

Three Root Causes of Conflict

Root cause NO1: Patriarchy, Violent Masculinity and Gender Inequality Challenge: Gender equality

- Gender-based violence (GBV) is both a cause and a consequence of gender inequality and predicated on social and cultural conditions, which are highly gendered. These complex gendered causes and consequences exist differently in pre, during and post conflict settings.
- Sexual violence (in conflict and non-conflict) is a consequence of patriarchal values, stereotypes, exclusion and oppression. Attention must not be deviated from the importance of gender inequality (including lack of women's participation noted above), impunity or social injustice that are under State responsibility.
- Negative masculine identity imposed by militarism and the model of the soldier, patriarchal oppression is amplified during armed conflict, giving way to women being considered as spoils of war, violence being encouraged by superiors to go and rape during their time off to "relax" and even setting up a structure where women would be exploited as sexual slaves.
- Special rapporteur Rashida Manjoo noted the UK's "boys' club sexist culture" which leads to certain perceptions about women and girls and disproportionate impact of funding cuts on the provision of services to women and girls at risk of violence.

Root cause NO2: Armament Challenge: Disarmament

- To end SVC, stop selling and profiting from arms sales. Corporations and governments must be held to account for transferring arms to situations where there is a known risk they will be used to commit gender-based violence, including sexual violence.
- Six countries export over 75% of the world's weapons: US, Russia, Germany, China, France, and the United Kingdom (UK) and all have signed G-8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict
- The UK Government's 2010 Human Rights Annual Report identified 26 "countries of concern"; yet that same year, the UK approved arms export licenses to 16 of these countries, including Israel, Libya, Pakistan, Russia, and Saudi Arabia. In 2013, the UK parliamentary Committees on Arms Export Controls found that over 3,000 export licenses for arms and military equipment, worth more than £12 billion, had been approved for 27 states identified by the UK government's 2012 Annual Report as "countries of concern". These include Saudi Arabia, China, and Zimbabwe.
- Effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty GBV provision (article 7(4)). States must include in their national export regulations binding provisions on preventing armed gender-based violence, including sexual violence. They must make due diligence investigations open and transparent. The Arms Trade Treaty adopted in 2013 presents an opportunity to take action on disarming sexual violence through strong implementation of its gender criterion

Root cause NO3: Exclusion Challenge: Women and Gender Perspectives must be part of Peace Processes

- It is crucial that women and gender perspectives are included in peace processes, negotiations and post-conflict transition processes to prevent relapse of conflict.
- Preventing SVC is part of the overall WPS agenda. The 2015 Women, Peace and Security (WPS) High Level Review presents opportunity to increase women's meaningful participation and rights in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.
- Violence against women is rarely mentioned in ceasefire agreements or peace agreements. Even in the case of the Liberian Peace Agreement (2003) – in which women most explicitly played a key role – the issue of rape was not addressed. Studies of 300 peace agreements relating to 45 conflict situations since the end of the Cold War show that sexual violence or gender-based violence has been addressed in only 10 conflict situations and 18 agreements. Sexual violence has been identified as a ceasefire violation in only six ceasefire agreements.
- If States are serious about ending sexual violence, there must be political and financial investment and commitment in building women's engagement at all levels of decision-making, as called for in CEDAW, Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 2122.
- WILPF rejects the patronizing stereotyping and simplification that women are vulnerable victims in and of themselves, which divorces sexual violence from agency, equality and participation aspects of the Women, Peace and Security.

