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# **Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: The United Nations' Response and Programmes**

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## Declaration

I, Siri Birkeland, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature.....*Siri Birkeland*.....

Date.....*Harstad, 02.06.2020*.....

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Any errors are mine alone.

## Abstract

Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) is a byproduct and tactic of war that has destructive effects on its victims, societies, and international, regional and national peace and security. The United Nations, as the world's largest inter-state organization, has increased its focus on the issues surrounding CRSV in the past twenty years, and has established several UN entities tasked with addressing CRSV at all levels. This thesis seeks to analyze the development of UN Security Council resolutions and its consecutive mandates addressing CRSV, and how the United Nations in practice addresses the prevention of and protection against CRSV. It will seek to provide an overview of the intricate bureaucracy of the UN system by presenting the main entities mandated by the Security Council to coordinate and address the issue of CRSV and show how these entities address CRSV on different levels to create a holistic and efficient response. By using a feminist IR theoretical lens, this thesis will investigate how the UN includes gender perspectives in their work, and how this pans out in practice. This feminist lens will be used to look at issues of emancipation, gender equality, gender discourses, gendered security, patriarchy and masculinity to construct a theoretical framework for the research and analysis.

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

CAR – Central African Republic

CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

CRSV – Conflict related sexual violence

DPA – UN Department of Political Affairs

DPO – Department of Peacekeeping Operations

DRC – Democratic Republic of the Congo

GBV – Gender-based violence

WHO – World Health Organization

ICC – International Criminal Court

IOM – International Organization for Migration

IR – International Relations

MINUSCA – United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

MINUSMA – United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

MONUSCO – United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

MPS – Men, Peace and Security

MPTF – Multi-Partner Trust Fund

OCHA – United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

OHCHR – Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

OP – Operational Clause

OSRSG-SVC – Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict

PBSO – United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office

PKO – Peacekeeping operation

POC – Protection of civilians

PP – Preambulatory clause

SG – Secretary General

SRSG-SVC – Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict

UN – United Nations

UNAIDS – Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNAMID – United Nations -African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund

UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNMISS – United Nations Mission in Sudan

UNODC – United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

UNSC - United Nations Security Council

UNSCR – United Nations Security Council resolution

WHO – World Health Organization

WPA – Women Protection Adviser

WPF – World Food Programme

WPS – Women, Peace and Security

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Sexual violence is a crime that occurs in all societies both in times of peace and conflict. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) sexual violence is “any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or act to traffic, or otherwise directed against a person’s sexuality, using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting” (Krug, 149). Sexual violence has a profound impact on victims physical and mental health. While causing physical injury, sexual violence is also associated with an increased risk of sexual and reproductive health issues that can be both immediate and long-term. Victims mental health can also be seriously impacted, and these traumas may be equally or more long-lasting than the physical injuries (Krug, 17-24). In addition to these impacts, sexual violence may also profoundly impact the social well-being of victims through stigmatization and ostracizing from families and/or groups. Sexual violence is most often used to express power and dominance over the person assaulted.

Although sexual violence exists in many forms, this thesis will focus on conflict-related sexual violence. Through resolution 1820 (2008), the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) determined that sexual violence “when used or commissioned as a tactic of war in order to deliberately target civilians, or as a part of a widespread or systematic attack against civilian populations” may be defined as conflict related sexual violence. Further, the term “conflict related sexual violence” refers to “rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, enforced sterilization, forced marriage and any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, girls, boys that is directly or indirectly linked to a conflict” (2018 Annual Report, 3). The term may also encompass trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation or violence, when committed in situations of conflict. Conflict related sexual violence (CRSV) affects both women, men, girls and boys, but women and girls are disproportionately affected. Throughout history CRSV has been used as a tool in conflicts, but the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have witnessed historically unprecedented levels of violence against non-combatants as well as a proportionate rise in international and local efforts to assist survivors of CRSV (Dewey and Germain, 49). Trend analysis done by the United Nations confirms that sexual violence continues to be part of the

broader strategy of conflict and war, and both non-State and State actors are reported to be perpetrators of CRSV.

2019 marked the 10-year anniversary of the establishment of the mandate and Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict of the United Nations, and 2020 marks the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 1325, which laid the foundation of what would become the Women, Peace and Security-agenda. United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres wrote in his 2019 report on CRSV that “over the past decade, there has been a paradigm shift in the understanding of the scourge of conflict-related sexual violence and its impact on international peace and security, the responses required to prevent such crimes and the multidimensional services needed by survivors.”.

My objective for this thesis is to understand how the United Nations works to address the issue of CRSV, through its resolutions, mandates, programs, missions and special offices since 2009, when the Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict of the United Nations was established by the UN Security Council. By analyzing resolutions, mandates and programs of work I wish to understand how the United Nations focuses its work on CRSV and how different UN entities' mandates differ in their work on CRSV. I wish to look at the development of the UN's work on CRSV since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1265 (1999), which was the first Security Council resolution on protection of civilians in armed conflict, through UNSC resolution 1888 from 2009 that gave mandate to the Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, until SC resolution 2467 (2019), that strengthens justice and accountability and calls for a survivor-centered approach in the prevention and response to CRSV. Further, I will be researching what UN entities work on addressing issues relating to CRSV both at different levels of the UN system, how UN peacekeeping operations address CRSV, and how CRSV affects women and men.

My research objectives and research questions are as follows:

1. To understand the development of the United Nation system's work on conflict-related sexual violence between 1999 and 2019.

**Research questions:**

- What laid the basis for the first Security Council resolution on protection of civilians in conflict in 1999?
- What does the mandate of the Office of the UN Special Representative on Sexual

Violence in Conflict entail and has this mandate been extended since 2009?

- What UN entities are working on CRSV, and are these entities working and coordinating efficiently?

2. To analyze how United Nations programs and operations are integrating CRSV in their work on the ground in conflict affected areas.

**Research questions**

- What UN entities are working with CRSV on the ground, and what different ways do these entities focus on aspects of CRSV?

- How does UN Peacekeeping Operations integrate CRSV in their operations and strategies?

- What guidelines are available for UN Peacekeeping Operations mandated in conflict affected areas to deal with CRSV and victims of CRSV?

3. To understand the gendered aspect of CRSV.

**Research questions**

- How does CRSV affect women, men, girls and boys differently and similarly?

- Does the UN use a gendered lens when working on issues related to CRSV?

- How does the Women, Peace and Security agenda of the United Nations affect the UN's work on CRSV?

The outline of the thesis is as follows; first, I will be presenting some background on UN entities and UNSC resolutions that are important to the UN's work on addressing CRSV. This is to create a context for the rest of the thesis. Second, my literature review will be presented to lay the theoretical basis for my research and analysis. I have chosen to look at the literature through a feminist IR theoretical lens, while including issues of emancipation, gender equality, gender discourses, gendered security, patriarchy and masculinity. Next, I will present my methodology and research strategy. I have chosen to present this in the order that I conducted my research as I felt this would present a more organized review of my research strategy and process. Next, I will present the findings of my research and my analysis of these findings. I have chosen to divide the analysis into three sub-chapters in accordance with my research objectives. Lastly, I will present my conclusion.

## Chapter 2: Background

This chapter will present the background necessary for the context of this thesis. It will focus on different UN entities mandated to work on CRSV and on the UN Security Council resolutions that have given CRSV the space and attention it now has in the UN system, and that has given mandates to UN entities and peacekeeping operations addressing CRSV.

### **The United Nations system and CRSV**

#### ***United Nations Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict***

2019 marked the 10-year anniversary of the establishment of the mandate of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC). The office was established by Security Council resolution 1888 in 2009. This resolution was one in a series of resolutions that recognized the destructive impact that sexual violence in conflict has on victims and communities and acknowledged that this crime undermines efforts to ensure peace and security and rebuild societies once a conflict has ended. The Office serves as a support of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, who serves as the UN's spokesperson and political advocate on CRSV ([UN.com/OSRSG-SVC](http://UN.com/OSRSG-SVC)). The mandate of the SRSG-SVC was established by the Security Council because the Council recognized “the widespread and systematic use of sexual violence as a weapon or tactic of war and the impunity enjoyed by perpetrators, evident through the limited prosecution and punishment of perpetrators” (OSRSG-SVC/Our mandate). Detailed in the mandate is the role of the SRSG-SVC; to provide coherent and strategic leadership, to effectively strengthen existing UN coordination mechanisms, and to engage in advocacy efforts with government representatives, all parties to armed conflicts and civil society. Prevention is the key word in respect to CRSV. Since the mandate was established, there has been a change from responding to sexual violence as any other tragic by-product of conflict to preventing sexual violence like any other threat to conflict prevention and sustainable peace.

The first Special Representative was Margot Wallström of Sweden, who established the office in 2010. Current Special Representative, Pramila Patten of Mauritius, introduced three new strategic priorities for the mandate during her period as SRSG; converting cultures of impunity into cultures of justice and accountability, fostering national ownership and leadership for

sustainable, survivor-centered response, and to address the root causes of CRSV. As mentioned earlier, prevention is key in addressing CRSV, and justice and accountability is an important part in preventing sexual violence from occurring. As the Office of the SRSB-SVC state on its webpage, prevention is possible because sexual violence is never an accident, and it is through consistent and effective prosecution that perpetrators will be deterred.

### ***United Nations Team of Experts on the Rule of Law/Sexual Violence in Conflict***

The work of the SRSB-SVC is supported by the United Nations Team of Experts on the Rule of Law/Sexual Violence in Conflict, co-led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPO), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (UN/OSRSG). The Team of Experts was created by the same Security Council resolution that gave mandate to the SRSB-SVC in 2009. The Team was created to assist national authorities in strengthening the rule of law, with the aim of ensuring criminal accountability for perpetrators of CRSV (UN Team of Experts, 2019). The Team is the only dedicated entity to provide this type of support on a global basis. Team members have expertise in different areas including criminal law, human rights, policing and law enforcement, rule of law reform, reparations, transnational justice, and gender equality and non-discrimination. The Team works with the aim of fostering national ownership and responsibility for addressing CRSV, and therefore work only with the consent and cooperation of host governments. To be able to hold individuals accountable for conflict related sexual violence, the Team works alongside counterparts on a national level to strengthen the rule of law institutions and enable them in the accountability work. The Team is focused on having a survivor-centered approach, which recognizes that survivors of CRSV are “women and girls as well as men and boys, and that survivors are often subject to stigmatization by their families and communities, which make survivors reluctant to report crimes and may also render them vulnerable to further violence (UN Team of Experts, 2019). The Team and its national counterparts’ areas of work are extensive to make sure it includes all stages of accountability and security: criminal investigations and prosecutions, military justice, legislative reform, protections of victims and witnesses, reparations for survivors, and security sector oversight.

### ***UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict***

UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict (UN Action) was formed in the aftermath of the International Symposium on Sexual Violence in Conflict and Beyond held in Brussel in

2006. After recognizing that efforts to address CRSV was impeded by uncoordinated prevention and response by the UN system, in 2007 the Secretary-General's Policy Committee endorsed UN Action as "a critical joint system-wide initiative to guide advocacy, knowledge-building, resource mobilization, and joint programming around CRSV, while also eliminating gaps and overlap in responses that resulted from the absence of a central coordination system" (UN Action, Background). UN Action is currently a network composed of 15 UN entities and its Chair is the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC). UN Action is a combined effort of humanitarian, political, peacekeeping and development actors within the network, and the strength of the network lies in its capacity to use the wide range of entities of the UN system to catalyze action to address CRSV through innovative advocacy and policy coordination. The network's three pillars of activity are; country level action, advocacy and knowledge building. In 2008, UN Action established the Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) in order to mobilize funds to support a wide range of activities, as well as the UN Action Secretariat, which is based in the Office of the SRSG-SVC.

The UN entities composing UN Action are: United Nations Department of Peacebuilding and Political Affairs (DPPA), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), Department of Peace Operations (DPO), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), World Health Organization (WHO), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

### **Security Council Resolutions**

Prior to the establishment of the OSRSG, the United Nations adopted several Security Council resolutions that focused on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, and these resolutions form the foundation to the resolutions that were later adopted on topics relating to sexual violence. As most experts consider the majority of General Assembly resolutions to be non-binding, but rather as "recommendations". Under Article 25 of the UN Charter, Member States are bound to carry out "decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the present

Charter”, and resolutions under chapter VII (action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression) are considered as binding (UN Charter, Chapter VII/Article 25). On the other hand, resolutions under Chapter VI (Pacific settlement of disputes) are not considered as binding under international law, as the Chapter has no enforcement mechanisms. Following are short descriptions of Security Council resolutions (UNSCR) that I believe form the important basis to the work done by the UN on CRSV today. These resolutions are not adopted under Chapter VII and are therefore not binding to Member States. I have chosen to include some of these resolutions in the background chapter because I believe they form a very important basis and mandate for the work the UN does on conflict-related violence, protection, prevention and participation.

