict related trauma also are common among former combatants. Research among Liberian male combatants suggests that experiences of sexual violence may lead to higher rates of PTSD (Johnson et al. 2008: 688). This trauma may relate to their own victimisation at the hands of fellow combatants, being forced to perpetrate violence against others—including their own relatives as a tool of military bonding (UNGA/SC 2010: 6)—or watching others perpetrate violence. These experiences of violence and trauma make combatants more ‘prone’ to ‘perpetrate new violent acts’, including once they have returned to civilian life (Baaz and Stern 2010: 46). In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, sexual violence is ‘now increasingly committed by civilians’, a trend attributed to an increase in demobilised combatants who have not received appropriate psychological care—an especially serious issue for former juvenile combatants (Baaz and Stern 2010: 43, 46). Without proper psychosocial support as well as adequate job training and limited livelihood options, former combatants are vulnerable to alcoholism and drug abuse, as well as recruitment into criminal groups, or even re-recruitment into armed groups (Anderlini 2006: 2; Human Rights Watch 2004: 33–34, 39; IRIN 2008).

There has been a tendency with past disarmament, demobilisation, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement (DDRRR) programs to exclude and neglect female members of fighting forces (Rehn and Sirleaf 2002: 116; Suthanthiraraj and Ayo 2010: 66; Anderlini 2010: 28; UNIFEM 2004). This exclusion and neglect results in women and girls being denied access to crucial financial and material benefits and services, including skills training, and denied help with their reinsertion and long-term reintegration into civilian life. For instance, there has been widespread exclusion of women and girls from DDRRR programs due to the “traditional” definition of eligibility—‘one weapon per combatant’ (UNDPKO 2010: 9), which has discounted the range of non-fighting roles that exist in fighting forces and which women and girls often assume (Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers 2008: 31). Past DDRRR programs have also failed to recognise the particular needs and vulnerabilities of high-risk groups such as girl and boy child soldiers, girl soldier mothers, and those associated with armed forces and groups, in particular the ‘bush wives’ and abducted girls forced to work as sex slaves, as well as their dependants (Farr 2003; Women’s Refugee Commission 2009: 7). This includes a disregard for their particular needs at cantonment sites, such as separate and secure housing, separate latrines and childcare (O’Neill and Vary 2011: 90). For women and girls who have been subjected to sexual slavery, they may be forced to accompany their captors through the disarmament process or may be simply abandoned en route to demobilisation sites and thus denied any means of support (UN

According to extensive research, it is likely that women account for approximately 10–33 per cent of most fighting forces. They have played significant combat roles in Colombia, Sri Lanka, El Salvador, Sierra Leone, Nepal, Sudan, and Eritrea, among other countries. (Bouta 2005: 5)

There are at least 300,000 child soldiers in the world today. One in three is a girl. (Women’s Refugee Commission 2009: 6)



Women demonstrate against violence as part of their observance of International Women's Day, Monrovia, Liberia, 2007. (Photo: #140514, United Nations)

2002: 132, 133). For girls who were subjected to forced marriages with combatants, remaining with their 'captor-“husband”' may seem like the 'best, and perhaps only, option' (McKay and Mazurana 2004: 56).

For those who are abandoned, do not feel welcome and safe in a DDRRR process, and are concerned that association with DDRRR programs will make them more vulnerable to stigma (Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers 2008: 29; Human Rights Watch 2004: 38), they may resort to 'self-demobilisation' and 'self-reintegration'. Without proper support through these DDRRR programs, the reintegration prospects for female former combatants are limited and the prospects of poverty, risky employment, violence and isolation are high (Farr 2003: 32).

In Liberia some 3,000 girl soldiers were officially demobilized through the formal DDR process that ended in November 2004. However, as many as 8,000 were excluded or did not register and received no subsequent support. (Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers 2008: 28)

Women are at the forefront of conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding efforts yet are consistently underrepresented or excluded from formal peace negotiations

As countless past and ongoing conflicts have demonstrated again and again, women dominate the frontlines of informal conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding efforts. Their efforts are often creative and unorthodox. They have included peace marches and demonstrations, 'sit-ins',

Based on a review of 31 major peace processes between 1992 and 2011, women represented

- > 4% of signatories
- > 2.4% of chief mediators
- > 3.7% of witnesses
- > 9% of negotiators

(UN Women 2012a: 3)

vigils, prayer meetings, ‘spitting sessions’ to air grievances, reconciliation ceremonies, early warning systems, weapons collection activities, threatening their own nakedness (taboo) and sex strikes (*Pray the Devil Back to Hell* 2008; UN Women 2012a: 9; Rehn and Sirleaf 2002: 115; Suthanthiraraj and Ayo 2010: 22, 29; UN 2002: 56; Itto 2006: 57). They build networks across ethnic and religious lines, such as in Bosnia (Hunt and Posa 2001: 1), Liberia (*Pray the Devil Back to Hell* 2008), Northern Ireland (UN Women 2012a: 2), and Northern Caucasus (Suthanthiraraj and Ayo 2010: 32). They have often demonstrated ‘their

own version of shuttle diplomacy’ (Hunt and Posa 2001: 2), playing a critical mediation role between opposing factions in conflict situations as diverse as Bougainville, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka and the Philippines, to name a few (UN 2002: 56; Hunt and Posa 2001; Pollard 2000; Suthanthiraraj and Ayo 2010; AusAID 2010: 8). Women often call upon their gendered identities and roles as mothers in their efforts to persuade combatants to ‘engage in dialogue’, such as occurred in Bougainville (AusAID 2011a: 61).

Despite their widespread mobilisation and leadership in informal peace efforts, women are consistently underrepresented or excluded during formal peace processes, including as negotiators, mediators, observers and signatories.²⁵ They face a range of political, cultural, social, technical and financial barriers. For example, women are often not represented or are significantly underrepresented among those who participate in formal peace negotiations, including among political and military leaders, as well as international authorities who mediate such negotiations (including the UN) (UN 2002: 61). In Afghanistan, for instance, the High Peace Council responsible for negotiating peace constitutes 61 men and only nine women (Allen 2013).

Women who seek roles in formal peace and political processes may face serious opposition (UN 2002: 61–62, 64). This opposition is often based on well-established discriminatory stereotypes and assumptions about women’s subordinate status and the widespread belief that women do not belong in the public realm discussing ‘masculine matters’ of peace and security but in the home (UN 2002: 55; Selimovic et al. 2012: 45; Wilton Park 2013: 5). This opposition may take the form of harassment and intimidation, prejudice and negative attitudes, even physical assaults and death threats (Selimovic et al. 2012: 5, 30). Women activists in Iraq face regular harassment and threats, and for some, death threats are ‘common occurrences’ (Selimovic et al. 2012:

During the mediation process following the post-election violence in Kenya (2007), tension among civil society women in the Women’s Caucus—formed to engage with the mediators—encouraged some women to organise a ‘spitting session’ to help ‘air grievances and differences’. This initiative enabled the women to find common ground and develop a unified agenda which strengthened their advocacy efforts. (Suthanthiraraj and Ayo 2010: 22)

55, 57). Beyond any external opposition they may face, women struggle to find time given their family responsibilities. In addition, they may not fully recognise their own value as peacebuilders (ActionAid, IDS and Womankind 2012: 37), and they often lack the technical and political skills, and capacity and financial resources (travel, lodging, childcare etc) necessary to engage and negotiate at formal levels (Suthanthiraraj and Ayo 2010; UN Women 2012a: 25).²⁶

While experiences of underrepresentation and exclusion are widespread, women have also succeeded in gaining access to the negotiating table: Northern Ireland, Darfur, Guatemala and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are just a few examples (UN Women 2012a; UN 2002).

Women also continue to advocate even when they are denied access to formal negotiations or are only allowed access in more limited roles. Their strategies have included convening parallel conferences to formulate recommendations and position papers, lobbying the wives of members of the negotiating teams, ‘intercepting’ members of the mediation team in the lobby of the hotel hosting the peace talks (“hallway” lobbying), and ‘pushing their position papers and recommendations under the closed doors of the negotiation room’ (UN Women 2012a: 8, 10; Suthanthiraraj and Ayo 2010: 23, 83). When Liberia’s peace talks were stagnating in Ghana, Liberian women barricaded the negotiating teams in their meeting until progress was made on the peace agreement (Anderlini 2010: 27; UN Women 2012a: 9; Hayner 2007: 13).²⁷ On another occasion some of them threatened to remove their clothes in protest at the slow pace of negotiations, deliberately drawing upon cultural sensitivities about a mother’s nakedness (Hayner 2007: 13).

Women’s participation in formal peace processes is critically important for a number of reasons. First, women represent half—often the majority—of the population. Any settlement that excludes the experiences, interests and ideas of half the population is liable to be fragile at best, and ‘can perpetuate forms of exclusion over the longer run that can give rise to future violence or fragility’ (AusAID 2011a: 37). Ambassador Donald Steinberg, who participated in the negotiations on the Lusaka protocol that ended the war in Angola, admitted ‘[t]he exclusion of women and gender considerations from the peace process proved to be a key factor in our inability to implement the Lusaka protocol and in Angola’s return to conflict in late 1998’ (Steinberg 2007).

Second, ‘crucial decisions’ are made during peace negotiations that shape and determine a country’s post-conflict recovery and governance structures (UN Women 2012a: 2), and peace agreements represent a ‘critical window of opportunity for addressing gender equality issues’ (Anderlini 2010: 29). While not all women will advocate for women’s interests, in the words of a landmark UN report on women, peace and security, ‘[w]omen who are involved in negotiating peace agreements, are more likely to advance issues that are of importance to women and girls’ (2002: 64). Experiences in Burundi, Guatemala, Darfur and Uganda have demonstrated that women’s participation in peace negotiations has led to a greater likelihood that issues such as support for victims of sexual violence, widows and displaced households are placed on the policy agenda (World Bank 2011: 308). Given this link and

‘Well, this society thinks that when you speak of peace or security, this is a masculine matter...Both men and a lot of women think so. And a consequence of this is that when a woman deals with peace questions, people don’t consider them. That is the reason why most peace agreements fail.’ – *Woman, Democratic Republic of the Congo* (quoted in Selimovic et al. 2012: 45)

the continued underrepresentation of women in peace negotiations, it is perhaps no surprise that ‘gender-blind peace agreements are still the norm, rather than the exception’ (UN Women 2012a: 17).²⁸ If gender issues are not addressed in the agreement, any attempts to address them in the implementation phase can be considered ‘beyond the scope of the peace mandate’ (UN 2002: 65). A peace agreement that disregards gender issues can have ‘profound’ implications for post-conflict reconstruction, in particular heightened vulnerability for women and girls in such areas as land rights, political participation and rights, protection from sexual and gender-based violence, and issues of accountability and justice (Anderlini 2010: 29-30; Bell 2013: 2).

