



CU Amnesty International

The most common impact of conflict on women is the use of rape as a weapon of war. It is used to fracture, destabilise and demoralise the community as well as a tool to reshape the ethnic balance of a community.

Since 1998, rape has been recognised as a war crime and a crime against humanity - but it still persists.

'It is now more dangerous to be a woman than to be a soldier in modern conflict'

Other effects of rape in these contexts

- Women and children refugees and internally displaced populations targeted for exploitation, abuse and trafficking.
- Women become restricted to their homes as they are vulnerable to attack, yet it is women who are expected to try to keep family and home running as normally as possible for the children. Finding food and fuel, trying to respond to health and education needs all become impossible.
- There is extensive evidence that during conflict, levels of domestic and sexual violence among the community 'hosting' the conflict increases in both quantity and severity and these escalated levels remain high long after the conflict is over.
- All too often women are ignored in the post conflict reconstruction period with little or no representation on tribunals trying war crimes or working for reconciliation and neither they nor their issues represented in new constitutions.

The cases of Iraq and Afghanistan are instructive and particular as the plight of women was often cited as one of the concerns that were to justify military action, yet as time goes on we do not see this translated into reality.

Sexual violence in conflict zones at last recognised as a matter of international peace and security Following pressure from activists working on women, peace and security, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1820 on sexual violence in situations of armed conflict

Action: Justine Masika Bihamba and her family have been attacked because of her work as coordinator of a women's human rights organisation in the DRC.

In September 2007 soldiers forced their way into Justine's home while she was out, and tied up her six children at gunpoint. One of the soldiers assaulted her eldest daughter, then sexually assaulted and attempted to rape another daughter.

Although Justine and her children were able to identify the soldiers, they have not been arrested or brought to trial.

Visit: www.cuamnesty.org.uk/actions to send an email on Justine's behalf.