### **1265 – 1999 (S/RES/1265)**

UNSCR 1265 is the first resolution to address the topic of the protection of civilians during armed conflict. At the time of the adoption of the resolution, then Secretary General Kofi Annan expressed concern in his reports on the situation in Africa that civilians accounted for the majority of victims in armed conflicts and had increasingly become targets of warring parties (Report of the SG on Africa, 1998, 11). In particular, children, women, refugees and internally displaced persons were particularly target of violence and conflict. In the resolution, the Security Council stresses the importance of addressing the issue driving armed conflict globally and the importance of protecting civilians through economic growth, eradication of poverty, sustainable development, national reconciliation, democracy, good governance, rule of law and respect for human rights. As in resolution 1261, this resolution expresses concern that vulnerable groups, particularly children, have specific rights and needs during armed conflict, and that during armed conflict there is little or no respect for international humanitarian law, human rights and refugee law.

### **1325 – 2000 (A/RES/1325)**

UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security recalls all the above resolutions, and acknowledges the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women and girls. It is an eighteen-point resolution that develops the Women, Peace and Security-agenda (WPS). It calls for the prosecution of crimes against women, increased protection of women and girls during war, the appointment of more women to UN peacekeeping operations and field missions and an increase in women’s participation in decision-making processes at the regional, national



and international level (Cohn, Kinsella, Gibbings, 130). It further calls for the adoption of a gender perspective to consider the special needs of women and girls during conflict, repatriation and resettlement, rehabilitation, reintegration, and post-conflict reconstruction. UNSCR 1325 is historical as it is the first formal and legal binding document from the Council that requires all parties to a conflict to prevent violation of women's rights, to support and make sure of women's participation in peace negotiations and in post-conflict reconstruction, and to protect women and girls from conflict related sexual violence. It was also the very first resolution to specifically mention the impact of conflict on women. The operational clauses in UNSCR 1325 call upon all member states to address the needs of women and girls in armed conflict, and the key recommendations of the resolution are (1) preventing sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict (2) including gender perspective in peace negotiations (3) protection of women and girls in refugee settings (4) considering gender in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (5) women's political participation (6) gender balancing at the UN (7) provide training for the UN and member states on the protection, rights, and needs of women and girls (8) Reporting of the Secretary-General on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution, and on gender mainstreaming in UN peacekeeping missions. The resolution has since its adoption become an organizing framework for the UN WPS-agenda. Within the UN system, the resolution has led to an increased attention to gender mainstreaming, meaning the inclusion of a gender perspective and assess a given policy's different impact on men and women. Perspectives from 1325 are included in most work that the UN does, but main programs and organs implementing the resolution are UN Women and the DPO (United States Peace Institute).

### **1820 – 2008 (A/RES/1820)**

UNSCR 1820 condemns the use of sexual violence as a tool of war and declares that “rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity or a constitutive act with respect to genocide” (A/RES/1820, OP4). It reinforces UNSCR 1325 from 2000, and falls under the umbrella of the Women, Peace and Security-agenda. The adoption of the resolution was historical as it was the first time the UN explicitly linked sexual violence as a tactic and tool of war with issues of WPS. That is also the reason the adoption of this resolution is so important to the work done on CRSV. Resolution 1820 highlights that sexual violence in conflict constitutes a war crime, and that appropriate measures must be taken by parties to a

conflict to protect civilians from sexual violence. It also calls for more deployment of women in peace operations, and the training of troops on preventing and responding to CRSV.

### **1888 – 2009 (A/RES/1888)**

As mentioned earlier in this background chapter, resolution 1888 established the United Nations Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. UNSCR 1888 specifically mandates UN peacekeeping missions to protect women and children from conflict-related sexual violence and requests the UN Secretary-General to appoint a special representative to lead and coordinate the UN's work on preventing CRSV on all levels, while engaging with the UN system as a whole, governments, parties to armed conflict and civil society (OP4). The resolution encourages the entities compromising UN Action, as well as other relevant parts of the UN system, to support the work of the Special Representative to “continue and enhance cooperation and information sharing among all relevant stakeholders in order to reinforce coordination and avoid overlap at the headquarters and country levels and improve system-wide response” (OP5). The resolution was also the first to call upon the Secretary-General to rapidly employ team of experts to conflicts of concern in terms of sexual violence to strengthen the rule of law on the ground. Other provisions of the resolution include retraining of peacekeepers, police and national forces in dealing with sexual violence, strengthening of monitoring and reporting on sexual violence, and urges further measures to increase the representation of women in mediation processes and decision-making processes with regard to conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

### **1960 – 2010 (A/RES/1960)**

UNSCR 1960 falls under the WPS-agenda, and its preambulatory clauses express concern at the slow progress made on the issue of CRSV and that such act continues to occur. As in preceding resolutions under the WPS-agenda, UNSCR 1960 notes that ending impunity is essential for a society to recover from conflict, and therefore all states are reminded to comply with international law and for leaders to demonstrate commitment to fight sexual violence, combat impunity and prosecute perpetrators of war crimes and genocide (PP6). The resolution was the first time the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to “include in his annual reports on CRSV detailed information on parties to armed conflict that are credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for acts of rape or other forms of sexual violence ... use this list as a basis for more focused United Nations engagement with those parties, including, as

appropriate, measures in accordance with the procedures of the relevant sanctions committees” (OP3). Further, the resolution encourages states who deploy peacekeeping staff to use scenario-based training materials provided by the Secretary-General, with the Security Council pledging to pay attention to CRSV in mandate renewals and authorizations. States are also encouraged to deploy a greater number of female military and police personnel to peacekeeping operations.

### **2106 – 2013 (A/RES/2106)**

UNSCR 2106 is the first time a resolution within the Women, Peace and Security-agenda acknowledges men and boys as part of the group affected by CRSV. PP6 of UNSCR 2106 states “sexual violence in armed conflict and post conflict situations disproportionately affects women and girls, as well as groups that are particularly vulnerable or may be specifically targeted, *while also affecting men and boys* and those secondarily traumatized as forces witnesses of sexual violence against family members”. This was an important shift in the discourse at the UN of who is affected by CRSV, and the literature review of this thesis will look closer into why this shift was so important.

### **2122 – 2013 (A/RES/2122)**

UNSCR 2122 puts stronger measures in place for women’s participation in all phases of conflict prevention, resolution and recovery. The responsibility of providing women with the opportunity of deployment and a place in decision-making processes on Member States, regional organizations and the UN itself. The UNSC expresses its intention to focus more on women’s leadership in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

### **2242 – 2015 (A/RES/2242)**

UNSCR 2242 integrates women, peace and security concerns across all country-specific situations on the Security Council’s agenda. The resolution expresses its intention to dedicate consultations on the topic of the implementations of the WPS-agenda, convene meetings of relevant Council experts, and invite civil society to brief during its country-specific considerations. UNSCR 2242 also urges the Secretary-General and UN entities to better integrate gender perspectives into its work to address accountability deficits. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs are urged to ensure the inclusion of tender analysis and technical gender expertise throughout all stages of mission planning, mandate development, implementation, review and mission drawdown. Further,

UNSCR 2242, on the issue of continued reports of sexual violence and exploitation by UN peacekeepers, urges police- and troop-contributing Member States to provide robust pre-deployment training, conduct investigations of uniformed personnel, and if appropriate, to prosecute.

#### **2467 – 2019 (A/RES/2467)**

UNSCR 2467 strengthen prevention through justice and accountability and calls for a survivor-centered approach in the prevention and response to CRSV. For the first time, the Security Council used a survivor-centered approach to address CRSV in all UN peace-making, peacekeeping and peace-building initiatives, including in the context of security and justice sector reform efforts and in negotiations of peace agreements and ceasefire verification mechanisms. UNSCR 2467 calls for comprehensive health care, including (but not explicitly referencing) reproductive health services for victims of CRSV, both female and male. The resolution also calls for a more holistic understanding of justice and accountability which includes the provision of reparations for survivors as well as livelihood support to rebuild lives. The inclusion of men and boys as victims of CRSV in OP 28 and 32 is the first since the adoption of UNSCR 2106 in 2013 that men and boys have been referenced in this context. It is the first time the protection and response to male victims, and the urging of challenging the cultural assumptions about male vulnerability, is included in a UNSC and WPS resolution.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review – a Feminist Perspective to the Discourse and Approach of the UN

The following chapter outlines the theoretical framework of this thesis. To construct the theoretical framework, I have used existing academic literature to act as a background and theoretical justification for my research. The selection of literature I have used is focused around the United Nations history of including women and women's issues on the organizations agenda, the Women, Peace and Security-agenda (WPS) and on intentions vs. reality when it comes to including women in the UNs work and mandates. I have chosen to look at this literature through a feminist IR theoretical lens while seeking to explain how the UN includes gender perspectives in their work, and how this pans out in practice. Although the focus of this thesis on conflict-related sexual violence, the literature review will focus on a wider lens of female protection, emancipation and participation to lay the theoretical basis and framework for the analysis later on in the thesis.

I will dedicate the first sub-chapter to use a feminist theoretical lens to look at how women's issues became increasingly important in international relations and to the UNs work the past few decades. Further it will look at the difference between sex and gender, and why the discourse around gender is so important to feminist IR theory. Second, I will look at the discourse at the UN and in UN resolutions, mandates and peacekeeping operations (PKOs) regarding gender, equality and participation. This also includes looking into intention vs. reality when it comes to implementation of the many resolutions and agendas that include women's and gendered issues at the UN. When using a feminist IR frame, it is logical to also take into account patriarchy and masculinity and its relation to and effect on the stance women's issues have on the UNs agenda. The third sub-chapter will be linked to the preceding chapter by looking at feminism vs. patriarchy through a gendered lens. In the discourse on gender, the meaning of gender is often directly linked to women, but can we really have a complete discussion on women's issues such as oppression, emancipation and participation if we do not include the men? This third chapter will also look at human security and how normative understandings of gender tells a skewed version of the story.

## Feminist International Relations Theory – Where are the Women?

As seen in the background chapter, women's issues have a young history in international politics and at the UN. Feminist international relations theory has an even younger history as it arose in the 1980s, stemming from a disciplinary dissatisfaction with the conventional and dominant theories and methods of IR (Kinsella, 1994). Rooted in feminism, which had its first wave in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, early feminist IR theorists and scholars were intent on “identifying and explaining how the essential theories, concepts, and case studies of International Relations were, at the very least, partial, biased, and limited because they reflected only (certain) men's experiences, roles, and status” (Kinsella, 1994). Where were the women not only in IR theory, but also in the political and public sphere, institutions of state and global governance? As with most IR theories, feminist IR theorists approach questions of international relations, politics, society and security with different lenses. J. Ann Tickner offers an overview of the different views within feminist IR theory in her book *“Feminism and International Relations – Conversations about the Past, Present and Future”*. While emphasizing that IR feminists share an interest in gender emancipation, they however approach the process towards emancipation differently. Liberal feminist theorists believe that gender equality can be achieved by obstacles that have denied women the same rights as men, integrating women into global politics at all levels. The liberal approach trying to provide women with equal opportunities as men within the political, social, educational, economic, and professional structure is frequently questioned by other feminist theorists, as many believe these structures were created by men for men. They believe that this is inadequate in ending gender subordination, and that it also reified masculine models of citizenship and political processes. We will get back to this argument later in the chapter when looking closer at the UN system and PKOs. Constructivist feminists focus on ideas on the ways global politics has shaped gender, “seeing gender subordination as the dynamic result of social processes and suggest that, therefore, changing norms about masculinity and femininity is essential to redressing it” (Tickner & Sjoberg, 6). Postcolonial feminists focus on the nature of relations of domination and subordination under imperialism, and imperialistic moves that can disturb the relationship between western feminism and non-western women. In particular, gender subordinations in cultural and sociopolitical context are investigated, rather than relying on some universal understanding of women's needs. This view on a universal understanding of women's needs is especially interesting to look closer into when discussing the UN programs and mandates, as the UN often have an overreaching “one size fits all”-approach to addressing issues and has been critiqued for not focusing enough on telling more nuanced stories of women's experiences and needs. I will get back to this critique later.