‘If we’d had women at Camp David, we’d have an agreement.’ – *Former President Clinton, following the failed Camp David talks, July 2000* (Quoted in Hunt and Posa 2001: 2)

Third, research—and reflections from negotiators—suggests that women generally adopt a more collaborative and inclusive style, dynamics that are beneficial in a negotiation and can improve the likelihood of a successful agreement (Anderson 2012; Anderlini 2010: 31).

During and following conflict, men may experience loss of traditional roles leading to a ‘crisis of identity’

While conflict can result in enhanced responsibility and opportunity for women, it can lead to the opposite for men. More research is needed on how men experience crisis, especially protracted conflicts (Refugee Law Project 2008). Yet it is clear that, for many men, in addition to struggles with post-traumatic stress disorder and depression (shared with women, boys and girls),²⁹ conflict also can lead to a loss of their traditional roles and create a ‘crisis of identity’ (Anderlini 2010: 25). This ‘crisis of identity’ occurs during and following conflict when men are often unable to assume their traditional and expected roles as providers and protectors. This may be due to injury, the effects of conflict-related psychological trauma, economic changes and displacement resulting in unemployment and the loss of livelihoods. Female breadwinners and war widows may move into jobs previously reserved for men because women are seen as cheaper labour, as in Sri Lanka (IRIN 2010). Women may also become the preferred recipients of food aid because they are seen as more responsible (Refugee Law Project 2008; WFP). The World Food Programme, for instance, aims for 70–80 per cent of its food aid recipients to be women (Mazurana et al. 2012: 13). While these changes are often necessary for the survival of women and their families, they can undermine male identity, and marginalise and disempower men (Byrne and Baden 1995: 19; Anderlini 2010: 25). A study conducted in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo found that, in situations where women are increasingly assuming the role of breadwinners, men express feelings of humiliation, failure and ‘loss of personal value’ (Lwambo 2011: 4). The Refugee Law Project observed that in refugee camp settings in the Great Lakes region of Africa, given the idleness and removal of their provider and protector role, men have become identified as ‘he-she’ (2008).

Left untreated, the stresses and feelings described above can result in ‘unhealthy outlets for asserting masculinity’ (Lwambo 2011: 4) including alcohol and drug abuse, violence and suicide (Anderlini 2010: 16; Refugee Law Project 2008; UNFPA 2010a: 44; Refugee Law Project 2008; Lwambo 2011:



Displaced Ivorians queue for food at a distribution site run by the UN Refugee Agency and Norwegian Refugee Council, Liberia, 2011. (Photo: UK Department for International Development/Derek Markwell)

20).³⁰ There is widespread recognition of the link between men’s loss of traditional roles and an increase in domestic violence. UNFPA’s *State of World Population 2010* has observed that ‘[t]he shift in traditional gender roles is now widely considered to be a factor in the rise of domestic violence within camps (2010a: 41). A 2002 UN report made similar observations about refugee camps and settlements, noting that the ‘volatile combination of overburden for some [women] and inactivity and consequent frustration for others [men] can become explosive’ (UN 2002: 27). According to Alumai Francis, Training Coordinator for the Transcultural Psychosocial Organization of Uganda, ‘this lack of opening up...is now turned into other forms of behaviour. You find that behaviour and habits like alcohol abuse is increased, the issue of domestic violence, and forms of rape’ (quoted in UNFPA 2010a: 42).

‘Men are supposed to be the providers and the protectors. But here when they lose their jobs it seems that women take over in terms of trying to provide for the family.’ – Ziad Yaish, *Occupied Palestinian Territory* (Quoted in UNFPA 2010a: 42)

Crises can create opportunities for improving gender relations but also trigger a return to the status quo and a backlash against women and efforts to improve gender relations

Gender relations are in flux during crises (UNFPA 2010a: 39). The disruption and breakdown in household and community structures that accompany conflicts and disasters present unique windows

of opportunity for improving women's status and promoting more equitable gender relations. This opportunity is triggered by women assuming roles and responsibilities previously reserved for men, thus breaking away from stereotypical assumptions about appropriate female roles and behaviour. In the words of one report, 'gender roles become more blurred as the struggle for survival takes precedence over more rigidly defined, traditional roles' (Women's Refugee Commission 2005: 21). The increasing visibility of women in positions of responsibility and decision-making in the home and wider community can encourage greater recognition of women's 'resilience and contributions' and initiate changes in attitudes (Anderlini 2010: 23). This impact has been observed in Afghanistan where women's involvement in decision-making on community projects has improved 'the perceptions by both men and women of women in leadership roles' (World Bank 2011: 170). Where this kind of transformational change does occur, however, it will not happen immediately or quickly. This unique period of shifting gender roles represents a critical time for programs and other interventions—whether local, regional or international—in support of gender equality and women's rights.

It is not uncommon for advances in women's status and programs aimed at gender equality and improving women's status to be viewed with hostility and seen as a threat to the status quo. These sentiments can stimulate periods of backlash and a shift toward traditional norms and identities; this kind of backlash is not uncommon in post-war environments (World Bank 2011:168; Byrne and Baden 1995: 18). According to various experts, communities in disarray often try to hold onto traditions for stability, and to 'go back to what they know, to what they are comfortable with, to what they identify with' (Turshen quoted in Puechguirbal 2010: 180); however harmful those traditions may be (Chew and

'According to tradition, the woman cannot say I am tired. It is her duty to work from early morning until late. Women don't even have power at the family level...And if she dares claim her rights, the husband can decide to leave her, saying you are no longer my wife.' – *Woman, Bukavu, Democratic Republic of the Congo* (quoted in Selimovic et al. 2012: 42)

Ramdas 2005: 4; Anderlini 2010: 24). The threats against, and harassment and assassinations of, staff from the Ministry of Women's Affairs in Afghanistan are an obvious example. In December 2012, for example, the acting head of a provincial women's affairs department in Laghman Province was assassinated—less than six months after her predecessor was assassinated (Rubin and Zahori 2012). In Iraq, women's rights have been 'branded as an idea imposed from the outside', despite the fact

that there is a 'long tradition of feminist interventions' in the country (Selimovic et al. 2012: 57, 55). Furthermore, women's organisations in Iraq have reported an increase in honour crimes since 2003 (Selimovic et al. 2012: 55). Also, the 'upheaval' associated with the Arab Spring has been followed by backlash against women's rights in the Middle East and North Africa (Selimovic et al. 2012: 5).

The manner in which men are engaged in programs aimed at gender equality and improving women's status—including addressing sexual and gender-based violence—is critically important. In settings where there is high poverty and unemployment among men, programs focusing solely on women's empowerment and livelihoods without informing and consulting with men may lead to a backlash from men, including abandonment and a rise in women's vulnerability to violence (Anderlini 2010: 23; Chioyenda 2012). For instance, a 'women only' food distribution system established by the UN World

Food Programme following the 2010 earthquake in Haiti led to significant tension with the Haitian men. While this approach was based on the assumption that women were more likely to distribute their food fairly in their families, it denied men access to the food distribution points, which were secured by UN peacekeepers and created a risky and threatening environment for the women, in which they were vulnerable to robbery and sexual violence as they entered and exited the distribution sites (Uwantege-Hart cited in Puechguirbal 2012: 10).

Frustratingly, the very same approach was used six years earlier following the 2004 hurricane with the same result (Puechguirbal 2012: 11).³¹

Also, programs that focus predominantly on women and programs on women's rights that fail

to acknowledge positive masculine ideals can create antagonisms and hostility toward interventions on gender equality, as was uncovered in a study conducted in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (Lwambo 2011: 9, 24).

Men are the gatekeepers of the current gender order and, as such, are potential resistors to change. (Women's Refugee Commission 2005: 14)

These examples are not an argument for abandoning programming that prioritises women's needs and rights; in some circumstances, there is a legitimate need for separate gendered programs. Rather, these examples represent a clear reason for proactively engaging with both men and women in the design, implementation and evaluation of programs aimed at gender equality and women's empowerment. This is a well-known fact, it seems, among women themselves; according to one expert, 'in many local settings, women are the first to request that men be consulted...at the outset of empowerment programmes targeting women' (Anderlini 2010: 54).

Gender Dimensions during Natural Disasters and their Aftermath

Gender is widely recognised among experts as a critical factor influencing experiences of natural disasters. The World Health Organisation has observed '...there is a pattern of gender differentiation at all levels of the disaster process: exposure to risk, risk perception, preparedness, response, physical impact, psychological impact, recovery and reconstruction' (WHO 2002: 1).

The following subsections explore the differentiated impact of natural disasters and their aftermath on women, men, girls and boys.

Women are more likely to die during natural disasters

In the words of one report, it is 'indisputable' that women are disproportionately affected by disaster (Chew and Ramdas 2005: 1). Mortality figures support this point. A 2007 article in the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* that sampled 141 countries from 1981 to 2002 concluded that 'natural disasters (and their subsequent impact) on average kill more women than men or kill women at an earlier age than men' (Neumayer and Plümper 2007: 551). Women also are more likely to die after a disaster (Neumayer and Plümper 2007: 554-5). Fifty-four per cent of the 13,007 killed by the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami in the worst affected prefectures were women and girls (Leoni 2012). Ninety per cent of the victims of a 1991 cyclone in Bangladesh that killed 140,000



Survivor of the Indian Ocean Tsunami, Aceh, Indonesia. (Photo: Joe Friend)

were women (Deen 2010). Sixty-one per cent of fatalities from the 2008 Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar were women (AusAID 2011b: 1). Similar statistics can be found for some of the areas hit hardest by the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami: in four villages in North Aceh district in Indonesia surveyed by Oxfam International, females accounted for 77 per cent of fatalities (Oxfam International 2005: 2). In another village—‘the worst affected village’ according to Oxfam International—women accounted for 80 per cent of the deaths (2005: 2). Some affected areas of India and Sri Lanka showed similarly high numbers of female deaths (Oxfam International 2005: 2; Pincha 2008: 24).

Age is another critical factor that influences experiences during disasters. A survey conducted in Aceh province after the tsunami uncovered that, in addition to the fact that women represented two-thirds of the fatalities, young children (under nine) and the elderly (over 60) comprised more than half of all casualties (Rofi et al. 2006).

When the survivors of Lampu’uk had picked themselves up out of the mud of the tsunami, several appalling facts became clear. The first was that their town no longer existed. The second was that four out of five of its former inhabitants were dead. But it took a while to realise the strangest thing of all: that among those who made it to higher ground, or who kept their heads above the surging waters, so few were women. – *Indonesia, following the Tsunami* (Oxfam International 2005: 3)

Masculine and feminine norms can disadvantage men, women, boys and girls during disasters and their aftermath

Expectations about appropriate male and female behaviour can be disadvantageous, even fatal for men and women in disaster and post-disaster environments. In many countries, men are expected to play the role of ‘protector’ and ‘defender’ of the family and home (GenderCC). These expectations can encourage them to take risks (be heroes) and put themselves in danger to protect the home and other assets rather than evacuate with other family members (Delaney and Shrader 2000: 14; Enarson 2000: 4). In Australia, for instance, more men than women are on the frontlines fighting bushfires (Parkinson 2011: 1). These expectations can also pressure men to get involved in dangerous search and rescue efforts and debris removal in the aftermath of disaster (Delaney and Shrader 2000: 14; Enarson 2000: 4; WHO 2002: 2). Based on World Bank data, more men died in Hurricane Mitch (1998) in Central America, likely due to their involvement in search and rescue, and higher tolerance for risk-taking (Delaney and Shrader 2000: 5).

Masculine norms can also leave men unprepared for the challenges associated with assuming domestic responsibilities and becoming a single parent following the death of, or separation from, female family members. Domestic duties and responsibilities are more often than not the purview of women, and when men are forced to assume this unfamiliar role without prior socialisation and education it can create significant psychological difficulties, including feelings of inadequacy and failure (Oxfam International 2005: 4; WHO 2002: 2). These circumstances can also lead to high rates of male malnutrition and even death, because men may not know how to cook (Mazurana et al. 2011: 13-14). In addition, men’s lack of domestic experience represents a ‘possible area of risk’, especially for men who are left alone to care for infants and toddlers, since they may be less aware of the needs of their children; difficulties observed during the 2010 Pakistan floods (Mazurana et al. 2011: 48). These difficulties can be aggravated by societal expectations that prevent men from seeking help when they need it. A profile by Lifeline Australia (counselling service) of the help-seeking behaviours of rural Australian men, for instance, supported by extensive research, found that there is a common tendency in men toward ‘stoicism’ and a belief that seeking help is a sign of weakness (Lifeline Australia 2007). Given these widely reported difficulties, it is perhaps no surprise that widowed men may face social pressure to remarry, as was the case in some communities following the Indian Ocean tsunami (Oxfam International 2008: 2).

Suresh, a 17-year-old boy, who lost his widowed mother, said that although he was not mentally prepared for marriage, the fear of managing a household caused him to marry a 16-year-old girl. He confesses, ‘I am not yet ready to take on the responsibilities of parenthood’. – *Tamil Nadu, India following the Tsunami* (Pincha 2008: 24)

Many men climbed trees to escape the water—it was something they had done many times before to pick fruit and while playing—yet women had never done this before and so didn’t do it. – (Oxfam International 2005: 9)

Similarly, women can be disadvantaged by norms about appropriate feminine behaviour and roles.³² The fact that women and girls did not grow up learning how to swim and climb trees (to pick fruit, for example), like men and boys, had devastating consequences in various affected countries during

the Indian Ocean tsunami, including Sri Lanka (Oxfam International 2005). Their more limited 'self-rescue' abilities (Neumayer and Plümper 2007) were challenged by traditional clothing, which severely limited their mobility (Chew and Ramdas 2005: 2; Neumayer and Plümper 2007: 554). As was documented in Tamil Nadu, India, for some women who lost their saris in the waves but managed to stay alive, 'strong internalized values of nudity and shame' prevented them from moving to safer ground (Pincha 2008: 24). In addition, the primary domestic responsibilities and roles of women and girls in many countries can make them more vulnerable to injury or death. This may be because they stay behind looking for their children and other dependants, including elderly relatives (Oxfam 2005: 2), or because their homes are damaged by disasters. This vulnerability stands in contrast with men who are often away from home, working in more robustly constructed buildings, out in the open, or working in other states or even in another country (Neumayer and Plümper 2007: 554; WHO 2002: 2; Zahur 2010). This pattern has been observed in many disaster contexts including the 1993 earthquake in Maharashtra, India (WHO 2002: 2), the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami (Oxfam 2005) and the 2005 Kashmir earthquake (AusAID 2009: 25).



Men clear rubble to try and reach survivors of earthquake, Haiti, 2010 (Photo: Mariana Nissen/UNDP)

Assumptions and expectations about feminine roles and behaviour also have serious consequences for women in the aftermath of disasters. According to the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, in Sri Lanka following the Indian Ocean tsunami, widows were unable to claim relief assistance because the state failed to recognise that women could be the family provider and head of household (2006: 29, 39). The primary domestic identity of women in many countries guarantees that when men leave home in search of employment—known as the 'flight of men' (Enarson 2000: 10)³³—women are expected to assume responsibility as heads of households. Women's domestic duties and responsibilities are even greater once they are alone and managing the impact of the disaster on children and the elderly (Thurairajah et al. 2008: 1110). Their increased workload makes migration for work impossible (PAHO 2002: 1).³⁴ It also restricts their ability to access relief when its distribution clashes with their domestic duties. Girls may be forced out of school to help with the workload or to enter the workforce (AusAID 2009: 12), along with boys as well (Pincha 2008: 29).

According to a World Bank study, female-headed households increased in Honduras after Hurricane Mitch from 20.4 per cent to over 50 per cent. (Delaney and Shrader 2000: 5)

In more conservative societies, cultural taboos may prevent women from receiving aid and medical care provided by male relief workers.

Women faced this restriction during the 2010 Pakistan floods (Mandelbaum 2010; WHO 2002: 2), as well as following the 2005 Pakistan earthquake when it was reported that women in the Northern Rocky Highlands—an area known for practicing 'honour' killings—were fearful of endangering their

‘honour’ and being killed by accepting medical evacuation from all-male helicopter crews (Mazurana et al. 2011: 60–61). Also in Pakistan, following the floods, restrictions on women’s movement without male accompaniment had particularly severe consequences for female heads of household who were ‘left out of the distribution system’ (APWLD 2006: 11).

Women and girls have specific health needs and face specific health-related risks during disasters and their aftermath

Pregnant, lactating and menstruating women and girls are particularly vulnerable in disaster environments (as they are in conflict environments). Pregnant and lactating women have greater food and water needs and face restricted physical mobility (Delaney and Shrader 2000: 14; Neumayer and Plümpner 2007: 553). Given the physical and psychological impact of disaster on their own bodies, and the impact on the health infrastructure (including obstetric care), they face higher risks of miscarriage, premature delivery, stillbirths, and infant and maternal mortality (WHO 2002: 2). The Indonesian Midwife’s Association estimated that it lost 30 per cent of its 5,500 members during the Indian Ocean tsunami, with significant flow-on impacts for pregnant women (Chew and Ramdas 2005: 2). The stress and trauma of disasters as well as the lack of privacy in temporary shelters can cause lactating problems for breastfeeding mothers (APWLD 2006: 8; UNIFEM 2010: 4; Mazurana et al. 2011: 48). Women who lose their babies while still breastfeeding, in addition to the trauma of their loss,

may struggle with milk clotting and infection, which can become quite debilitating and require medical attention (APWLD 2006: 21).

‘Do you know how difficult it is to be a woman in a tent?’ – *Woman in line to receive sanitary pads, following Turkish earthquake* (Reinart 1999)

Menstruating women and girls face unique problems in temporary shelters and camps. In more conservative societies, limited or non-

existent privacy, poor toilet facilities, and in some cases no bathing facilities—as was the case in at least one shelter in Southern Punjab following the 2010 Pakistan floods (BBC News 2010)—prevent women and girls from being able to properly wash themselves and their sanitary cloths. This can lead to rashes and infections, reported among adolescent girls during the 1998 floods in Bangladesh (WHO 2002: 2). Also, in past relief efforts, relief packages have failed to include female hygiene kits (Oxfam International 2008: 2).³⁵

The health of the wider female population is also affected by poor conditions in shelters. Following the Indian Ocean tsunami, it was reported that many women and girls in Tamil Nadu, India, suppressed ‘the urge to defecate or urinate because of poor toilet conditions’, which led to frequent urinary tract and other infections (Pincha 2008: 26). In some temporary shelters following the floods in Pakistan, the lack of privacy and women’s concerns about modesty forced them to wait to use the lavatories until nightfall, thus increasing their vulnerability to illness and attack (UNIFEM 2010: 3). Cultural practices and norms can also aggravate the health risks women face following disasters. The cultural practice of *purdah* in Pakistan—‘which regulates the interaction of women and unrelated men’—made life even harder for women in shelters following the floods where the ‘demands of *purdah*’ restricted their access to bathing facilities and medical clinics with serious consequences for their health and hygiene (IDMC and NRC 2011: 5, 9).³⁶

Gender inequality in many societies creates gender-specific vulnerabilities during disasters and their aftermath

There is a direct link between the unequal status of women and girls in the family and wider community and their vulnerabilities during and following disasters. A 2007 study determined that a lower socioeconomic status ‘renders women more vulnerable to the mortal impact of natural disasters’ (Neumayer and Plümper 2007: 552). Lower levels of education among women and girls, for example, limit their ability to access early warning information on disasters (Pearl and Dankelman 2008). Women who lack inheritance³⁷ and land rights—a problem that is widespread across the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia and the Pacific (UN Women 2011: 39)—are vulnerable to eviction and poverty if their husbands or sons die during or following a disaster (WHO 2002: 3). There are reports that sterilised women who lost children during the tsunami in India were pressured to undergo recanalisation surgery under threat of abandonment from their husbands (APWLD 2006: 30). Also in India and elsewhere in the region, young women became vulnerable to ‘tsunami marriages’, another name for forced early marriages sought by men to seize control of government compensation granted to the young women for losing their parents (APWLD 2006: 30), or sought by men who did not have the necessary skills to take care of themselves and any dependants (Mazurana et al. 2012: 20). Women’s unequal status was also visible in the treatment of female victims of the tsunami: the Thai government provided 50 per cent less financial assistance for the funerals of women than men because heads of households and breadwinners were automatically assumed to be male (APWLD 2006: 1).