It is important to note the emphasis feminist IR scholars put on the difference between gender and sex. “Sex” is seen as a biological maleness or femaleness whereas “gender” refer to personality traits and conceptions of self that people are expected to have on the basis of their sex (Tickner & Sjoberg, 4). Gender is by many scholars seen as a social construction, where many gendered assumptions are based off social order and expectation. C. Cohn explains gender as “A way of categorizing, ordering, and symbolizing power, of hierarchically structuring relationships among different categories of people, and different human activities symbolically associated with masculinity or femininity” (Cohn, 14). Peterson further points out that the typical binary oppositions when it comes to gender, where “the primary and superior one (i.e. man) defines the desired norm (i.e. masculinity) and the secondary inferior one (i.e. woman) functions as the failure of the norm (i.e. femininity), structure most political, social, and economic meanings. Peterson argues that the opposition is also hierarchical – what we associate with masculinity, with characteristics such as strength, rationality, protector and independence, is encoded as privileged and positive, while femininity, with characteristics such as emotional, weakness, interdependence and in need for protection, is encoded as subordinate and negative (Peterson, 14). Kinsella further explains Peterson’s point by writing that feminists argue that the hierarchical binaries functions as fixed and ahistorical, and that they are presumed to be self-evident and universal (Kinsella 190). Tickner has a similar argument, where she explains that masculinities and femininities have different hierarchical power implications. She explains that “feminist theorists have talked about an ideal-typical masculinity sitting on top of the hierarchy of gender tropes, contrasted at the other end of the spectrum to a subordinated femininity that is a necessary “other” to the powerful, hegemonic masculinity” (Tickner & Sjoberg, 4). I will get back to the UN’s use (or misuse) of the concept of and approach to gender in their work, including in resolutions, mandates and discourses.

### Women’s Voices at the UN – a Feminist Struggle?

No more than 50 years ago did women’s issues really start gaining attention in international relations. The International Women’s Year Conference in 1975 in Mexico City was the first international conference held by the United Nations that had the sole focus on women’s issues and concerns and was also the most visible origin of women’s global organizing in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a result of the conference, the UN declared 1976 – 1985 as the United Nations Decade for Women, putting women’s issues on the international agenda. The origin of the idea

for the conference did not come from the UN-system itself but was put forward by representatives of international women's organizations. The proposal was put before the UN Commission of the Status of Women and was approved as both the Commission's work and the women's rights movements had attracted public attention around the world (Fraser, 20-21). As the recommendation of the Commission to organize the conference was adopted by the General Assembly in 1972, it still faced opposition by several delegates, Saudi Arabia being the most vocal in the UN Third Committee. Princess Ashraf Pahlavi of Iran spoke in opposition to the Saudi delegate and stated that "male imperialism --- has paralyzed an important part of society in both developed and developing countries" and called on women to stop being "a colony of man" (Fraser, 21). As Kinsella writes, the 1975 Conference "encouraged and legitimized research and action on the experiences, roles, and status of women globally, highlighting not only the stark absence of attention to women, but also the magnitude of women's contributions. Research on women's lives and opportunities signaled the validity and importance of women's issues" (Kinsella, 192).

When feminist IR theory first arose, theorists advocated at a minimum for including women in the field of international relations. However, this was done with the recognition that to do so was not only to expand the scope of the field, but also to radically alter its predicates (Kinsella, 194). The introduction of feminist IR theory would demand a critical analysis of the presuppositions and presumptions of the existing discipline and IR theories, and the initial efforts were both as simultaneously deconstructive, in their critique of the state of the field, and reconstructive, in introducing new methods and theories for understanding international politics (Peterson, 1992). This deconstructive/reconstructive work is most obvious in the feminist IR theorists' analysis of the concept and practice of the state. Liberal feminist theorists focus on changing institutions to correct gender inequality by increasing the representation of women in positions of power and influence within institutions of governance. Linked to this, they also highlight the need to change laws to allow and facilitate for women's participation, which in turn they believe will correct the distribution of power between the sexes (Kinsella, 196). Tickner writes that "many other IR feminisms question an approach that tries to provide women equal opportunities within the political, social, economic, educational, and professional structures created by men for men; they claim that it is not only inadequate to the task of ending gender subordination, but that it is misguided because it reifies masculine models of citizenship and political process" (Tickner & Sjoberg, 6). Even in societies that are considered well



developed and committed to giving women equal rights, gender inequalities still exist, and can be seen multiple ways at all levels of society.

This view is backed by Randi Solhjell, who writes that gender perspectives and equality is often translated into meaning more women in existing institutions instead of challenging the masculine discourses in precisely these systems. She paints a picture of this by saying “it maintains and legitimizes these structures by taking a handful of women and stirring” so that the institutions are considered as more equal and less male-dominated simply because women are represented, and the percentage of female participation has increased (Solhjell, 212). Furthermore, Solhjell brings up gender discourses at the UN and how she sees these as somewhat essentialists. The essentialist discourse means that women are being generalized and that *all* women share the same experiences and stories. It is the women’s nature and not society or experiences that are the determining factor for a special, female vulnerability (Solhjell, 212). There is a discourse both in Resolution 1325 and in mandates of peacekeeping operations that women are either the victim in need of saving or a pacifist (when being a part of peace talks), and this supports the argument around an essentialist discourse within the UN. What is not taken into account is that women can be so much more than a victim in a conflict-related situation, they can be political actors, carry arms, propel conflicts, negotiate peace agreements, or operate as peace activists etc. Women are not portrayed with any sort of nuance in resolutions before 1325, when it was acknowledged that women are important actors in war and peace. Security Council Resolutions 1325 established an international language for gendered perspectives to be taken seriously in peace and security questions, and it has been said to have challenged male dominated and masculine oriented structures, However, several theorists claim that the resolution has a limited political agenda, where the focus is solely on conflict-related sexual violence (women as victims) and women in leader positions (elitist women).

UN peacekeeping operations have been and still are male dominated. On average 5% of uniformed staff (military or police) and 29% of civilian staff working in PKOs and special political missions are women (UN DPO statistics, 2019). Six out of 16 ongoing operations led by DPO are led by women, one deputy head of a UN-operation, and only one female force commander (Tryggestad, 279). 9 out of the 15 largest PKOs established today all have specific POC (protection of civilians) mandates, notably women and girls (Vermeij & Holen, 2). As the Women, Peace and Security-agenda has several dimensions, including protection of women against CRSV, the central dimension of the framework is still participation. Tryggestad writes

that “women and women’s interests are to be included in *all* work of international peace and security, at *all* levels (global, regional and national), and women’s contributions to conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace building will and must be recognized” (Tryggestad, 277). The UN, experts, scholars and more all agree that women’s meaningful participation in conflict prevention and peacekeeping will make missions more effective and efficient. Now this sounds great in theory, but research has shown that protection, participation and representation work very different in practice. Although numbers of female participation are higher than before the adoption of 1325, the numbers are nowhere close to the initial ambitions. Kirby and Sheperd argues that “the mere presence of women on any given mission is not as important as what positions they hold, how their presence alters gender practices, whether a gender perspective is integral to mission activities, and how these elements interact with the wider context of conflict and its resolution” (2016, 375). Research shows that women are more likely to be deployed to political or observer missions than to situations that are most in need of gender expertise, such as significant conflict. Liberal feminist IR theorists see gender mainstreaming, which is a prerequisite for all UN PKOs, as a tool for women’s equal participation. Solhjell, on the other hand, argues that in practice this gender mainstreaming works more like a “difference policy”, where women are given “special protection” in an otherwise male-dominated and masculine security politics. In PKOs gender mainstreaming efforts are typically put into practice by establishing gender units and to hiring gender advisors. In fact, one of the UN’s indicators for tracking progress on parts of resolution 1325 is to measure the percentage of PKOs that have gender advisors and units (Solhjell, 222). It is interesting to note that according to the UN in 2011, all UN PKOs have “gendered components”, but it is, however, not clear what “gendered components” mean or how to measure its effect on the ground (Solhjell & Gjelsvik, 14). Despite the efforts to include gendered components in UN PKOs, the share of women in police and military forces remain small. As these forces are generally viewed as masculine structures, feminist IR theorists debate how women are to be included in these male dominated structures and if the inclusion really challenges gendered discourses.

### Gendered Discourses – Have we Forgotten About the Men?

As discussed above, gender discourses at the UN have received critique from feminist IR theorists, and one of these critiques revolve around the one-sided story of gender only entailing women. Cohn states that “for many policymakers in international institutions ... “gender” is

often little more than a more “neutral-sounding” word for women; when they refer to “gender issues” they really mean those things they think of as “women’s issues”” (Cohn, 2013, 3). This unbalanced discourse and focus around gender is especially troublesome when speaking about security, human security and PKOs. Solhjell argues that UN PKOs mix sex and gender in their mandates and practices, and as we have seen earlier in the chapter, women are often referred to as vulnerable, biologically weaker, more frequently victims of gender-based violence(GBV), and in need for (masculine) protection (Solhjell, 214). On the other side men are referred to as saviors, strong, in power, and possible perpetrators. Masculine ideals and norms are often favored in military operations, including PKOs.

When speaking about security in this context of Women, Peace and Security-agenda, IR theorists and others often speak of gendered security. Resolution 1325 initiated debates on gender and security, but because gender is often linked to meaning women at the UN, the idea has become that including more women in operations and on the ground will automatically improve security and the possibilities of peace, and break down masculine structures and norms (Solhjell, 215). Gendered security is also understood to mean women’s special need for protection, and the above understandings of gendered security fails to consider men and women’s relations and power balance, and that men’s lives, and experiences must be included and understood in relations to gendered security. In this connection, something called the Men, Peace and Security (MPS) agenda has been suggested as an enhancement of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. The MPS-agenda is seen as complimentary to the WPS-agenda through “recognizing the other side of gender” (Kirby & Sheperd, 386), and has been offered as a way to both achieve and extend the original WPS-agenda. An element in the MPS-agenda is to make men partners in ending violence against women. UN Women’s campaign #HeForShe aimed to engage men in gender equality, and there is also an increasing focus on education and training for boys and men on gender disparities for them to become partners towards changing gender norms and inequalities in society. This is for example recommended in the Beijing+5 Summit outcome document, where it states that “Policy-making processes require the partnership of women and men at all levels. Men and boys should also be actively involved and encouraged in all efforts to achieve the goals of the Platform for Action and its implementations” (A/RES/S-23/3, 19). The outcome document further states that the international community need to “develop policies and implement programmes, particularly for men and boys, on changing stereotypical attitudes and behaviors concerning gender roles and responsibilities ...” (A/RES/S-23/3, 31). This language creates a discourse of men and boys as

allies and partners when talking about gender equality and is a positive discourse that there should be more focus on.

A more recent side to the MPS-agenda is an increased emphasis on violence and sexual violence experience *by* men. Men are not just beneficiaries of patriarchal gender norms, and stereotypical norms around gender promote behaviors that make men vulnerable in certain contexts (Kirby & Sheperd, 387). UNSCR 1325 has been contributing in shaping concepts of women and gender, where it is *only* women who mark, represent or have gender (Cohn, Kinsella, Gibbings, 136). UNSCR 2106, adopted as a part of the WPS-agenda in June 2013, was an important shift in regard to how the UN and the international community speaks about gender, particularly when it comes to CRSV. For the first time, a resolution within the Women, Peace and Security-agenda acknowledged that men and boys should be included in the discussion. Preambulatory clause six (PP6) of UNSCR 2106 states “sexual violence in armed conflict and post conflict situations disproportionately affects women and girls, as well as groups that are particularly vulnerable or may be specifically targeted, *while also affecting men and boys* and those secondarily traumatized as forces witnesses of sexual violence against family members” (UN, 2013). Although the mention of men and boys is important, and the awareness of men and boys as an “emerging” victim group could be a breakthrough for increasing visibility, the context in which it is mentioned can be interpreted as trying to minimize the significance of CRSV with male victims and/or the effect it has on men and boys. Men and boys are seen as secondary victims, where women and girls are “disproportionately” affected by sexual violence. In UNSCR 2106, men and boys are only mentioned twice in the PP’s; as victims (PP6) and in an instrumental capacity, whose involvement is needed for prevention of violence against women (PP5). Ellen A. P. Gorris argues that this framing “reinforces traditional stereotyping, were men are conceptualized as aggressive perpetrators, and women as non-violent victims: the traditional notions of hegemonic masculinity and heterosexuality” (Gorris, 418). The discourse of women being disproportionately affected by sexual violence is directly connected to the claim that CRSV is broadly under-reported. Gorris, while praising the contribution of the international women’s rights movement in bringing attention and legislation to sexual violence, states that this sole focus on gathering data on female victims has made male victims “invisible through under-reporting and the limitations of national and international legal framework” (Gorris, 413). This under-reporting may be due to several factors; inaccurate reporting by aid workers, CRSV being reported and prosecuted as other offenses, men not seeking medical help due to stigma, and failures in national laws. In some instances, national law criminalizes acts of sexual

violence or rape for female victims but leave male victims subject to prosecution for homosexual relations when the perpetrator is of the same sex. In his annual report on CRSV in 2018, Secretary General Antonio Guterres writes that men and boys face reporting barriers due to social stigma relating to perceived emasculation, that there are often no legal provisions regarding the rape of men, and that nations' laws may impede reporting in fear of prosecution. The SG further puts forth a recommendation "that there be more consistent monitoring and analysis of and reporting of sexual violence against men and boys ... as well as the review of national legislation to protect male victims; and the strengthening of policies that offer appropriate responses to male victims and challenge deeply entrenched cultural assumptions about male vulnerability to such violence" (2018 CRSV Report of the Secretary General, 5,53 (19, 138)). The inclusion of male victims in the SG's report is a positive step towards increasing the attention and reporting on sexual violence committed against men and boys, but this nonetheless counts for only a minor part of the SG's report as the remainder focuses on female victims.