Abul Kalam had five daughters and one son. He was a poor sharecropper. He was holding his children together and fighting against the wind—fearful of the rising water. In his struggle to survive, Abul Kalam released his daughters one after the other, so his son could survive. – *Bangladesh* (Akhter 1992: 64 cited in Enarson 2000: 4)

Disasters create environments where violence and exploitation can thrive

It is ‘widely recognised’ that violence against women increases after disasters (UNESCAP 2010: 10; Chew and Ramdas 2005: 2; APWLD 2006: 27; Anastario et al. 2009: 18). In the five months following the earthquake in Haiti, the Commission of Women Victims for Victims, a local NGO, ‘registered more than 250 cases of rape’ in a number of displaced persons camps (Amnesty International 2011: 8). Though quantitative data is often not available, there is evidence from both the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires in Victoria, Australia, and the 2011 Christchurch earthquake in New Zealand that family violence increased after the disasters: an estimated 50 per cent increase in the case of the Christchurch earthquake (Parkinson 2011; Phillips 2011). A study conducted among women in Mississippi,

In the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake, residents of the capital’s tent cities were 20 times more likely to report a sexual assault than other Haitians. (Kolbe and Muggah 2012)

‘There are so many people who are being affected after the fires with domestic violence, and so many women who aren’t able to seek help.’ – *Following the Black Saturday bushfires, Victoria, Australia* (Kate quoted in Parkinson 2011: 14)

USA, displaced by the 2005 Hurricane Katrina registered an increase in gender-based violence—particularly intimate partner violence—from 4.6 per 100,000 per day to 16.3 per 100,000 per day in 2006, with levels remaining at 10.1 per 100,000 per day in 2007 (Anastario et al. 2009: 18). Drawing on these and other data gathered, the researchers concluded that ‘female [internally displaced persons] are particularly vulnerable to [gender-based violence] in the acute phase following a disaster and displacement and to [intimate partner violence] in the protracted phase of displacement’ (Anastario et al. 2009: 24). These vulnerabilities are exacerbated by the physical destruction associated with natural disasters, which may result in shelters and rape crisis centres being closed (Chew and Ramdas 2005: 2), and police stations and courthouses destroyed. The police station that housed Haiti’s only special unit for responding to sexual violence, for example, was ‘flattened’ during the 2010 earthquake in Haiti (Maguire 2012: 2).

Past disasters have shown that particular segments of the female population often demonstrate heightened vulnerability to violence following disasters. In Pakistan following the 2010 floods, for example, ‘older women, widowed women and second wives’ were found to be particularly vulnerable to intra-family violence triggered by frustrations about living conditions and ‘collective trauma’ (IDMC and NRC 2011: 11). Experts have noted that unmarried women and girls as well as widows are particularly vulnerable to harassment, violence, sexual exploitation and prostitution (WHO 2002: 3; IDMC and NRC 2011: 10). Displaced women and girls who reside in temporary shelters are also at particular risk of violence given the lack of privacy, inadequate shelter, poor lighting, in some cases shared bathing facilities, and secluded location of bathroom and shower facilities which characterise some settlements, including in Haiti (Stedman 2011: 2; APWLD 2006: 16, 26). As was reported in Aceh following the Indian Ocean tsunami, it is because of these risks that some women—especially widows with families—may have opted to remain in communities and stay away from displaced camps (Rofi et al. 2006: 348). In the face of violence, women do mobilise to protect themselves. In Pakistan following the 2010 floods, for instance, female camp residents adapted to the inherent insecurity of the camps by organising themselves into groups to visit latrines at night (IDMC and NRC 2011: 10). In Haiti, women’s organisations initiated volunteer security patrols, arranged escorts to accompany women to the shower facilities at night, and distributed ‘rape’ whistles (Stedman 2011: 2).

According to some experts, male aggression and violence following disasters reflects ‘dysfunctional coping mechanisms’. This explanation has been provided for the widespread behaviour of men following Hurricane Mitch in Nicaragua and Honduras, who resorted to gambling, alcoholism and drug abuse (Delaney and Shrader 2000: 5–6, 16, 26). Similar behaviour was observed among men following the Indian Ocean tsunami.³⁸ In some societies, post-disaster male demonstrations of aggression are socially acceptable or may be excused as they are considered evidence of men’s ‘coping strategies’ in the face of trauma (Pincha 2008: 33; Parkinson 2011: 22; Selimovic et al. 2012: 21).

Women are often at the forefront of post-disaster community recovery and rehabilitation efforts, which can create opportunities for their advancement and changes in gender relations

Women are often at the forefront of community-level recovery and rehabilitation efforts following natural disasters. The World Bank has observed that this is one of the ways women cope with



Women clear rubble as part of United Nations Development Programme cash for work programme, Haiti. (Photo: Adam Rogers/UNDP)

disasters—by mobilising themselves into social networks, and staying busy (Delaney and Shrader 2000: 15). Elsewhere it has been observed that ‘[d]isasters literally push women out of the confines of their homes and neighbourhoods and lead them to take on non-traditional roles in the name of insuring their families’ survival and well-being’ (Yonder et al. 2005: 6). This mobilisation has been witnessed across numerous disaster zones. Following Hurricane Mitch, for example, women in Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala became involved in ‘traditionally masculine tasks’ (Chew and Ramdas 2005: 3) such as clearing roads, hauling cement, digging out wells and constructing latrines, alongside the more traditional tasks of caring for the injured and elderly, and organising food assistance (Delaney and Shrader 2000: 5, 22). In Haiti after the earthquake, women participated in treating the wounded, clearing rubble and rebuilding homes (Maguire 2012). On Java (Indonesia) after the 2006 earthquake, women ran temporary shelters and community kitchens (UN/ISDR 2007: 23). In Aceh (Indonesia), six months after the Indian Ocean tsunami, approximately 70 per cent of community-based organisations were women’s groups or organisations ‘mostly staffed by women’ (Chew and Ramdas 2005: 3). Following disasters, women are also often at the forefront of efforts to enhance disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction in their communities, through programs focused on increasing food security, and building disaster-resilient homes, for example (UN/ISDR 2007).

‘Disasters can be great liberators.’
(Quoted in Briceño 2002: 7)

Importantly, while women are actively involved in community disaster response efforts, they may be excluded from more formal and government-sanctioned disaster management programs (World Bank 2012). According to the World Bank, in East Asia and the Pacific, disaster management and response is considered ‘men’s business’, a view reflected in the fact that in Lao PDR, the National Disaster Management Committee is made up of nine men and one woman (World Bank 2012: 2, 4).

Similar to conflict and post-conflict environments, post-disaster environments also can present real opportunities for long-term social change, including in gender relations in the family and wider community. A 2010 report by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific noted that ‘[o]ne unique opportunity the post-disaster period offers for women is to challenge their gendered status in society by taking on tasks which are traditionally performed by men’ (2010: 11). According to the World Bank’s report on Hurricane Mitch, some women did find that they were shown more respect by their husbands after their contributions following the disaster (Delaney and Shrader 2000: 5, 32). Post-disaster environments also present opportunities to change discriminatory norms, laws and practices, including in areas such as inheritance, as well as land and property rights (APWLD 2006: 52). Through the advocacy efforts of the Women’s Policy Network, an Acehnese organisation, women now can be registered as individual or joint owners of land in the post-tsunami land distribution scheme, in contrast to before the tsunami when only men had land ownership rights (AusAID 2009:19). Recognising this significant opportunity, women’s post-disaster relief efforts frequently evolve into greater mobilisation among women, including the establishment of women’s organisations as well as larger scale political and social mobilisation efforts (Enarson 2000: 17; UN/ISDR: 2007).

[T]he hidden potential of women emerges in post-disaster situations and they are seen as strong, resilient and strategic in their ability to think through longer term family and community needs. (UNDP 2010: 9)

Utility of a Gender Perspective in Armed Conflicts and Natural Disasters

As the previous section has demonstrated, applying a gender perspective in crisis environments is justified and required by circumstances on the ground. It is also widely accepted that adopting a gender perspective improves the effectiveness of peace, stabilisation and disaster relief operations, and will pay dividends in both conflict and disaster environments. In the words of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, '[t]hinking about the gender dimensions of your work improves what you do, how you do it and what effect you have. It is simply about good programming' (2006: 7). On the topic of natural disasters, experts have noted that '[i]ncluding gender in future disaster work holds the promise of tremendous benefit at remarkably little cost' (Delaney and Shrader 2000: 46).

One of the most effective ways to understand different needs within a population is to collect data by sex and age (SADD) and to analyze that data, in part, using a gender and generational analysis that is situated within the context of the particular country, region and crisis. (Mazurana et al. 2011: 3)

In both conflict and disaster environments, a gender perspective allows operations to 'understand who in the population is affected by the crisis', why, how, what they need, 'and what they can do for themselves' (IASC 2006: 7; Mazurana et al. 2011: 8). In conflict analysis frameworks, which tend to provide 'a macro-level strategic assessment of a situation', a gender perspective 'provides a more "people-centered" approach' (Anderlini 2006: 2). This enhanced understanding has many benefits at an operational level: it helps operations plan and prioritise their tasks; it enables targeted programming; it enables more accurate, effective equitable and cost efficient service provision; it decreases the chance of 'blind spots' (Olsson and Tejpar et al. 2009: 111; Mazurana et al. 2011); it reduces the likelihood of unintended harm to beneficiaries (Anderlini 2010: 33; Delaney and Shrader 2000: 10); and it also reduces potential backlash against the operation (Olsson and Tejpar et al. 2009: 117). Sex and age disaggregated data are essential elements for building a gender perspective (Mazurana et al. 2011).

A list of 46 gendered early warning indicators developed by the UN Development Fund for Women—or UNIFEM (now part of UN Women)—in the Solomon Islands include:

- > 15. Male unemployment
- > 21. Avoidance of markets / gardens due to fear
- > 32. Incidence of domestic abuse
- > 33. Frequency of marriage breakups
- > 36. Aggressive or 'hyper-masculine' behaviour encouraged
- > 38. Girls' primary school attendance
- > 39. Boys' primary school attendance (2006: 17)

Examples of the Utility of a Gender Perspective

- > Integrating a gender perspective in early warning efforts can enhance an operation's situational awareness by highlighting a

range of shifting dynamics that might otherwise be invisible to, or ignored by, an operation. For instance, careful attention to changes in the daily routines and vulnerabilities of women and girls can help an operation's staff to identify wider changes in the overall security situation and serve as an early warning about potential instability or impending conflict. In the words of one expert, women are the 'proverbial canaries in the mine' (Anderlini 2010: 8). Elements of male behaviour and activities—including high male youth unemployment and demonstrations of hyper-masculine behaviour and aggression—also can serve as indicators of potential instability (Anderlini 2006: 2; UN Women 2012c: 5).

- > Careful attention to the specific health needs and vulnerabilities of pregnant women in a disaster situation can help determine the particular services that will be required in a disaster response operation. The UN Population Fund (UNFPA), based on detailed statistics on women of childbearing age, expected deliveries and expected numbers of newborns in Pakistan during the 2010 floods, arranged for the provision of emergency reproductive health medicines, women's hygiene kits, newborn kits, clean delivery kits and birthing kits (UNFPA 2010b).
- > Prior knowledge about the cultural requirements for privacy among Pakistani women directed the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to distribute plastic sheeting to provide additional privacy for women around clusters of tents where they resided following the 2010 floods (Mazurana et al. 2011: 70).
- > Having reliable data on numbers of female ex-combatants helps a peacekeeping operation determine how many female military observers are needed to 'support their effective disarmament' (UNDPKO/DFS 2010b: 13, 20).
- > Engagement with women in the local population can help an operation build its situational awareness of the local environment. In Chad, for example, local women informed personnel from the European Union Force Chad about the presence of armed groups in nearby mountains, which they had observed while out collecting firewood and water. This information was unknown to the force personnel as well as local men who never travelled in the area, and as a result the operation initiated patrols in the mountains (Whitman and O'Neill 2012: 10). In another example, in Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan, an all-male rifle patrol within the Swedish Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) began patrolling smaller streets and alleys to improve their engagement with local women, following a suggestion made by the PRT's gender field advisor (Whitman and O'Neill 2012: 7–8). Through this change in their route, local women began approaching the patrol, including their male interpreter, and eventually shared crucial information about an upcoming event in the local community. This information enhanced the operation's situational awareness,

'As the war was brewing, women were up and about very early in the morning, getting all of their business done as quickly as possible. The markets were only open for a few hours because people were afraid. When the market was open for longer, it was a sign that things were getting back to normal.'

– *Woman, Sierra Leone* (quoted in Rehn and Sirleaf 2002: 113)

enabled them to develop an appropriate plan, and ‘prevented a possible escalation of tension’ had the operation been ignorant of this event and reacted accordingly (Whitman and O’Neill 2012: 8).

- An understanding of incidents and patterns of sexual violence as well as those groups particularly at risk can help an operation plan and develop targeted preventive interventions. For instance, in recognition of the particular vulnerability of displaced women and girls in Darfur to sexual violence during firewood collection, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) instituted vehicular—and sometimes aerial—firewood patrols, conducted by civilian police and military observers (AusAID 2010: 12; UNIFEM and UNDPKO 2010: 21). In addition to firewood patrols, operations have also established water route and trade route patrols, night patrols and foot patrols to facilitate agricultural harvests (UNIFEM and UNDPKO 2010: 21-23). In the case of UNAMID, these patrols have proven to be an effective protective and preventive practice, and have assisted the mission in carrying out its mandate, which includes the protection of civilians and protection from gender-based violence (UNAMID).

Participation and Consultation

An essential component of adopting a gender perspective in any program is ensuring the equal participation of and consultation with women, men, girls and boys in design, implementation and



A woman collects millet, escorted by Jordanian peacekeepers as part of a patrol by the African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), North Darfur, 2010. (Photo: Albert Gonzalez Farran / UNAMID)

evaluation. Through participation and consultation, they can define and explain their own needs, vulnerabilities, priorities and interests. Through this engagement, the local population become ‘agents in planning and not merely...beneficiaries’ (UNDPKO/DFS 2008: 14). Due to women’s primary domestic

A clear and accurate picture of a situation cannot be attained if 50% or more of the population has not been consulted. It can mean that 50% of the information needed is missing. (IASC 2006: 6)

role and responsibilities in many cultures, they represent a critical source of information, insight and observation about needs and vulnerabilities in the local community. This can help an operation develop a comprehensive picture of the local environment, including security dynamics (UNDPKO/DFS 2010b: 30), and inform

the planning and development of effective interventions. Women are often ‘most aware of what family needs are and what immediate responses [are] needed’ in post-crisis environments (APWLD 2006: 6; Mazurana et al. 2011: 48). Through their regular commercial activities, women and girls may have ‘ears to the ground’ and can ‘sense any changes in the security environment’ (UNDPKO/DFS 2010b: 23). They can suggest particular locations and times most appropriate for police and military patrols (UNDPKO/DFS 2008). They often know about the location of arms caches and transportation routes for weapons (UN Women 2012c: 4; Whitman and O’Neill 2012: 4), as well as the movement of armed groups. Women also represent a critical source of insight and ideas in planning for and building shelters and camps, in particular relating to the locations for latrines, water collection sites, kitchens and lighting. After all, women and girls are often responsible for family and community water collection and hygiene management (Brun 2010). This advice not only helps to limit and prevent exposure of residents to violence (Anderlini 2010: 20), it also has wider benefits. Advice from women may guide the establishment of more conveniently located water points, which can reduce the time needed to fetch water, and in turn can provide women with more time to engage in income generating activities and encourage more regular school attendance by girls (Brun 2010: 7).

Yet, in many societies, men are the main source of information for operations since they occupy most leadership and decision-making positions (Byrne and Baden 1995: 23). There is also a common impression that men have information about ‘hard’ issues such as security, while women only have ‘humanitarian’ information (Olsson and Tejpar et al. 2009: 88). Furthermore, experience has shown that international interventions have a tendency to accept

[W]hen cultural norms dictate that women travel on foot to gather water or firewood, they may see and hear things men do not notice. (Whitman and O’Neill 2012: 3)

existing power structures in their ‘rush to embrace’ local actors (Anderlini 2010: 21) rather than nurture new or marginalised voices in the community, such as women (ACMC 2012).³⁹ Following the Indian Ocean tsunami, for instance, many relief initiatives relied on panchayats (traditional village councils) to distribute relief; however, panchayats customarily engaged with male heads of household and some were reluctant to distribute aid directly to women (Oxfam International 2008: 1). Such practices have faced criticism and are also not the case in every situation; it has been observed, for instance, that women’s organisations—often at the heart of recovery efforts—are increasingly accepted as key informants, and partners in assessments and recovery efforts after natural disasters (UNDP 2010: 8).



African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) staff meet with a group of internally displaced women, Abu-Shouk Camp, Northern Darfur, 2009. (Photo: UN Photo/Olivier Chassot)

Female operational personnel, including female interpreters, can play a crucial role in helping an operation to integrate a gender perspective in its work; their presence can encourage and facilitate participation by and consultation with the local female population. Experts often note that women in especially vulnerable situations prefer to engage with female operational staff, especially about healthcare issues and other intimate matters, and if they have been subject to sexual violence (Farr 2003: 32; UNDPKO/DFS 2010b: 19). In disaster environments, not only do female survivors feel more comfortable discussing their needs with female personnel, but in cultures which restrict women's mobility and engagement with male strangers, female relief personnel are a culturally acceptable means for female survivors, especially heads of households, to access much-needed disaster relief (Enarson 2000: 28). In Liberia, the presence of female police officers patrolling the capital was credited with a significant increase in reports of domestic violence (O'Neill and Vary 2011: 92), and the

[T]he [Psychological Operations] Team had been approached by Afghan women only once or twice. However, when accompanied by the Gender Field Advisor...the Gender Field Advisor met with and spoke to more than 15 women. (Olsson and Tejpar et al. 2009: 103)

The operational imperative of having a critical mass of female military peacekeepers is widely acknowledged, as it enables better access to women in post-conflict environments to support mandate implementation. (UNDPKO/DFS 2010b: 13)

presence of international female uniformed police in the UN peacekeeping operation (UNMIL) was credited with encouraging Liberian women to report incidents of sexual violence (Suthanthiraraj and Ayo 2010: 73; True 2013: 5). This information is crucial for an operation's understanding of the vulnerabilities, risks and needs of the local community.

The importance of having female personnel on operations is especially obvious in more conservative cultures. In Afghanistan, for example, many male military personnel in the International Security Assistance Force Provincial Reconstruction Teams have been advised not to address or even look at Afghan women (Olsson and Tejpar et al. 2009: 121). Female Engagement Teams (FET), have been established by US and Australian militaries as a way to engage with Afghani women within the existing conservative cultural constraints of the country (Cumming 2012).

Wider benefits of the presence of female peacekeepers, in particular, have also been reported. Following the arrival of the female Indian Formed Police Unit in Liberia in 2007, the number of local female applicants to the Liberian National Police immediately rose from 120 to 350 (UNDPKO/DFS 2008: 34). The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations has credited the presence of female peacekeepers with encouraging women to enter the security sector, thus 'challenging traditional ideas of gender roles' (UNDPKO 2010: 10). Despite these examples, some researchers advise caution, arguing that 'it is unwise...to draw firm conclusions on the impact of women peacekeepers', given that at this point the evidence is largely anecdotal and ad hoc (Jennings 2011: 5,6).



A member of Female Engagement Team, I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), speaks with a local Afghani man while on patrol, Boldak, Afghanistan, 2010. (Photo: Corporal Lindsay L Sayres, US Marine Corps)



A member of African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) visits woman in her home in Zam Zam Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Camp, Northern Darfur, 2010. (Photo: UN Photo/Albert Gonzalez Farran)

It also has been reported that in some situations local men are more receptive to, and more willing to share information with, female personnel than with male operational personnel (Whitman and O'Neill 2012). In Afghanistan, for example, a Dutch Provincial Reconstruction Team has observed that Afghan men are more open toward female military personnel. Talking to female personnel 'even "loosened men's tongues" which provided the team with very useful information about the area of responsibility...' (Olsson and Tejpar et al. 2009: 41-42). The ISAF operation in Afghanistan provides a number of examples where local men have had information about security threats that they have been willing to reveal only to female personnel (Whitman and O'Neill 2012: 6). In one case, a US female corporal and member of a US Female Engagement Team was the only accepted 'interlocutor' for a local male villager who had information about the location of improvised explosive devices and the identification of Taliban supporters (Whitman and O'Neill 2012: 12-13). One reason for this openness may be that local men consider women in military uniform to be a 'third sex' and thus approachable (Cumming 2012). Finally, some studies and reports suggest that male victims of sexual violence are more likely to find it easier to talk to a woman initially, although this may not be the case if the perpetrator was a woman (Russell et al. 2011: 6; Sorsoli et al. 2008: 343).