The prohibition on gender-based violence has been codified in the context of the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and is thus only applicable to women (CEDAW, Article 1). Without taking away from the importance of CEDAW and its focus on GBV, Lara Stemple argues that this singular codification of GBV has conflated the terms "sexual violence", "gender-based violence" and "violence against women", and that these terms are now being used interchangeably in UN legal and policy documents (Stemple, 618-620). This practice incites the discourse and view that sexual violence and gender-based violence only refers to female victimization. As follows, male victims remain invisible, under-researched and under-addressed (Gorris, 415). Going back to masculine structures and norms, as discussed earlier, men often face social, cultural, political and judicial stigmatization in connection to sexual violence. Sexual violence directed towards men often intends to strip men of their "masculine" status as the protector, the one in power and as a soldier, and the "feminization" or "homosexualization" of men reduces to a subordinate status in society, conserving the hegemony of a heterosexual and masculine society (Sivakumaran, 270-274). Due to stigmatization, research has shown that male victims have a tendency to recount their stories of sexual violence using nondescript words such as "torture" and "abuse" (Gorris, 415). This not only suppresses the sexual aspect of their abuse, but it also contributes to under-reporting as the abuse is categorized differently. Even though UNSCR 1325 and its succeeding resolution have successfully drawn greater attention and resources to

CRSV, Dolan argues that these resolutions have failed at comprehensively responding to and preventing the phenomenon of CRSV due to a “systematic reluctance to confront the reality of CRSV against men and boys, coupled with an active complicity in silencing that reality in what effectively reverted to a patriarchal discourse dressed up in feminine clothing” (Dolan, 83). These resolutions under the WPS-agenda, especially resolution 2106, have made advances in how stakeholders and actors operate within the UN system, but Dolan pushes his argument further by saying that these resolutions are the result of multiple inputs, negotiations, and political maneuvering and sensitivity, these resolutions have been watered out and are reflective only of the lowest common denominator rather than progressive thinking. This is the “downside” of an organization such as the UN, where all Member States have access to and a say in negotiations, and where compromise is a given to make sure resolutions are adopted (preferably by consensus).

## Chapter 4: Methodology

This chapter will present and discuss the use of methodology in this thesis. Methodology and the use of it is the basis of all research projects, and the choices a researcher makes when it comes to methodology is important for the planning, execution and analysis of any research. Throughout my research process I have used the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of Alan Bryman's book "Social Research Methods" as my guide into the vast universe of methodology, as this book is extensive, trusted in the field of social and political research, and explains the different approaches in methodology in a way that is fairly easy to understand. As Bryman writes in his book, there are some main elements that are included in most research projects, but these elements are not necessarily sequenced in a set way for all researchers (Bryman, 6). Below I have presented these elements in the sequence that I conducted my research.

My research objectives and research questions are as follows:

1. To understand the development of the United Nation system's work on conflict-related sexual violence between 1999 and 2019.

**Research questions:**

- What laid the basis for the first Security Council resolution on protection of civilians in conflict in 1999?
- What does the mandate of the Office of the UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict entail and has this mandate been extended since 2009?
- What UN entities are working on CRSV, and are these entities working and coordinating efficiently?

2. To analyze how United Nations programs and operations are integrating CRSV in their work on the ground in conflict affected areas.

**Research questions**

- What UN entities are working with CRSV on the ground, and what different ways do these entities focus on aspects of CRSV?
- How does UN Peacekeeping Operations integrate CRSV in their operations and strategies?
- What guidelines are available for UN Peacekeeping Operations mandated in conflict affected areas to deal with CRSV and victims of CRSV?

3. To understand the gendered aspect of CRSV.

**Research questions**

- How does CRSV affect women, men, girls and boys differently and similarly?
- Does the UN use a gendered lens when working on issues related to CRSV?
- How does the Women, Peace and Security agenda of the United Nations affect the UN's work on CRSV?

This spring and research process did not turn out as expected. The global spread of COVID-19 changed pretty much all plans I had for my research and data collection. This forced me to reassess my plans and try to adapt to a new everyday life, with all the restrictions that followed. Throughout this chapter I hope to explain why I made the choices I made throughout this thesis, all with the best possible result in mind.

### Research Objectives and Questions

When I started my research, I knew I wanted to write about conflict-related sexual violence, and I believed that focusing on the United Nations and its work in this field would be great as I had just spent a year working at the Norwegian Permanent Mission to the UN in New York and had made several contacts at the UN Headquarter. After doing some reading on the UN's work on CRSV I decided on my research objectives and questions, making sure they were focused and narrow enough to guide my research. Bryman writes that while doing research the research questions are a guide for the literature search and review, but the literature review may also prompt the researcher to change or add new research questions (Bryman, 9). This was the case for me. After doing a more generalized research for a while I realized that my fourth research objective stated in my research proposal "To investigate if CRSV differs from conflict to conflict, and if geographical location and context of a conflict affects types of CRSV used", paired with two research questions "Are there differences in the use of CRSV in the ongoing conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Syria and Myanmar, and why?" and "How are UN programs and operations addressing the cases of CRSV in these states?", would remove some of the focus of the thesis. The objective and questions could virtually form the basis for a completely separate thesis, and therefore I decided to remove this part from my further research and thesis.

### Research Strategy and Design

After defining my research objectives and questions, the next task was to find a research strategy. I found that doing a qualitative study would fit my research objectives and questions



better, as qualitative research places an emphasis on generating a theory from research rather than testing a theory by doing research and emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data (Bryman, 374). A qualitative research model uses interviews, observation and texts and documents, among other methods, in the collection and analysis of data. This approach was a good fit for my research project as I wished to interview experts and diplomats working on CRSV and to observe meetings on the topic at the UN. In his chapter on qualitative research, Bryman presents a model that outlines the main steps of qualitative research:

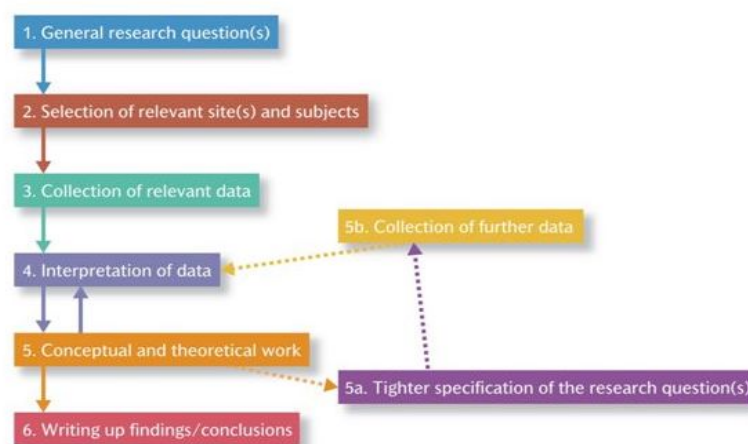


Figure 17.1  
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Bryman: *Social Research Methods*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition

Bryman’s model is a useful guideline to how a research process can be planned and executed, and it helped me in planning my work. These six steps will be revisited throughout the methodology chapter as I go through my research process. Bryman writes that qualitative research tends to view social life in terms of process, and that “one of the main ways is that there is often a concern to show how events and patterns unfold over time” (Bryman, 395). Bryman continues to explain that many qualitative researchers immerse themselves into social settings over longer periods of time, sometimes years, where they are able to observe changes over time. For a research project such as this master thesis, such an immersion in a social setting is not possible, but my research still focuses on changes in the way the UN works on CRSV over two decades.

When it comes to the relationship between theory and research I decided that an inductive approach would work best with a qualitative research project. Bryman writes that “with an inductive stance, theory is the outcome of research which involves drawing generalizable interference out of observations” (Bryman, 23), which is what my research objectives and questions are trying to do.

This thesis uses a case study design. A case study entails the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case, and “case study research is concerned with the particular nature of the case in question” (Bryman, 60). For this research, the “case” is the United Nations, and in a case study the case is an object of interest in its own right, that the researcher tries to provide an in-depth examination of. In the case of the UN and its work on CRSV, I see this as what Bryman explains as an “extreme or unique case” (Bryman, 62), as the UN has a unique organizational structure and mandate to reach out globally. The UN is the largest organization working on CRSV and coordinates and cooperates with a vast number of other organizations and actors all over the globe, and therefore it is an interesting case study to see if such a large and bureaucratic organization can really manage to implement its goals on the ground. UN resolutions and mandates are unique, especially when it comes to Security Council resolutions, in that they are voted on by only 15 members of the UN but is often based on a member-wide consensus.

## Literature Review

An important part of any master thesis is the literature review. Bryman writes that “The aim of a literature review is to establish what is already known about the topic and to frame the review in such a way that it can act as a background and justification for your investigation” (Bryman, 90). In the case of this thesis, I have conducted a narrative literature review, which seeks to examine existing literature, research and theory relating to the subject of a thesis to create a frame for a data collection and analysis.

In the first round of searching for literature I used my university’s online library and Google Scholar to look up scholarly articles. Using keywords such as “UN”, “conflict-related sexual violence”, “UN resolutions and mandates”, “UN peacekeeping operations” and so on, I found countless articles, books and scholarly articles containing these key words and I had to take the time to comb through a lot of material to find literature I could use. Many scholarly articles and excerpts from books have a summary or presentation of the content in the beginning so the

reader can quickly see if this is something useful for their literature review. This is helpful in saving time in an already time-consuming process. But many scholarly articles I found didn't have these summaries, and I experienced multiple times to have read half of a long article with a headline that sounded fitting to my thesis and discovering that it wasn't much use to me after all. This is a frustrating but necessary part of the research process. What I find with using platforms such as Google Scholar is that one can access excerpts of books and excellent scholarly material, and the platform also shows you how many has cited the article which can point to the trustworthiness of the literature. It also shows you related articles, which led me to several articles that I ended up using. Of course, like Bryman warns about in his chapter on literature reviews, one has to be careful and mindful of sources found online, as search engines like Google do not evaluate the sources, it simply finds it for you.

It is difficult when finding sources for a literature review to make sure one is comprehensive of the coverage of the literature without being overwhelmed by the sheer volume of information and literature that is available. For my literature review I have tried to find literature that looks at the UN from all sides, and I've also tried finding literature that is skeptical or negative to the UNs work to create a balanced background. I have tried not to favor any points of view or authors, although it is almost impossible to be completely objective. I have tried to draw comparisons between different literature to create a comprehensive background and justification for my research project, and I have also divided the review into sub-themes to make it more orderly both for the reader of the thesis and for myself during the research process. Where I have felt it being appropriate, I have included my own criticism of the literature, like Bryman encourages in his chapter (Bryman, 98). For me, this is a way to show that I have read and understood the literature, and also that I can see the literature's contribution to my background and to the field.

My process for finding and analyzing literature for my literature review was as follows: first I search for literature online, in library databases and at my local library. I then use the search function for electronic documents to make sure my keywords are included in the article, I eventually found that this was something that could save me from reading material that eventually would prove not useful for me. Further I download the online document in a PDF-format to read on my computer, and the PDF-format allows me to highlight in the document. I have used color coded highlights for different themes, which I will get back to later. In a notebook I write keywords or notes and page numbers for things that I find important in the

literature, or that I want to further research. After finishing reading, I write a short summary (if there isn't already one) of the literature I just read so that it is easier for me to later come back and remember what the article or excerpt was on without having to go back and read it all again. This process worked very well for me, and it was a process of trial and error throughout the initial research process. After seeing how well this worked for me to stay organized, I do wish I had come up with this process in the beginning of my time as a master student a few years back.

### Sampling cases

Sampling in a research project is the selection of units with direct reference to the project's research questions (Bryman, 408). The research questions should indicate what units should be sampled, and for qualitative research a purposive sampling of units is best. Purposive sampling "sample cases/participants in a strategic way, so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are posed" (Bryman, 408). For this thesis I have used a generic purposive sampling approach, where sampling is conducted purposively and informed by research questions, but not necessarily with regard to the generation of a theory. The sampling was employed in a sequential manner, where the sampling was an evolving process with an initial sample that was added to or changed to benefit the research questions as the research evolved. I was also forced to change my sample when COVID-19 put an end to my plans of going to New York to interview and observe at the UN.

In the planning of my research project I, in accordance with generic purposive sampling, established criteria for cases needed to address the research questions, identified appropriate cases, and then sampled units from those cases that had been identified. First off, I identified UN experts and diplomats working on CRSV as an important unit for my research. These experts and diplomats could share their knowledge on the UN system and work on CRSV, as well as their own experiences of working in this field. My plan was to interview two diplomats that I knew from my time at the Permanent Mission of Norway to the UN who worked on human rights and CRSV, and three experts that worked within the UN system. Two of these experts I had met briefly at a high-level meeting on CRSV in the fall of 2019, and the last expert I had talked to several times as she worked for both the Norwegian Defense University College and the UN and would come to the Permanent Mission in New York often. I am lucky to have a unique access to people within the UN system because of my previous job, and my plan was

to utilize these networks as much as I could. I also planned on using some snowball sampling for interviews, where participants propose other participants who may have characteristics relevant to the research (Bryman, 415). This was my plan when travelling to New York to conduct interviews, and then have participants propose or introduce me to other experts who may add to my research. I planned to ask them to propose others while I was in New York as I believed the polite thing to do would be to ask after we had met and conducted the interviews. I was fairly confident that this would work out as my experience from working at a Permanent Mission to the UN told me that most experts and diplomats were more than willing to share their experiences and views on different topics.

With a limited time-frame and resources and considering the context in which field work on CRSV is conducted, I was not able to interview experts, staff, victims, witnesses and so on in the field, nor do any observations. This would have been an excellent unit for sampling, as it would have given me direct access to observe the work the UN actually does on the ground and speak to people who were the closest to the issue. But such research would have taken a lot of time and access would have been difficult and unsafe as most of the UNs projects on CRSV are situated in conflict or post-conflict areas. Because of this, my second unit of sampling are documents. These documents are official reports, articles, books, news and transcripts from meetings. I believe that these documents serve as a good resource as the UN and its partnering organizations working on CRSV produce large numbers of documentation, often leading back to when CRSV first was put on the UNs agenda. Because I have been using a lot of documents, I have not paid that much attention to the sample size. Had I been in the field, I would have had to consider a sample size of how many would be interviewed and how much observation I would do, but I did not see the same necessity for this when it came to documents. In the case of interviewing experts and diplomats I did also did not give sample size that much thought as I believed it would be difficult to gather an overwhelming amount of data in the five days I was going to be in New York.

### Data Collection

The data collection for this thesis was planned in two different processes – one was interviews and observation, and the other was collecting data through document sources. As shown above, I had planned my data collection to include interviews and observation at the United Nations Headquarter in New York. The UN is a closed setting for most people, but since I worked for

the Permanent Missions of Norway to the UN up until December of 2019 I would be able to gain access through the Permanent Mission and my contacts there. I had prepared interview guides that had many of the same questions for all participants but varied somewhat depending on the participants job and experience. I wanted the interviews to flow more like a conversation rather than an interview, because previous experiences with doing data collection and interviews in both Tanzania and India had shown me that participants feel more comfortable and perhaps willing to share more when the interview is more like a conversation. As Bryman writes “in qualitative interviews, rambling or going off at tangents is often encouraged – it gives insight into what the interviewee sees as relevant and important” (Bryman, 466). Therefore, I had planned semi-structured interviews with questions that were open-ended and starting with “what are your thoughts on...”, “how have you experienced...” and “tell me about...”, as these questions lets the interviewee take some of the control of where their answers may lead. I had also planned on meeting the participants on their home turf, either at their office or somewhere else within the UN Headquarters. I believe it is important to show the participant that you as a researcher are willing to come to them and make things as convenient to them as possible, as they are doing you a great service by sharing their experiences and knowledge.

My plan was also to observe a few meetings that were planned at the UN during the week I was there. These were meetings not only on CRSV, but also on peacekeeping operations and women in conflict. I was also considering going back to New York for the launch of the handbook on CRSV for UN peacekeeping missions, as this would be a large and important event and one of my interviewees was a driving force behind this handbook. In these meetings I would be a participating observer in that I was present at the meetings to observe what was being said, who participated actively at the meeting, the mood in the room and so on.

All these plans for my field work and data collection in New York had to be scrapped mid-March when the seriousness of COVID-19 closed national borders and confined us to our homes. I quickly understood that it was unlikely that I would be able to go to New York before my thesis was due, and I had to completely change the strategy for my field work. I tried to reschedule my interviews, but only one of my planned participants was available for a phone interview. Although it was not ideal to only have one participant left, I have complete understanding for the participants who had to pull out of an interview due to what was going on. I decided that one interview was better than none and tried to do research to find new people to interview.

My interview was conducted over the phone. Although a face-to-face interview is preferable, a phone interview was in this case a good substitute. Since I had met my interviewee before, the interview immediately took more the style of a conversation. I started the interview by asking if the interviewee was comfortable with me recording the interview for my own notes and transcripts and if they would be okay with me using their full name and title. I also gave her a time frame of how long the interview would be, so that she knew they wouldn't have to be on the phone for hours. We then began the interview, loosely following my prepared research guide. For the sake of the flow of the conversation, I let the interviewee talk without interruption and followed up with new questions where it was natural. This is the reason why recording the interview is so important because “the interviewer is supposed to be alert to what is being said – following up interesting points made, prompting and probing where necessary, drawing attention to any inconsistencies in the interviewee’s answers” (Bryman, 479). Once the interview was over, I directly began listening to the interview and writing the transcript. Even though this is a time-consuming exercise it is incredibly important to do as written notes may be lacking and small details may slip. I also made sure to write the observations and thoughts I had made note of during the interview.

Documents as sources of data has counted for the majority of my data collection. Like Bryman writes, “the emphasis is placed on documents that have not been produced at the request of a social researcher” (Bryman, 546), and it is these kinds of documents I have used. The search for documents that are relevant for my thesis was time consuming as I tried to find sources not only from the UN and its partnering organization, but also documents that could describe the reality on the ground, news articles, documents that perhaps was critical of the UNs approach to CRSV and so on. I wanted these different sources to create a more balanced data analysis. Using UN documents as a source of data gathering is both positive and negative; on the one hand the UN has one of the largest databases of resolutions, mandates, reports, reviews, research and news in the world, which gave me access to great data and resources for my analysis. However, on the other hand the sheer size of the documents available can seem almost overwhelming. While searching for, reading and analyzing documents, I kept Bryman’s checkpoints for assessing the quality of a document in mind; authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning (Bryman, 546). In the age of the internet it is not always easy to assess documents with these criteria. This was especially the case for mass-media outputs, as the authorship of articles is often unclear, and it is therefore difficult to assess if the article’s

account can be relied upon. I have used documents deriving both from the state and from private sources, such as statistical information, reports, press releases, mission statements, resolutions and transcripts from meetings. All of these documents have been open to the public online and I have not had to apply to get access to anything. Even though documents have come from the state, in this case the Norwegian Government, and from the UN, one has to be careful and attentive to any biases. Even though one could expect these documents to show an objective “truth”, in some cases the author(s) could be writing to put the spotlight on only certain sides of the case.

When collecting data through documents I applied some of the same strategy that I used for collecting literature for the literature review. I read through the document, downloading it to a PDF where possible, highlighting what I found to be relevant, and wrote down keywords or extracts in my notebook that I found to be important. I then saved the documents or links in specific folders on my computer that were marked with different topics that I wanted for my analysis, for example “UN resolutions”, “Special Office mandate” and so on. This system helped me a lot in keeping a system and an overview of the sources and data I had collected.



## Chapter 5: Findings and Analysis

The purpose of this chapter is to present and analyze my findings in an effort to answer the three research objectives of the thesis. As explained in the previous chapter, the analysis will be based off data collected from official documents and statistics, news articles, scholarly articles, excerpts from books and an interview with one of Norway's leading experts on CRSV. This chapter will be divided into three parts, each dedicated to the three research objectives and its consecutive research questions. The first part will be focused on the development of the UN's work on CRSV from 1999 to 2019. I will examine how the attention and debates around the issue of CRSV has developed and what direction it has developed in. I will look closer at the Security Council resolutions that have laid the basis for most of the UNs work and mandates steered towards CRSV and analyze how the language and discourse in these resolutions affect the mandates that follow after these resolutions are adopted. Further, the first part will look at how the UN system works and coordinates the UN's response to CRSV at UN Headquarters. This work includes research, mandate development, outreach, deployment etc. The second part of this chapter will pick up on the preceding part on UN-system coordination and work, however it will shift the focus to the work that is done on the ground. I will examine how mandates are set into action and analyze if intentions of are put into practice. Further, I will examine how UN peacekeeping operations integrate CRSV in their mandates and operations and analyze if an inclusion translates into action on the ground. The third and final part of this chapter will look at the gendered aspect of UN's work on CRSV. As discussed in the literature review, gender and gender security is a major aspect of CRSV, and one can look at this from different angles. I have chosen to look at how the work of the UN on CRSV is mainly focused on and steered towards women and girls, as they are proven to be disproportionately affected by GBV and CRSV. However, the UN resolution, reports, mandates and frameworks neglect to take into account the male victims of CRSV. I will be looking at how CRSV affects men and boys, why they are not considered as primary victims in the UN's work, and what challenges they face when reporting and seeking help.

### 1999 – 2019: Two Decades of CRSV at the United Nations

The United Nations Charter, written as the founding document of the United Nations at its establishment in 1945, states the objects of the international organization. Among these objects are maintaining international peace and security, protecting human rights, delivering humanitarian aid and upholding international law. Women's issues have been given attention

within the UN since 1975, when the UN hosted the first World Conference on Women, and the following Decade for Women really helped set women on the map of the international political community. Following the first World Conference were important declarations and conferences such as CEDAW, the Nairobi World Conference, the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo Conference), and the Beijing Platform. Parallel to this, the UN and the Security Council was mostly concerned with the Cold War and its relating security issues, which created divides within the UNSC and paralyzed much of the peacekeeping work the UN intended to set into motion, due to the interventions of either the US or the Soviet Union (Meisler, 35). After the Cold War ended, the UN saw a radical expansion of peacekeeping duties and missions, deploying more peacekeeping missions in the first decade after the Cold War ended than in the previous four decades (Meisler, 286). The focus of the UNSC shifted back to maintaining peace and international security, and the number of adopted Security Council resolutions more than doubled. Interestingly, it wasn't until September of 1999 that the first Security Council resolution discussing the protection of civilians during armed conflict was adopted. UNSCR 1265 was a landmark resolution that followed the first report of the Secretary-General on the protections of civilians in armed conflict, and it established what remains today as the building blocks of the Protection of Civilians (PoC) agenda (Center for Civilians in Conflict). The work that led up to the adoption of UNSCR 1265 was led by the discussion of "human security", that was first referenced in the 1994 Human Development report of the United Nations Development Programme, which equates security with people rather than territories (UNDP, 1994). It was Canada, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, that brought the term "human security" to the table when discussing international security. Juergen Dedring writes that "The notion of human security was alien to the basically traditional practices of the UNSC where the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity were paramount and overshadowed the impact of human rights" (Dedring,11). The Canadian policymakers came to the conclusion that the most effective approach to putting human security on the Security Council's agenda was to shift the focus to the protection of civilians in situations of armed conflict, as this had clearer connections to the UN Charter and the responsibilities of the UNSC as laid out in the Charter. After months of debates and preparations, the Secretary-General issued his report on the protection of civilians (S/1999/957) on September 8 1999, and on September 17 UNSCR 1265 followed and was unanimously adopted by the UNSC.