Consequences of Failing to Integrate a Gender Perspective

Despite often good intentions, operations that are ‘gender blind’, or fail to integrate a gender perspective, ‘may lack effectiveness, impact and relevance’ (OECD 2012: 48), and worse, may expose vulnerable groups to heightened risk. These consequences serve as an argument in favour of the utility of a gender perspective. In the words of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, ignoring gender issues ‘can have serious implications for the protection and survival of people caught up in humanitarian crises’ (2006: vii). Sadly, multiple examples prove this point:

- > In Afghanistan, a US anti-drug poppy eradication program, which failed to account for the traditional practice of repaying debts with women and girls (‘blood money’), led to a rise in the practice of ‘loan brides’, effectively forced marriages of girls. More specifically, due to the poppy eradication, farmers became indebted to opium buyers and their daughters (some as young as two months old) became the only means of repaying their debt since they no longer had their poppy crop (Anderlini 2010: 54–55).
- > In the context of natural disasters, many reports have highlighted how gender blind response efforts can result in heightened vulnerability to injury, violence and illness. It was reported, for instance, that, following the Indian Ocean tsunami, women were not included in discussions on the design of shelters. This resulted in shelters that lacked kitchens and separate toilet and bathroom facilities for women and girls. According to the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, this lack of gender sensitivity resulted in sexual harassment and violence in and around shared toilets and bathing facilities, and cooking-related injuries in the ‘unsafe make-shift facilities’ that had to be built given the lack of kitchens (2006: 33). In Haiti following the earthquake, incidents of sexual violence were linked to conditions of the toilet facilities that were not separated by gender, lacked sufficient lighting, were located too far away, and did not have locks (Mazurana et al. 2011: 73). Experiences from Pakistan and India explored earlier in the paper also highlight how the lack of privacy in toilet and bathing facilities in shelters and camps can result directly in illness among women—including rashes and infections such as urinary tract infections—and attack, when the women have suppressed their need to use the facilities until nightfall (WHO 2002: 2; Pincha 2008: 26; UNIFEM 2010: 3). Similar

‘Failing to incorporate gender most likely results in overlooked damages, needs, and priorities. It most certainly exacerbates, and potentially creates, poverty and inequity. It likely intensifies vulnerability and creates new categories of “victims”.’ (Delaney and Shrader 2000: 46)

‘In an IDP site of North Kivu, latrines were built without prior consultation of girls and women. The female population was uncomfortable using the facilities since they were built near a place where men would socialize. As a result, women relieved themselves in the forest, with negative implications for their safety, their dignity as well as for the public health of the entire community.’ – *Democratic Republic of the Congo* (Brun 2010: 7)

circumstances exist for women and girls in displaced persons camps, such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Brun 2010).

- Finally, as discussed earlier, programs focused solely on women's empowerment and livelihoods that disregard their impact on male kin and male members of the wider community and fail to inform and consult with men may lead to backlash from men, including abandonment and a rise in women's vulnerability to violence (Anderlini 2010: 23).

Evidence of the Utility of a Gender Perspective

Despite earlier examples, there is in fact limited systematic and robust evidence of the practical utility for operations of integrating a gender perspective in crisis environments. Therefore, assessing the utility of a gender perspective in interventions can be challenging. This lack of evidence is

According to one expert, there is a 'lack of evidence regarding the efficacy of gender mainstreaming'. (Anderlini 2010: 60)

largely because institutionalising genuine gender programming with robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms is progressing slowly (Wilton Park 2013). The development of National (and regional) Action Plans (NAPs) on

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security (see Appendix B) is one example. These NAPs are broadly intended to help integrate a gender perspective in a country's peace and security efforts, at home and abroad, with particular focus on women's participation and protection. According to the PeaceWomen Project, there are currently 40 NAPs in use; however, the first NAP was only introduced in 2005 (by Denmark), and half of the existing NAPs were adopted between 2009 and 2010 (PeaceWomen Project). Similarly, the UN Departments of Peacekeeping and Field Support (UNDPKO/DFS) adopted guidelines on integrating a gender perspective in the work of the UN police and UN military in 2008 and 2010 respectively. While the NAPs and DPKO/DFS guidelines reflect significant progress, given their infancy it is difficult to assess their impact and determine the benefits of a gender perspective.

Conclusion

Conflicts and disasters are inherently gendered crises. Differences in casualty trends, risks, threats, vulnerabilities, needs, capacities, capabilities, opportunities and stresses—explored in this paper—make this point irrefutable. Operations that recognise, understand and respond to these differences—in other words, adopt a gender perspective—will demonstrate enhanced situational awareness and prove more effective in their efforts, whether in a peace and stabilisation or disaster relief context. In contrast, operations that fail to adopt a gender perspective will have an incomplete picture of the environment in which they are working, are likely to lack effectiveness, and may in fact expose already vulnerable groups to injury, violence and other risks.

For civil-military actors newly engaging with gender issues who work in conflict and disaster settings and engage in the fields of training, education, research and doctrine, the gendered experiences described in this paper encourage action on multiple fronts. As the civil-military community, we must:

- recognise and acknowledge that the vulnerabilities and needs, capabilities and strengths, opportunities, stresses, priorities and interests of women, men, girls and boys are not the same, and often are significantly different
- avoid the trap of gender stereotyping that relies on often simplified narratives about female victims and male perpetrators
- build a body of basic reliable sex-disaggregated data using ethical collection methods that enables a more nuanced picture of crisis settings and enhances an understanding of gender issues
- pay careful attention to the dynamics of participation in crisis and post-crisis settings to ensure that all segments of the local population have the opportunity to safely share their concerns, interests and priorities, whether in peace negotiations or consultations on the design of refugee camps and temporary shelters
- be appropriately sensitive to the potential impact of our interventions on gender relations and power dynamics in communities and families, without disregarding our responsibilities regarding human rights
- recognise the continued critical need for programs focused on women's empowerment and human rights, while also ensuring that men are consulted and considered in all such programs and that men's own needs, vulnerabilities, rights and opportunities are addressed.

A gendered picture of crisis settings relies on asking questions that are often not asked, such as: what happens to men who return from conflict to find their breadwinning role taken over by women? And how does their return affect the women who have assumed responsibility and decision-making power in the household and ensured their family's survival through crisis? Why are men and boys particularly vulnerable to mass executions and disappearances? Why are women excluded from peace negotiations when they often have helped the warring parties agree to the negotiations in the

first place? How does it affect the household when women are the preferred recipients of food aid? How does a man cope as a single parent following conflict or disaster when he has limited experience managing a home and caring for children? How does a woman cope as a single parent and head of household after losing her husband/partner? Why are former combatants often perpetrators of sexual violence once conflict ends?

The gendered dimensions of armed conflicts and natural disasters often reveal complex 'stories'. The wealth of research and analysis that is regularly emerging from the very active fields of gender and conflicts, and gender and disasters, is bound to add further layers of complexity to these stories. This complexity does not mean that the integration of a gender perspective has to be a difficult and burdensome exercise. In fact, it suggests the opposite. The adoption of a gender perspective facilitates an operation's efforts by helping to build a clearer picture of the impact of conflicts and disasters on women, men, girls and boys, and acts to guide more effective response efforts.

Appendix A – Terminology

For the purposes of this paper, various terms are defined and explored below:

Gender refers to the socially constructed attributes, roles, responsibilities and opportunities associated with being male or female in a given culture as well as the socially constructed relationships between men, women, boys and girls and between women and between men. In the words of the UN Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, '[g]ender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context' (UNOSAGI 2001: 1). The term is often confused with 'sex', which refers to the biological differences between females and males.

Gender perspective or **gender sensitivity** refers to 'attention to the differential needs, circumstances and experiences of women and men' (Anderlini 2010: 2). In contrast, a gender blind approach assumes that men's and women's experiences, vulnerabilities and needs are similar or the same (APWLD 2006: 2).

Gender mainstreaming refers to the process of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all activities. The United Nation's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) defines it as 'the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality' (1997).

The strategy of gender mainstreaming has been widely adopted by the UN system, some national governments, non-governmental and other intergovernmental organisations, among others. In practice, gender mainstreaming has proven to be challenging and has been the subject of widespread criticism and concern. Common critiques and concerns relate to a range of issues. Experts point to the fact that there is ongoing conceptual confusion not only around 'gender mainstreaming' but 'gender' more generally, as mentioned earlier (Sandler and Johnsson-Latham in AWID 2004: 3; 5). There is resistance to the concepts and values associated with gender equality (Rao and Kelleher 2005: 59). There is a tendency to lose sight of the transformational nature of the strategy and instead focus on gender mainstreaming as a technical exercise resulting in gender checklists and toolkits, for example, rather than profound institutional change (Johnsson-Latham and Win in AWID 2004: 5; 7). The practice of gender mainstreaming has often relied on networks of gender focal points who are non-gender experts with little time to devote to gender issues given their own unrelated job responsibilities (Lewis 2006). Also, the common practice of applying gender as a cross-cutting issue in reality denies it appropriate attention and funding: an explanation for the expression 'mainstreamed into oblivion' (Win in AWID 2004: 7). It has also been used and conceived as an alternative to, and justification for eliminating, targeted programming on women's rights and empowerment and dedicated gender posts (Rao and Kelleher 2005: 61; Win in AWID 2004: 7).

Gender equality refers to ‘the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys’ (UN Women 2013). According to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), ‘[e]quality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female’ (UN Women 2013).

Appendix B – Gender Framework

Gender programming in armed conflicts and natural disasters is broadly framed by a body of international legal and policy documents. The majority of these documents focus on conflict situations as opposed to natural disasters. Examination of these documents is beyond the purview of this briefing paper. Below is a chronological list of key documents. These documents draw attention to gender-based differential needs, circumstances and experiences in situations of crisis.

The development of this body of legal and policy documents has a long history that draws upon the foundation of the UN, women's rights movements, the UN Decade for Women (1975–1985), and world conferences on women, among others. It has been built—in many cases—through the tireless advocacy efforts of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the increasing exchange of information between NGOs and Security Council members, long and heated negotiations between UN Member States, dialogue between UN field offices and headquarters staff, and focused gender research and analysis by the NGO and academic communities. The experience of mass atrocities in Bosnia and Rwanda in the 1990s, as well as incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeeping forces that first received global attention in 2001, have drawn attention to the gender-specific vulnerabilities of women and men, and the attendant gaps in international policy. The unanimous adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security in 2000 was a landmark event in the evolution of this framework, as it helped to formalise an international agenda for integrating a gender perspective in peace and security matters. This gender framework continues to evolve today, evidenced by the recent adoption of Security Council Resolution 2106 (2013), and is increasingly supported by institutional gender architecture.