UNSCR 1265 laid the foundation for several resolutions on PoC, and a year later, in October 2000, UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security was adopted by the UNSC. It is UNSCR 1325 that first drew the attention of the international community to the disproportionate and unique impact armed conflict has on women and girls. The resolution formed the organizational framework of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, and the resolution was historical in its focus on women's protection in conflict situations and increased participation in governance, decision-making, peace talks and peacekeeping. After the adoption of UNSCR 1325 and the establishment of the WPS-agenda, six more resolutions that explicitly discusses GBV and CRSV have been adopted under the agenda. The WPS-agenda is an important framework that sets ambitions of including gender perspectives and women in all of the work the UN does, and we will get back to how these ambitions have been put into practice and how these practices work on the ground.

Operational clauses (OP) 10 and 11 of UNSCR 1325 focuses on gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, but it wasn't until UNSCR 1820 was adopted in 2008 that sexual violence was acknowledged by the UNSC as a tool of war, and linked to issues of women, peace and security by the UN Security Council. The resolution expresses deep concern that despite the repeated condemnation of such violent acts, and the inclusion of these acts in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and ad hoc international criminal tribunals, GBV and CRSV continues to occur, in some situations becoming systematic and widespread. The resolutions *demand* the "immediate and complete cessation by all parties to armed conflict of all acts of sexual violence against civilians" (OP2). UNSCR 1820 contains strong and assertive language on sexual violence, which sets the standard for the UN's stance on the issue for future resolutions and work on the issue. Although the Security Council resolutions adopted on the WPS-agenda and CRSV are greatly important to the work of the UN on protecting against and preventing CRSV, it is worth noting that the intentions of the WPS-agenda on including the principles of the agenda in the Security Council's work and resolutions has been inconsistently applied by the Council. Kirby and Sheperd gives an example of how there have been 36 UNSC resolutions on the situation in Iraq since 2000, and only six of the resolutions contained language related to the WPS-agenda (Kirby & Sheperd, 378). More critically, none of this language is included in the operative clauses. The OP's of Security Council resolutions require concrete implementation by actors or states, and therefore the inclusion of language relating to the WPS-agenda would be much more decisive and impactful if it were to be included in the OPs. Integration of the WPS-agenda in the Security Council's

work has thus been limited, even though the Council is the institution responsible for the original policy structure and architecture of the WPS-agenda. There has been positive progress on this issue however with the adoption of UNSCR 2242, where the Council has stated its commitment to integrating pillars of the WPS-agenda across all country specific situations, which shows promise of greater consistency in the inclusion of the agenda.

UNSCR 1960 (2013) requested the UN Secretary-General to report annually on the implementation of UNSCR 1820, 1888 and 1960, and to recommend strategic actions going forward. The SG's annual report is an extensive report that addresses patterns, trends, emerging concerns and country-specific situations. In the latest report of March 2019, the Secretary-General (SG) states that trend analysis of incidents in 2018 confirms that sexual violence continues to be a part of the broader strategy of conflict and that women and girls are significantly and disproportionately affected. Although many countries are affected by the threat, occurrence or legacy of CRSV, the report of the SG focuses on 19 countries in which credible and verifiable information is available. The information that the report is based upon is verified by the UN, primarily through the "monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements" on CRSV established in UNSCR 1960; UN actors, national institutions, civil society organizations, health-care service providers, and women's groups (OP8). Both the SG's report and UNSCR 1960 states that this cooperation and information sharing should "enhance data collection and analysis of incidents, trends, and patterns of rape and other forms of sexual violence to assist the Council's consideration of appropriate actions". SCR 1888 established the mandate for Women's Protection Advisers (WPA) in peacekeeping and special political missions. The SG's report states that WPAs are responsible for "convening the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements on CRSV in the field" (S/2019/280, 4), and that the deployment of WPAs have significantly improved the availability and quality of information. The access to information is often made difficult by the conflict situation and infrastructure. In my interview with Lotte Vermeij, an expert on CRSV and former women protection adviser deployed by the government of Netherland to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lotte told me that she had experienced difficulties with accessibility in different ways; active blockades of roads by armed groups, floods or landslides, situations unsafe for staff to access, and the fact that some villages don't have roads to access the village. This issue of accessibility is especially urgent when it comes to healthcare. Victims of CRSV often require immediate and life-saving healthcare and psychosocial support, but these services are limited even in some urban services,

much less in rural areas (S/2019/280, 8). Lotte's experience of working as a WPA was challenging but interesting, because WPAs are in the field working on prevention and response to CRSV 24/7. Being immersed in the community and with actors and organizations on the ground this way allows the WPAs to create bonds with civilians and networks with local bodies, and therefore the information and statistics they gather is very important to the UN's reporting and prevention of CRSV. As of March 2019, 21 women's protection advisers were deployed in seven UNPKOs (S/2019/280, 4). Deploying WPAs to more peacekeeping operations and areas where CRSV and GBV is an issue should have a positive impact on both data collection and reporting. The advisers are deployed by Member States through the UN and can verify data that is reported and sent to Headquarters. They establish trust within the societies where there are deployed and there are victims and survivors of CRSV, and in the long-run this close cooperation and interaction with victims, local bodies and organizations, the military and police, and host governments, can lead to a system of information sharing and prevention that involves all levels of society and policy. It is also important to note that the work of WPAs is dependent on the consent of the local government to be present in a country and to be able to collect data on CRSV. Despite this, state actors have been reported to have been implicated in all country situations, with national armed forces, police and other security entities being listed as perpetrators of CRSV. In his report, the SG names state actors in the DRC, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic as being implicated in incidents of sexual violence (S/2019/280, 5).

The UN's work on CRSV includes most of the organizations major departments and programmes, as intended in UNSCR 1325. But the three bodies exclusively mandated to work on CRSV within the UN system are the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, and the UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict (UN Action). UN Action is chaired by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC), and the Team of Experts supports the work of the SRSG-SVC. Although these three bodies work on the same issues, they have different areas of work to avoid overlap as much as possible. The SRSG-SVC is tasked with serving as the UN's spokesperson and political advocate on CRSV. The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (OSRSG-SVC) was established by resolution 1888 in 2009. As seen in the background chapter, the mandate of the Office and Special Representative is to provide coherent and strategic leadership, to effectively strengthen existing UN coordination

mechanisms, and to engage in advocacy efforts with government representatives, all parties to armed conflicts and civil society. While the initial mandate and work of the Office is firmly rooted in the WPS-agenda, its strategies and framework has expanded and evolved since 2009. New strategic priorities were established in 2017 by SRSG-SVC Ms. Pramilla Patten, and in 2018 the Special Representative signed a framework of cooperation with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. After the signing of the framework SRSG-SVC Patten stated that “this framework affirms our common commitment to promote and protect the rights of women and girls affected by CRSV, a human rights violation deeply rooted in gender discrimination” (OSRSG-SVC press release, 2018). This new framework testifies to the ways in which the CEDAW, the targeted response to CRSV, and the broader discourse on WPS and gender equality are linked. When coordinated well, further cooperation within the UN system on the issue of CRSV should be seen as something solely positive for the cause, as resources and networks are pooled together for a common goal.

While the SRSG-SVC works on prevention on a political and advocate level, the Team of Experts work to strengthen the capacity of national institutions to prevent CRSV and to ensure accountability for past crimes through the rule of law (S/2019/280, 4). According to the SG’s 2019 report, the Team of Experts has conducted engagements in several areas of serious conflict, such as Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, and Myanmar. For example, the Team assisted the High Military Court of the Democratic Republic of Congo in upholding the life sentence of Frederic Batumike, a local parliamentarian and militia leader who had been found guilty of crimes against humanity for the rape of 39 children in Kavumu between 2013 and 2016 (S/2019/280, 4). It is important to note that the work of the Team of Experts must have the consent and cooperation of host governments, regardless if the request for assistance came from national authorities, UN field presence or Headquarter officials. This cooperation and involvement of national authorities builds national ownership, leadership and responsibility of the process of building national capacity to enhance accountability for CRSV (Team of Experts report, 4-5). Joint Communiqués or Frameworks of Cooperation, which are specific, time-bound commitments between the OSRSG-SVC and national authorities, also help promote national ownership and engagement through establishing priority interventions for a comprehensive approach to prevention and response to CRSV. The areas of intervention include accountability, reparations, access to justice, legal reform, commitments by defense and security forces, and provisions of comprehensive services (OSRSG-SVC, “Our Mandate”).

The third UN entity mandated to work on CRSV, UN Action, unites and coordinates the work of 13 UN entities. Its main task is to amplify advocacy, improve coordination and accountability, and support country efforts to prevent CRSV and respond efficiently to needs of survivors. According to UN Action's own information folder, a 2013 independent review stated that UN Action "has proven itself to be a uniquely well-structured, rapidly mobilized, visible and effective mechanism in providing a global platform for advocacy, accountability and coordination". This effective mobilization and work is quite the feat for UN Action, as it is comprised of large organizations and agencies that all have extensive mandates and areas of work to focus on. As of March 2019, UN Action supports 10 survivor-focused projects on three continents (S/2019/280, 4), and it continued to fund the Gender-based Violence Information Management System, which is an inter-agency initiative that enables humanitarian actors to safely collect, store, analyze and share data. This data is an important source for the UN's work and reports on CRSV and informs about the reality on the ground.

As seen above, the UN has a well-coordinated system that tackles issues of CRSV at different levels. The entities discussed above do important work both at UN Headquarters, at political levels, through advocacy and on the ground in conflict situations. I will get back to how these entities work on the ground in the next part of this chapter, and I will also focus on peacekeeping operations and how the mandates of these operations are so important to the work of protection, prevention and participation.

### Protection, Prevention and Participation - Conflict-related Sexual Violence on the Ground

When looking at what different entities and actors are working on CRSV on the ground, the pool of actors is vast and varied. International, regional, national and local organizations, both inter-governmental and non-governmental, are involved in the work of protection, prevention and participation. These actors make an important contribution to the work in different ways, be it gathering data on victims and attacks, delivering medical or emergency services, investigating attacks and so on. By focusing on what UN entities are working on CRSV on the ground, the pool of actors decreases, however an impressive number of UN entities are involved in this work in one way or another. I will be focusing on the work of UN Action and UN

peacekeeping operations, as these represent the largest umbrellas under which other entities of the UN coordinate and cooperate their field work.

UN Action unites the work of 15 UN entities; UN DPPA, UNDP, OHCHR, WHO, UNAIDS, UN Women, UNODC, UNICEF, OCHA, PBSO, DPO, UNFPA, IOM, WPF and UNHCR. UN Action states in its mission statement that “the core accomplishment of UN Action lies in its capacity to catalyze action through innovative advocacy and policy coordination of a wide range of entities towards addressing CRSV, while incorporating several different mandates”. When coordinated efficiently, the reach of these entities and their mandates cover efforts on humanitarian aid, human rights, development, political advocacy, peacekeeping, security, medical aid and criminal law, which results in a holistic response to the issues surrounding CRSV. As well as working on bettering national efforts to address sexual violence, the entities under UN Action work on deepening partnerships with NGOs and civil society. These entities have ground presence in areas of difficult situations, need or conflict, and pooling together the networks and trust that has been built on the ground over time gives the work of UN Action a broader reach than a single entity or organization may have. A 2013 review of UN Action from 2007-2012 showed that despite the focus on advocacy and information spreading, there were still relatively low levels of UN policy awareness at all levels by UN staff as well as governments, NGOs and some donors. The review states that “... generally there was poor understanding and a sense that change on the ground for UN and for the national situation as a result of these (UNSC) resolutions was very limited and mixed in terms of policy and programmatic awareness and responses” (UN Action review, 58). The review also shows that UN Action had limited engagement with NGOs on the ground, and that this engagement was limited to implementing operational arrangements and occasional or limited participation in consultation on strategies and guidance. On the other hand, certain UN entities and offices had a more direct relationship with NGOs that were more substantial. The review does not inform of what entities this involves, but the possibility of some of these being a part of the larger UN Action network should be fairly large considering that the 15 entities are some of the largest of the UN system. For a more substantial relationship and sustainable engagement with NGOs on the ground, UN Action should utilize the relationships already established by these entities. The 2013 review also states that the need for internal advocacy at both UN Headquarters and at country levels is pressing, as progress is not swift enough. Even though UNSC resolutions on CRSV have inclusive and strong language and every intention of ending CRSV, there is little help in these intentions if they don’t translate into action in the field. In a UN Action progress



report from 2018, which is arguably a much more simplistic report than the review of 2013, UN Action presents its progress on advocacy and knowledge building. It states that the work of UN Action has heightened the awareness of CRSV to a place on the international peace and security agenda, that its secretariat continues to conduct briefings with strategic partners, it continues to be the primary consultation forum for the SG's annual report on CRSV, and that it has established a website that functions as a repository of advocacy resources and field updates on CRSV. UN Action's global campaign "Stop Rape Now" focuses on advocacy through social mobilization, information kits on UNSC resolutions, information on obligations of Member States and news stories. Many celebrities have been pictured doing a crossed-arm gesture in a show of solidarity with survivors, and this gesture has become the sign of the "Stop Rape Now"-campaign. There is no evidence however of the outreach of this campaign in the field, as those falling victim to CRSV in conflict often do not have access to online sources and campaign material. The report of the UN Action presents the mandate, organizational framework, goals and engagements of UN Action. However, it does not go into any analysis of the result of these engagements. No new review has been published by UN Action since 2013, and therefore any analysis of the result of specific engagements is difficult.

Women's protection and participation have been a part of UN peacekeeping operations' mandates since UNSCR 1325 was adopted in 2000. UN peacekeeping play a vital role in the protection of civilians and advancing human rights through their mandates and functions, and under the PoC mandate PKOs are mandated and structured to respond efficiently to threats of CRSV through political engagements, advocacy, and through various instruments of peacekeeping (Module II, 1). The UNSC has specifically mandated UN PKOs to address CRSV; linking the protection of civilian to include all forms of sexual violence (Module I, 3). UNSCR 1325 set the attention to how women and girls were disproportionately affected by CRSV and GBV, recognized the urgent need to mainstream a gender perspective into PKOs and stressed the important role women play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building. UNSCR 1820 was especially important in linking CRSV to PKOs as it requests the implementation of training programs for all peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel deployed by the UN, asked for further steps to be taken to heighten awareness and responsiveness of CRSV on the ground, and showed deep concern with the persistent obstacles and challenges to women's participation and full involvement in prevention and resolution work. In the DPO/DFS Specialized Training Materials on prevention and response to CRSV, module I presents the strategic level and module II presents the operational level of prevention

and response to CRSV. The operational module shows that the DPO has an extensive and comprehensive framework of addressing and dealing with CRSV in their operations, and this framework includes training of staff, commanders and experts in the role and responsibilities of addressing CRSV in PKOs, engagement and coordination at all levels from HQ to staff on the ground, reporting and investigating etc. The document states that the protection of civilians is a primary responsibility of the host State, consistent with their obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law. However, UN peacekeepers are authorized through the UNSC to undertake actions to protect civilians either in support of or parallel to government actors (Module II, 4).

When it comes to CRSV, the gender perspective of UN peacekeeping usually entails a focus on two perspectives; protection and participation. First comes the protection of women and children, who are disproportionately affected. Men and boys are increasingly recognized as also being victims of CRSV, but we will get back to this later in the chapter. The deployment of Women Protection Advisers (WPAs) into PKOs have been mandated by the UNSC to coordinate, mainstream and support the implementation of the CRSV mandate of PKOs. A Senior WPA is deployed to monitor and verify incidents of CRSV, mainstream CRSV in the Mission's planning process and policies, and support the host Government and civil society to address CRSV and strengthen national ownership. Currently, WPAs and SWPAs are deployed to five peacekeeping missions; MINUSCA, MINUSAM, MONUSCO and UNMISS. (Module II, 5) UNPKO reports that these Missions, with the help of SWPAs and WPAs, have designed and institutionalized innovative protection tools and practices specifically to enhance the prevention and response to CRSV. Further, gender units are also deployed to mainstream gender perspectives, capacity building and assisting Missions components to implement the mandate through a gendered analysis (Module II, 5). One of the UNs indicators to track the implementations of the WPS-agenda is to measure what percentage of PKOs that have WPAs and gender units, and according to the UNs own numbers all UN PKOs have gendered components (Solhjell, 222). What is not specified is what gendered components mean and how this is measured beyond counting the number of experts that are in the field. In his 2019 report on Women, Peace and Security, the Secretary-General stated that "although progress has been made over time in strengthening expertise in gender equality and adequate staffing to ensure the effective operationalization of WPS-mandates, many challenges persist" (S/2019/800, 27). What is still to be done is ensuring the adequate resourcing of gender advisers, ensuring that gender advisers and units are deployed to Missions.

As a part of the training of PKO personnel, military, police and civilian, and in order to enhance military capacity to prevent and respond to CRSV, a handbook has been developed by the Norwegian Defence University College in close coordination with UN DPO, NATO and other partners. This handbook will provide practical tools and will be widely distributed to PKOs, special political missions and troop contributing countries, enabling military components to be better prepared to tackle the challenges related to CRSV and to effectively implement PoC mandates. Lotte Vermeij, whom I interviewed for this thesis, has been a leading force behind this handbook. She explained that the process of creating the handbook has taken three years, as it ended up being a system-wide cooperation where UN entities, UN Action and country teams have been consulted and involved in the creation process. Lotte explained that even though it delayed the process, this system-wide inclusion will make implementation much more straightforward as the language has been adapted to be agreeable to all partners. This will be the first “whole-of-mission” handbook published and distributed by the UN, and Lotte and her team are working on plans on how to utilize the handbook to raise awareness in Missions and staff. The hope and intention for Lotte and her team is that this training will lead to a comprehensive, mission-wide framework for preventing and dealing with CRSV, where PKO staff are properly trained and educated in dealing with CRSV. The launch of the handbook was scheduled for March, but due to COVID-19, the launch has been pushed indefinitely.

Reports and UNSC resolutions all say the same; women play an integral part in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding. Women’s equal and meaningful participation and full involvement in peace negotiations and decision-making processes is essential for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security (Module I, 2). The Secretary-General states in his 2019 report on CRSV that “preventing sexual violence requires the advancement of substantive gender equality before, during and after conflict, including by ensuring women’s full and effective participation in political, economic and social life ...” (S/2019/280,1). The increased participation of women in uniformed services in PKOs and national security forces is one of the priority action areas of the WPS-agenda and has been requested by all UNSC resolutions adopted under the WPS-agenda. Women peacekeepers are seen as important to peacekeeping because they create greater diversity and a broadened skillset for improved decision-making, planning and results. They often have greater access to communities by interviewing and supporting survivors of GBV and CRSV and thereby generating critical information that would be otherwise difficult to reach. Female peacekeepers are essential

enablers to building trust and confidence with local communities, and they serve as mentors and role models for women and girls in post-conflict settings. It has also been proven that diversity in peacekeeping helps to address the disproportionately negative effect that conflicts have on livelihoods and on women's lives (UN Peacekeeping). Several positive steps have been taken by the UN to strengthen women's participation, such as the adoption of UNSCR 2242, the adoption of a gender strategy by the Peacebuilding Commission in 2016, and the Secretary-General's system-wide strategy on gender parity and the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy 2018-2028 of the Department of Peace Operations (S/2019/800,4). UNSCR 2242 (2015) calls on the Secretary-General to initiate a revised strategy on gender analysis and technical gender expertise, within existing resources, and to double the number of women in PKOs. Despite intentions and ambitions of increasing the number of women in PKOs and national security forces, the numbers present a gloomy picture of the reality. Although there has been some progress in the numbers of participating women, the progress has been glacial. In 1993, women made up 1% of deployed uniformed personnel. In 2019, women made up only 4,7% of military contingents and 10,8% of police units in UN PKOs, and combined only around 5% of all uniformed military, police and justice and corrections service personnel were female (Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy, 3). According to the Secretary-General in his 2019 WPS-report, the share of women leading UN PKOs have shown an upward trend since 2015; as of December 2018, women comprised 35% of heads and 48% if deputy heads of UN PKO and special political missions, compared to 26% and 35% in 2017 (S/2019/800). The Secretary-General noted concern of the slow progress in female participation. He stated that a significant number of areas are yet to be fully addressed, and that women face a number of challenges towards equal participation. One of these challenges are restrictions in deployment opportunities, as Member States are responsible for the deployment of staff in military and police forces, and these States may have discriminatory laws or implicit or explicit gender biases in deployment processes. In the work to gather data for the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy, UN DPO consulted widely with female uniformed personnel in the field to understand challenges women face when participating as uniformed personnel. Many women were not aware of the employment opportunities in uniformed forces, and the lack of family-friendly policies within Member States would hinder some to applying for deployment. The possibility of being deployed for 12 months with no opportunity to visit their families put many off the idea of applying. Another challenge was the lack of training and self-development opportunities for women, including participation in Military Staff Colleges, Police Academies and UN-related courses to be able to meet qualification pre-requisites for UN deployments (Uniformed

Gender Parity Strategy, 2). The Strategy document also notes that many women who are looking at applying for deployment are worried about their own security when deployed. Field missions may not provide adequate security, accommodation and facilities to women, and women may therefore be vulnerable to sexual harassment and exploitation themselves.

An increase in the number of women participating in PKOs, special political missions and in peace talks is integral to the progress of the WPS-agenda and the prevention of CRSV. There is no shortage of ambitions and strategies within the UN system, but if words are not put into action the progress will continue to move glacially.

### Male victims of CRSV – Underreporting and Social Stigma

There is no arguing that women and girls suffer disproportionately as victims and survivors of CRSV and GBV. As discussed in the literature review, deeply rooted and structural gender inequality and discrimination are seen as the root causes of why conflicts and CRSV has such a different impact on women, men, boys and girls. Without revisiting the discussion on discourse of gender and gendered security, I believe it is important to discuss male victims of CRSV and why men have little space in the frameworks and mandates that are created to prevent CRSV. In the UN discourse on CRSV, women are the victims and men are either the perpetrator or the savior. The precise extent to which CRSV with male victims occurs is still unknown, but male sexual abuse in conflict is likely more prevalent than what is reported. It wasn't until UNSCR 2106, adopted in 2013, that men and boys were officially recognized as victims of CRSV by the UN Security Council. PP 6 reads “sexual violence in armed conflict and post conflict situations disproportionately affects women and girls, as well as groups that are particularly vulnerable or may be specifically targeted, *while also affecting men and boys* and those secondarily traumatized as forced witnesses of sexual violence against family members” (UN, 2013). As important as this inclusion is, men and boys are linked with those secondarily traumatized and are therefore put aside as not being a primary victim. In his 2019 CRSV-report, the Secretary-General has included a small section on men and boys as victims of CRSV. Incidents include rape, gang rape, forced nudity, torture and other forms of inhumane and degrading treatment, and violations have been reported in Burundi, CAR, DRC, Sri Lanka and the Syrian Arab Republic (S/2019/280, 6). The report gives several examples of situations where men and boys are targeted; in Afghanistan young boys are victims of *bacha bazi*, a criminalized tradition by which young boys are “kept” by older, powerful men to use the boys

as they please. This practice has been criminalized by national Afghan law, but prosecution of cases is rare, and the practice remain common, especially in rural areas (S/2019/280, 10). In the Syrian Arab Republic men are victims of horrible torture when captured and detained or if they are accused of being homosexual. The UN has received reports of sexual violations being perpetrated by Government forces and their allied militias, and men are especially vulnerable during arrests and detention (S/2019/280, 32). In Yemen, young boys are especially vulnerable, as 80 cases of violations against boys perpetrated by community members and relatives, and four cases involving members of the Yemini government forces have been reported (S/2019/280, 33). In the cases of Syria and Yemen, women, men, girls and boys are especially vulnerable due to situations of displacement and living in insecure refugee camps.