The documents listed in chronological order below are complemented and framed by International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law and, where relevant, their optional protocols.⁴⁰ Many are relevant to situations of conflict and disaster. These include: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966); International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966); the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979); the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the Optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (2000); and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (2000), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006).

Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), section E: Women and Armed Conflict (1995)

- The BPFA is a consensus document (not legally binding) that was drawn up by UN Member States at the Fourth World Conference on Women. It includes a focus on women and armed conflict as a critical area of concern. It does not include a similar focus on natural disasters, though it does reference them in passing. It established gender mainstreaming as the global strategy for achieving gender equality.

OCHA Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998)

- The Guiding Principles, while not legally binding, nonetheless serve as an international standard to guide governments, organisations and other actors in the provision of assistance and protection to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) (The Brookings Institution). The Principles broadly address gender-specific violence, the importance of ensuring the participation of internally displaced women, and the unique health needs of women.

Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (2000), Outcome document of the twenty-third Special Session of the General Assembly ‘Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-first Century’ (Beijing+5)

- The Beijing+5 outcome document provided more detailed focus on natural disasters, compared to the BPFA, and highlights the need for a gender perspective in disaster prevention, mitigation and recovery (para. 46).

Windhoek Declaration and Namibia Plan of Action on ‘Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations’ (2000)

- This declaration and plan of action was launched at a UN seminar. It is an important predecessor to SCR 1325 and was the first document to provide a detailed list of concrete requirements to mainstream gender in peacekeeping operations covering areas such as mandate, recruitment, training and monitoring, evaluation and accountability.

Security Council Resolution⁴¹ 1325 (2000)

- SCR 1325 addresses a myriad of issues relating to women’s participation and protection in situations of peace and security, including the adoption of a gender perspective in peace processes and peacekeeping, gender training, the importance of women as peacekeepers, their role as peacebuilders, and ending impunity for acts of sexual violence, to name a few issues.

UNHCR’s Commitments to Refugee Women (2001)

- These commitments by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) address participation, registration and documentation, food management and distribution, economic empowerment, and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (2002)

- The Rome Statute was the first international treaty to recognise rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced sterilisations, gender-based persecutions, trafficking of persons, sexual violence as crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide (Coalition for the ICC).

Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (2003)

- This Bulletin applies to all UN staff, including those deployed to conflict and disaster situations, and promulgates specific provisions prohibiting acts of sexual exploitation and abuse against beneficiaries of assistance.

Action to address gender based violence in emergencies: IASC Statement of Commitment (2004)

- This statement of commitment by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) aims to strengthen prevention, improve reporting and data collection, provide care for victims/survivors and address problems of SEA, among other actions.

Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters, UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction (2005)

- Though there is very limited gender focus in the document (Kottegoda), in the 'Priorities for Action: 2005–2015', the Hyogo Framework recommended the integration of a gender perspective in 'all disaster risk management policies, plans and decision-making processes, including those related to risk assessment, early warning, information management, and education and training' (UNISDR 2007: 4).

UNHCR Executive Committee (ExCom) Conclusion No. 105 (LVII), Women and Girls at Risk (2006)⁴²

- This document is binding on the UN Refugee Agency and guides their efforts regarding the identification of and response to women and girls at risk in situations of displacement.

United Nations system-wide policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women (2006)

- This policy covers the entire UN system and individual UN agencies, departments and funds, including those with mandates in conflict and disaster situations.

UN Security Council Resolution 1820 (2008)

- This resolution is the first in a series to focus on sexual violence as an issue of international peace and security. It requests the development of guidelines and strategies to protect civilians from sexual violence.

Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Policy Statement Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action (2008)

- Building on the 1999 Policy Statement for the Integration of a Gender Perspective in Humanitarian Assistance, this policy statement outlines action to be taken by the IASC to ensure the incorporation of gender equality at global and field levels.

UN Security Council Resolution 1888 (2009)

- > This resolution requests the appointment of a new Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) on Sexual Violence, introduces the concept of rapidly deployable teams of experts to respond to situations of sexual violence, establishes the role of women's protection advisers, and suggests the use of interactive meetings with local women and women's organisations to discuss their needs and concerns.

UN Security Council Resolution 1889 (2009)

- > This resolution is a significant exception to its protection-dominant predecessors. It is focused predominantly on improving women's participation and empowerment, the importance of consultation with civil society to understand women's needs and priorities, and resource mobilisation required to support that empowerment, and also requests a set of indicators to track implementation of SCR 1325.

UN Security Council Resolution 1960 (2010)

- > This resolution encourages the use of naming and shaming of perpetrators of sexual violence; requests the establishment of monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements on sexual violence; and calls for the development of a coordination and strategy plan relating to information collection.

DPKO/DFS Policy: Gender Equality in UN Peacekeeping Operations (2010)⁴³

- > This policy is directed at all categories of peacekeeping personnel and outlines the requirements for 'ensuring the equal participation of women, men, girls and boys in all peacekeeping activities' and is based on the strategy of gender mainstreaming (UNDPKO/DFS 2010a: 2).

UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) Policy on Gender Mainstreaming in Disaster Risk Reduction (2011)

- > This policy applies to the work of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and details actions required to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005).

UN Security Council Resolution 2106 (2013)

- > This resolution includes particular emphasis on issues of justice and combating impunity, the importance of assistance to survivors of sexual violence, and elaborates on commitments laid out in previous resolutions, such as the deployment of Women Protection Advisers.

Appendix C – Adopting a Gender Perspective: Practical Tools

Below is a sampling of practical tools developed by national governments, NGOs, UN bodies and other organisations that provide detailed guidance and tips for adopting a gender perspective on the ground in conflict and disaster settings.

Government

- > Australian Agency for International Development, 'Gender Guidelines: Peace-Building' (2006)
- > Australian Civil-Military Centre and UN Women, 'Side by Side – Women, Peace and Security', documentary (2012)
- > National action plans on women, peace and security (PeaceWomen Project)

Non-Government Organisations

- > National Rural Women's Coalition, 'Weather the Storm', a forthcoming manual and toolkit intended to help women assume leadership in disaster preparedness in remote communities in Australia (to be trialled in Victoria and Queensland)
- > International Rescue Committee, 'Caring for Child Survivors of Sexual Abuse: Guidelines for Health and Psychosocial Service Providers in Humanitarian Settings' (2012)
- > C Pincha, 'Gender Sensitive Disaster Management: A Toolkit for Practitioners', Oxfam America and NANBAN Trust (2008)
- > Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, 'Guidelines for Gender Sensitive Disaster Management: Practical Steps to Ensure Women's Needs are Met and Women's Human Rights are Respected and Protected during Disasters' (2006)
- > Women's Refugee Commission (formerly Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children), 'Masculinities: Male Roles and Male Involvement in the Promotion of Gender Equality – A Resource Packet' (2005)
- > International Alert and Women Waging Peace, Inclusive Security, Sustainable Peace: A Toolkit for Advocacy and Action (2004)

United Nations

- > UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), 'Working with Men and Boy Survivors of Sexual and Gender-based Violence in Forced Displacement', Need to Know Guidance #4 (2012)
- > UN Women, 'Gender-Responsive Early Warning: Overview and How-to Guide' (2012)

- > UN Departments of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)/Field Support (DFS), 'Guidelines: Integrating a Gender Perspective into the Work of the United Nations Military in Peacekeeping Operations' (2010)
- > United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 'Guide to Gender-Aware Post-Disaster Needs Assessment', Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery (2010)
- > UN Fund for Women (UNIFEM), DPKO, UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict, 'Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: An Analytical Inventory of Peacekeeping Practice' (2010)
- > UN DPKO/DFS, 'Guidelines for Integrating Gender Perspectives into the Work of United Nations Police in Peacekeeping Missions' (2008)
- > UNHCR, 'UNHCR Handbook for the Protection of Women and Girls' (2008)
- > World Health Organization (WHO), 'WHO Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Researching, Documenting and Monitoring Sexual Violence in Emergencies' (2007)
- > UN/International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, 'Gender Perspective: Working Together for Disaster Risk Reduction – Good Practices and Lessons Learned' (2007)
- > Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) 'Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action – Women, Girls, Boys and Men: Different Needs – Equal Opportunities' (2006)
- > UNHCR, 'UNHCR Standard Operating Procedures for Prevention of and Response to SGBV' (2006)
- > UN, 'Women, Gender and DDR', Module 5.10, Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (2006)
- > IASC, 'IASC Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings: Focusing on Prevention of and Response to Sexual Violence in Emergencies' (2005) (intended to be used alongside above IASC handbook)
- > UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 'Gender Equality: OCHA Tool Kit – Tools to support implementation of OCHA's policy on gender equality' (2005)
- > WHO, 'Gender Considerations in Disaster Assessment' (2005) (includes questions, and principles of good practice)
- > UNHCR, 'Sexual and Gender-based Violence against Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons – Guidelines for Prevention and Response' (2003)
- > IASC, 'Plan of Action on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises', (2002)
- > IASC, *Gender and Humanitarian Assistance Resource Kit*, CD ROM (2001)

Other Organisations

- > The World Bank, 'Gender and Disaster Risk Management: Guidance Notes' (8) (2012)
- > The Sphere Handbook: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (2011 edition) <http://www.spherehandbook.org>
- > Global Protection Cluster – Gender-based Violence Area of Responsibility Working Group, 'Handbook for Coordinating Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings' (2010)
- > International Federation of the Red Cross, 'A Practical Guide To Gender Sensitive Approaches To Disaster Management' (2010)
- > ICRC, 'Addressing the Needs of Women Affected by Armed Conflict: An ICRC Guidance Document' (2004)