The issue of under-reporting of CRSV is well known and included in reports, resolutions and frameworks. As the case for female victims of CRSV, male victims face challenges of seeking help and reporting after sexual violations have happened. Shame, social and cultural stigma, fear, failures in national law, inaccurate reporting, and masculine stereotypes all pose restrictions to reporting. Male victims may be dissuaded from seeking medical or judicial help or report instances of CRSV because of national laws and legal frameworks. In cases where the perpetrator is also male, the victim may face charges and detention for homosexuality (Gorris, 413). Under-reporting may also be caused by the shortcomings in training of staff to recognize signs of male victims of sexual violence (Sivakumaran, 256). In this context, training of staff should be expanded to recognizing male victims of sexual violence. In both the strategical and operational modules of PKO training, male victims are mentioned only once in the recognition that men and boys may also be affected by CRSV. Both national and international data-gathering and reporting have proven to mislabel sexual violence as torture rather than CRSV, and numbers of recorded incidents are therefore lower than reality. Further, when cases lead to prosecution, cases with male victims are not prosecuted as sexual violence but rather as torture or abuse (Sivakumaran, 273-274). The Secretary-General recommends in his report that more consistent monitoring and analysis of and reporting on CRSV against men and boys is necessary for the UN to take appropriate measures in addressing the issue of male victims. This monitoring and reporting is perhaps especially important in the context of formal and informal detention settings and of men and boys associated with armed groups. The SG stresses the importance of reviewing national legislation to protect male victims, and to strengthen policies that offer appropriate responses to the needs of male victims (S/2019/280, 53). In addition, the deeply rooted assumptions about masculinity and male invulnerability to sexual violence must

be challenged to lower the bar for male victims to seek help and report their abuse. In this work, the UN should follow suit and expand their recognition of male victims to be included in the prevention and protection work in the context of CRSV.

## Moving Forward

When it comes to the United Nations and its work on CRSV, there is no arguing that the UN system as a whole is working towards a common goal. The combined efforts of the Security Council, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, and the UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict has created important and much needed focus and efforts towards the destructive impact CRSV has on individuals, societies, peace and security. The UN Security Council resolutions adopted on Women, Peace and Security and on conflict-related sexual violence all have ambitious language that presents guidelines and intentions for the UN system and its Member States on how to tackle gender inequality, GBV, CRSV, impunity and PoC. In a perfect world these ambitions would translate directly into practice, but the UNSC is dependent on other UN entities to do this for them through their mandates. It is still crucial that the UNSC continues adopting resolutions that address these topics, as it sets a standard for the rest of the UN system and for Member States.

On the prevention of CRSV, the Secretary-General issued in his 2019 report eighteen recommendations that represent a platform for a comprehensive and multisectoral response to prevent and address the scourge of CRSV (S/2019/280, 49-55). These recommendations include

- the reinforcement of the compliance of State and non-State parties with UNSC resolutions
- strengthening the prevention of and response to CRSV as a cross-cutting priority in the work of the UNSC
- to ensure the availability of timely and reliable information as a basis for preventive action and response at every level
- to ensure more proactive and effective preventive action by UN peacekeepers
- strengthen prevention by supporting efforts to ensure the criminal accountability of perpetrators, access to justice for survivors and justice sector reform

- recognizing that men, boys, and LGBTQI+ individuals are also targets of CRSV, and this issue needs more consistent monitoring, analysis and reporting.
- To strengthen the infrastructure established by the UNSCR 1888 to address CRSV and support the response of affected countries

The recommendations made by the SG in his report depends on the efforts of the UN system, Member States, non-State actors and NGOs. Protracted conflicts and a diminishing UN budget makes the strain on the UN system heavier, as many UN entities see their budgets cut drastically. 2019 was a year of budget crisis for the UN, and in June the Secretary-General had to urge Member States to pay their budget dues to the UN on time as money was literally beginning to run out. The SG stated that “the inability to meet payroll and pay supplies would be catastrophic for the UN’s reputation and ability to conduct business” (UN News, 2019). Especially peacekeeping operations, with military and police personnel, were suffering under the budget crisis, as the UN was hindered to reimburse troop- and police-contributing countries in a predictable and timely manner, hindering their ability to provide lifesaving support to peacekeeping operations. The UN budget for 2020 was adopted by the UN Fifth Committee in December 2019 and was set at \$3,073,830,500. This is an increase of approximately \$8 million on what was initially requested by the SG, but 2019 showed us that the budgets are dependent on Member States paying their dues on time. Looking at the current financial situation of the world, no-one knows if Member States will be able to pay their dues in full.

The adoption of UNSCR 2467 in 2019 is a positive step forward for the UN’s work on CRSV. The resolution presents new instruments in fighting CRSV and show several positive steps in moving towards a survivor-centered approach in every aspect of the response of affected States, the international community, and all UN peace-making, peacekeeping and peace-building initiatives. The resolution calls for more comprehensive healthcare, including reproductive health services after rape and abuses. An explicit reference to reproductive healthcare is not included, as the United Nations threatened to veto the resolution if such an inclusion was made (Chinkin & Rees, 15). However, there is clear reference to human rights language in the resolution on the right to access the full range of sexual and reproductive health services without discrimination. PP19 recognizes the “need for survivors of sexual violence to receive non-discriminatory access to services such as medical and psychosocial care to the fullest extent practicable and need to be free from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and that violations of the obligations on the treatment of victims can amount to serious violations of international law”. This important statement by the UNSC indicates that Member States have a



responsibility to facilitate and ensure appropriate care for *all* victims of CRSV, or be accountable of violations if they fail to do so. The explicit reference to the response to male victims in OP32 is historical, as it is the first time a UNSC resolution under the WPS-agenda makes such an explicit reference. The OP reads “... *recognizes* also that men and boys are also targets of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings, including in the context of detention settings and those associated with armed groups” and continues “*urges* Member States to protect victims who are men and boys through the strengthening of policies that offer appropriate responses to male survivors and challenge cultural assumptions about male vulnerability to such violence”. This challenging of cultural assumption works towards ending the discrimination and adverse treatment that is rooted in cultural and social bias and is an important step towards helping remove obstacles for men and boys to seek help and report instances of CRSV. The expansion of the inclusion of male victims in UNSC resolutions is also important in challenging the existing gender discourse of the UNSC and making it more inclusive to *all* victims of CRSV.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

The objective of this thesis has been to investigate how the United Nations system addresses the issue of conflict-related sexual violence through its resolutions, mandates, programs, entities, and offices since 2009. The UN is the largest inter-governmental organization in the world, and the organizations work on human security, protection of civilians, peacekeeping and gender equality is seen across continents. Twenty years after the adoption of UNSCR 1325 and eleven years after the establishment of the OSRSG-SVC, 2020 marks the year of two important anniversaries in the work on CRSV. In the current climate of protracted conflicts, civil wars and inter-state conflict, and large movements of internally displaced people and refugees, the threat of CRSV is as relevant as ever.

My research has shown that in theory, the UN system has several mechanisms and frameworks in place to address the threat of CRSV. The Security Council, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, and the UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict coordinate and cooperate to create a holistic approach to issues relating to CRSV at all levels. In a heavily bureaucratic system such as the UN, these entities work towards creating as little overlap in work as possible to utilize their resources in the best ways, so that the work can be focused on protection, prevention and rebuilding. The research has shown that the introduction of the Women, Peace and Security-agenda and CRSV through Security Council resolutions has been instrumental in creating a discourse and action plans around the protection and participation of women in conflict-related situations. Without the resolutions and mandates of the Security Council, the work that the UN entities mentioned above would not be possible. However, the ambitions of the UNSC resolutions are equally, if not more, dependent on UN entities to put them into practice. As the discussion of the literature review shows, the UNSC should go further and implement stronger language when it comes to the protection of victims, prevention of CRSV and GBV, responsibilities of Member States, and participation of women in peacekeeping operations and programs. None of the resolutions adopted under the WPS-agenda are adopted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, and are therefore not binding to Member States.

The continuing trend of CRSV being used as a broader strategy of conflict and war by both non-State and State actors is of great concern. Exact numbers and statistics of sexual violations

are not possible to find due to underreporting, difficult access to victims and difficult conflict situations, and an appropriate response is therefore difficult to establish. Reporting mechanisms must become better and more robust if the UN is to respond proportionately to the reality on the ground, and these reporting mechanisms must also take into account sexual violence against both men and women to create an accurate picture of the exact extent of the use of CRSV. Reporting and response must take into account that victims of CRSV are not a homogenous group and that their experiences and needs are diverse. Therefore, responses should be survivor-centered and adapted to the conflict situation.

The analysis shows that UN Action, although an important coordination mechanism for the UN system's response to CRSV, must work on bettering their outreach and awareness campaigns so that they actually reach those actors and individuals on the ground who need the information. As mentioned in the analysis, UN Action should take full advantage of the network already established by the entities who work under the umbrella of UN Action coordination, so that key actors' expertise on prevention of CRSV can be strengthened.

The lack of progress in female participation and the number of uniformed female deployment in PKOs is a defeat to the WPS-agenda and the UN system. As ambitions are set high, the sobering reality is that progress on this issue is not made fast enough. This slow progress has a direct impact on the prevention of CRSV and peacekeeping work in the field, as the valuable contributions of women are missing. The deployment of gender units, SWPAs and WPAs is a positive step in the right direction, but these deployments are often not big enough in size and are stretched thin over large geographical areas. Positive steps have also been made by the UN through the adoption of UNSCR 2242, the adoption of a gender strategy by the Peacebuilding Commission in 2016, and the Secretary-General's system-wide strategy on gender parity and the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy 2018-2028 of the Department of Peace Operations (S/2019/800,4). It still remains to see if these steps will translate into positive developments that can be seen in female deployment numbers and in peacekeeping operations.

When it comes to a gender inclusive approach to addressing CRSV, the UN system still has a long way to go. The attention given to male victims of CRSV has to increase for the UN to be able to say that they enforce gender equality in their frameworks and mandates. Although women and girls are disproportionately affected by CRSV, this should not take away from the fact that a large number of male victims also suffer under the horrible consequences of the use

of CRSV as a tactic of war. Social stigma and lack of information and training on the ground stands in the way of proper reporting, and cases of male victims of CRSV severely under-reported. A development of the gender perspective of the UN is necessary in order for the issue of male victims to be properly addressed. The adoption of UNSC 2467 is an important step in this context, as the inclusion of male victims and their needs as survivors shows that the gender discourse of the UNSC is moving to becoming more inclusive.

Although the analysis of the UN's work has focused perhaps more on the shortcomings of the UNs work on addressing CRSV, it is important to add that the UN does tremendously important work on bettering people's lives and eliminating threats to human security. So many factors play into why the UN's work on protection, prevention and participation has not reached the point that is desirable, and all these factors must be addressed parallel to the work on CRSV. Limited budgets, conflict situations, threats to security, practical challenges and accessibility, national and regional limitations etc. all add complications to the UN's work. In his 2019 report on Women, Peace and Security, Secretary-General Guterres stated that "there remains a stark contrast between rhetoric and reality, where previously agreed commitments have not been matched by action". Despite slow progress and continuous challenges to the work of the UN, this should not take away from the important and highly necessary work that the UN does in addressing CRSV and helping its victims. I would like to end with the uplifting words of Jan Egeland:

*"We succeed more than we fail. We save lives more often than we see lives lost. We see progress more than we see regression. The world becomes better year by year"*

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# Appendix

## Interview Guide – Lotte Vermeij

- Could you first start by briefly telling me about how you got involved in the UNs work on CRSV?
- What was your experience of being a Women Protection Advisor in eastern DR Congo as part of the MONUSCO?
- Could you tell me about the CRSV handbook for UN peacekeeping missions and how the work on this handbook has been? I understand it is a whole system approach, but has the “whole system” been a part of the development of the handbook? Has the launch been pushed due to corona?
- You have extensive experience and knowledge of UN peace operations. I read in a policy briefing that you and Sine wrote that the 9 largest out of 15 peace operations have specific POC mandates. Do you think that these mandates give the operations enough resources and opportunity to really tackle the issue of CRSV while in the field?
- In your 2017 policy briefing you wrote that a more inclusive, community-based approach is important for peace operations personnel to better understand the context in which they operate to effectively address the challenges encountered in mission areas. 2017 was not that long ago, but have you seen any changes in the way peace operation personnel work and in the way peace operations are adapted to each conflict?
- Since you started working in UN peace operations, are there any areas in particular where you have seen specific change or development?
- While you’ve been on the ground working with peacekeeping missions, have you seen an increase in reporting of incidents or a lessening of the stigma around CRSV when the programs or support systems are in place, or do you think that will be something that will have to happen over time?
- When you came to talk to us at the Mission you spoke on infrastructure and accessibility being an issue when tackling CRSV. Do you see a willingness from national and regional governments to help out on these issues?
- From your point of view, is the international community doing enough to tackle the issue of CRSV?

- What do you see as the way forward for the UN and peace operations when it comes to tackling CRSV?



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