Endnotes

1. Gender capacity advisers are deployed as part of the Gender Standby Capacity Project (GenCap), a joint initiative between the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the Norwegian Refugee Council. For more information, visit <http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/themes/gen-cap>.
2. ‘Gender synchronisation’ is a term and concept first developed by Greene and Levack (2010) and also explored more recently by Quay and Crawford (2012). It refers to the idea that gender programs—which are often developed separately for women and men—would benefit from being more intentionally synchronised or coordinated.
3. Research on the Black Saturday bushfires in Victoria for instance, indicates that although there were concerns about an increase in family violence, ‘In the urgency of disaster recovery’, it was not prioritised (Parkinson 2011:12).
4. In the context of conflict, gender issues are further complicated by their association with the UN Security Council’s women, peace and security agenda and entrenched decades-old political tensions and dissatisfaction relating to the exclusiveness and power of the 15-member Security Council in the context of the 193-member organisation.
5. The Australian National Action Plan provides a whole-of-government framework to guide the integration of a gender perspective across Australia’s peace and security efforts (Australian Government 2012). The Australian Civil-Military Centre’s contributions to the National Action Plan relate to a range of issues, in particular gender-based violence and wider protection matters, gender training of Australian civilian, police and military personnel, engagement with and support to Australian non-government organisations, and women’s participation.
6. According to the 2010 Asia-Pacific Disaster Report, those living in the region are ‘four times more likely to be affected by natural disasters than those living in Africa, and 25 times more likely than those living in Europe or North America’ (UN ESCAP and UNISDR 2010).
7. For instance, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom PeaceWomen Project website houses a large library of resources related to women, peace and security issues organised thematically (www.peacewomen.org), and the Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights houses a useful compendium of university syllabi for courses on gender, armed conflict, security and international relations (<http://genderandsecurity.umb.edu/syllabus.html>). Also the Gender and Disaster Network (<http://gdnonline.org>) is a useful source of information and analysis on the gender dimensions of disasters.
8. For example, the intersection of gender and other factors such as disability—which has profound consequences in disasters—is an area that is gaining increasing attention (UN Enable).
9. The lack of basic data is one critical factor. Data on sexual violence is ‘difficult to capture’ (Ward 2005: 178) for a number of reasons, including widespread underreporting, the limitations of data collection in insecure environments, definitional differences (Wood 2006: 318; Cohen et al.

2013: 11), and differences in data collection methodology (UNGA/SC 2010: 11). As a result, experts are in disagreement about whether and how rates of sexual violence have changed (Hoover Green et al. 2012).

10. Women have participated in the perpetration of sexual and gender-based violence in Rwanda (African Rights 1995a), in the Balkans (UN Security Council 1994: 59), in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Johnson et al. 2010: 553), in Darfur (Amnesty International 2004: 24) and in Sierra Leone (Human Rights Watch 2004: 2, 29), to name a few.
11. In the 2011–2012 Progress of the World’s Women report, UN Women reported that 115 countries guarantee women equal property rights and 93 countries guarantee them equal inheritance rights (2011: 24).
12. Although the term ‘prostitution’ is used throughout this paper, the author would like to point out that some organisations are rethinking the terminology and replacing the commonly used term ‘prostitution’ with ‘transactional sex’ as, they argue, it better captures what is happening in crisis environments.
13. In Afghanistan, decades of conflict have resulted in ‘one of the highest rates of widowhood in the world’ (Taneja 2011). Estimates from the UN Development Fund for Women (now UN Women) and the International Organization for Migration from 2006 suggest the number of widows in Afghanistan is between one and two million (referenced in Taneja 2011).
14. While sexual violence often dominates discussions of women’s experiences of conflict, it is important to recognise that civilian women are also subject to other forms of violence during conflict, including mass killings, abduction, detention, torture and forced labour (Cohen et al 2013: 7, 8).
15. There are many other available statistics on sexual violence against women and girls. For example: approximately 20,000 were raped during the fighting in Kosovo from 1998–1999 (Rehn and Sirleaf 2002: 16); one in four women reported sexual violence during the 1999 crisis in Timor-Leste compared to one in eight after the crisis (Hynes et al. 2004 cited in UNIFEM and DPKO 2010: 14); approximately 250,000 women and girls were victims of rape and other forms of sexual violence during the conflict in Sierra Leone from 1992–2002 (UNGA/SC 2012: 20); at least 250,000 women and girls were raped during the Rwandan genocide in 1994 (International Panel of Eminent Personalities to Investigate the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda and Surrounding Events, cited in Rehn and Sirleaf 2002: 9); and between 20,000 and 50,000 women were raped during the 1992–1995 war in the Balkans (Amnesty International 2009: 5).
16. Boys and young men are also victims of sexual assault and rape in camps, including in schools in exchange for grades or school materials (UNHCR and Centre for Refugee Research 2011: 16).
17. Sexual and gender-based violence is an umbrella term that covers physical, sexual and psychological violence, or the threat of such acts directed against women, girls, men and boys ‘because of their sex and/or their socially constructed gender roles’ (Women’s Caucus cited in Carpenter 2006: 83). It encompasses a wide range of acts within the home and in the wider

community, including rape, forced impregnation, forced abortion, trafficking, forced prostitution, sexual slavery, the intentional spread of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, sexual harassment, sexual mutilation, and humiliating treatment such as enforced public nudity (definition drawn from UNHCR 2003: 11; UNHCR 2008a: 7).

18. According to the UN Refugee Agency, '[r]efugee women are affected more than any other women's population group in the world' by violence against women (UNHCR 2008b).
19. Helpful readings include: Sivakumaran 2007; Refugee Law Project 2008; Grey and Shepherd 2012; Zawati 2007; Lewis 2010; Russell 2007; and Russell et al. 2011. Also, UNOCHA 2008b provides a helpful review of literature focused on male sexual violence.
20. In the view of Save the Children, 'boy survivors—and their very different experiences of sexual violence and its implications—are rarely considered at all' (2012: 2).
21. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2012 guidelines for 'Working with men and boy survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in forced displacement' provides a very detailed list of the physical, psychological, social, economic and legal consequences and needs of male sexual violence survivors (2012: 10).
22. Many countries in conflict or emerging from conflict are characterised by weak, poorly functioning justice systems. They often lack the capacity to investigate and prosecute crime (UNGA/SC 2013: 26), existing staff may have very limited understanding of gender issues, including sexual violence, as well as limited capacity for victim-oriented support, protection and reparations. With weak formal justice systems, communities may turn to traditional justice systems and customary law to handle cases of sexual violence. As examples from the Democratic Republic of the Congo suggest, this may result in a financial settlement to the victim's families, rather than any justice for the victims themselves (Selimovic et al. 2012: 47). Furthermore, for male victims of sexual violence, legal redress may be impossible where legal definitions of rape exclude them. For one detailed study of the issue of justice for sexual violence survivors see Amnesty International 2009.
23. In Sudan, Afghanistan and Somalia, rape victims have been blamed for the rape (UNGA/SC 2010: 8) and have even faced imprisonment and fines, as has been reported in the case of Darfur (UNHCR 2008a).
24. For more information on girls in fighting forces see McKay and Mazurana 2004 and Mazurana et al. 2002.
25. Selimovic et al. 2012 provides a detailed analysis of the obstacles to women's participation in formal peace processes in Armenia and Azerbaijan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Liberia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.
26. Regional and international organisations play an important role in providing capacity-building support and training, as well as political support to help women prepare for formal conflict resolution, peace negotiation and peacebuilding roles. The UN Development Fund for Women (now UN Women) is one important example (UNIFEM 2010).

27. The 2008 documentary *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* provides a detailed description of the efforts of Liberian women during the Liberian peace talks in Ghana (<http://www.praythediabacktohell.com>).
28. According to UN Women, only two of the 11 peace agreements signed in 2011 included 'specific provisions for women (2012b). For a detailed gender analysis of six peace agreements from the Asia Pacific region see Buchanan et al. 2012.
29. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 'between 30 and 70 percent of people who have lived in war zones bear the scars of post-traumatic stress disorder and depression' (Badkhen 2012; Vinck et al. 2007).
30. The Partners for Prevention initiative, a regional joint programme of the UN Development Programme, UN Population Fund, UN Women and UN Volunteers for Asia and the Pacific, has a range of resources that explore broader issues associated with men, masculinities and prevention of gender-based violence. See <http://www.partners4prevention.org/resources>
31. This backlash also has been seen in Mozambique when a human rights organisation tried to help empower women by providing them with cows or goats. 'When the women returned home with their newly acquired income, their husbands abandoned the family, alleging they were no longer needed to support the family' (Murdock and Zunguza 2010: 33).
32. Biological and physiological differences can add to women and girls' disadvantage. For instance, physical strength and speed can be hugely important to help 'withstand a disaster's physical impact' (Neumayer and Plümper 2007: 553).
33. The term 'flight of men' can also refer to men using relief aid for themselves and abandoning families. According to the World Health Organization, this type of flight has been reported in rural Bangladesh, the Caribbean, Brazil and the US (2002: 3).
34. Their own economic recovery efforts are made harder by the fact that the informal and agricultural economies—the two sectors often dominated by women—are also often the most impacted by disaster (PAHO 2002: 1).
35. Displaced women and girls in conflict environments are also often faced with limited access to female hygiene kits and face similar challenges to wash their sanitary cloths given widespread overcrowding and limited privacy in refugee and displaced persons camps (Brun 2010: 3). Access to sanitary material has a direct bearing on the mobility of women and girls, including their ability to attend school and markets (Brun 2010: 3; Bayisabe 2013).
36. According to an assessment by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), women who tried to seek emergency relief in public ran the risk of being accused of violating *purdah* (referenced in IDMC and NRC 2011: 9).
37. The absence of inheritance rights affects women in many types of situations beyond natural disasters and conflicts. Balinese women, for example, do not have inheritance rights, and

following the Bali bombing in 2002, some Balinese widows were left destitute when their dead husband's relatives came to reclaim their family home (Wright 2012).

38. According to the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, some men used the financial compensation from the disaster for alcohol and gambling (2006: 27, 29).
39. There is also a known tendency among some international personnel to be 'overly cautious' about offending local cultural sensibilities and norms (Anderlini 2010: 55). For example, according to one expert, an Iraqi woman who had already 'secured the permission of local elders and officials to provide employment to widows...met resistance from US military commanders in the region, who claimed that her work "was not culturally acceptable or sensitive"' (Anderlini 2010: 55).
40. The website of the Office of the UN Higher Commissioner for Human Rights includes a detailed list of international human rights instruments. See <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/>
41. Security Council resolutions have a particular legal standing that sets them apart from legally binding documents. According to Article 25 of the UN Charter, '[t]he Members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the present Charter' (UN 1945: article 25). Yet as Security Council documents, these resolutions are not consensus documents; they are the work of an exclusive group of UN Member States (Anderlini 2010: 52), which adds a layer of politics to the equation.
42. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees also passed Executive Committee Conclusion No. 107 (LVIII) on children at risk in 2007. See <http://www.unhcr.org/4717625c2.html>
43. This document replaces the 2005 UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations 'Under Secretary General's Policy Statement on Gender Mainstreaming' and is an updated version of the 2006 Policy Directive.

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