

ABSTRACTS:

WOMEN AND THE GOVERNANCE OF SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

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As recently as twenty years ago, the subject of security governance and its centrality to development was not open to much debate. In Africa, the notion of security governance was not discussed outside of governments and their appointed agents; it did not include civil society, let alone women's rights analysts and actors. Nor was the role of women in the processes and structures of security governance accorded space in policy planning and related dialogues. The defence and security of the African state was the sole focus of the security discourse and in that context, the security concerns of individual citizens, particularly women, rarely featured.

Two decades later, in 2009, the World Bank is preparing to make security and development the focus of its 2011 World Development Report (WDR). This is in part the result of more than two decades of debate about human security vis-à-vis the defence and security of the state. In the period since the end of the Cold War, the world has come to embrace the notion that individuals ought to be the reference point in security discourse and planning. Africans have gradually engaged with this discourse and indeed, the continent has provided much of the empirical evidence that led to the treatment in policy circles, of security and development as two sides of the same coin.

This paper examines the nature and extent of security and governance discourse, policy and practice in Africa. It offers a critique of African and international approaches to the security and development challenges in Africa. The central argument of the paper is that policy and practice in this regard are dominated by global actors in connivance with African elite to the exclusion of African citizens and legitimate non-state actors. The challenge that confronts African citizens and civil society actors is to shape a strategy for engaging critical institutions and actors regionally and globally so that they can become more responsive to citizens' security concerns.

In its exploration of these factors, this paper discusses three inter-related issues under four sections. Firstly, it traces the evolution of security and its governance in Africa and the place of women in this. Secondly, it assesses the relevance of key international policy instruments for promoting security and development to African realities, particularly in relation to women's concerns. Thirdly, the chapter proposes strategies for propelling women's security agenda and relevant actors working on this agenda to centre stage in global discourse and regional policy and practice. It concludes with recommendations for key civil society actors working on the rights and security of women.

Mainstreaming Gender into the African Union Peace and Security Agenda

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Abstract

This paper will assess the extent to which the African Union (AU) has mainstreamed gender equality in its peace and security agenda. It will begin by developing a conceptual framework to articulate the case for incorporating a gendered analysis of the peace and security challenges in Africa. The paper will then examine the challenge of gender-based violence in conflict situations on the African continent. In particular, it will discuss how Africa has witnessed the confluence between gender, violence, and war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Darfur. The paper will assess some of the key international instruments for promoting gender equality, with a specific focus on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 which stipulates the role that women should play in promoting peace and security. This UN Resolution 1325 established the premise upon which the African Union developed its own Declaration on gender equality with a specific focus. The paper will then briefly assess the efforts that the AU has undertaken to mainstream gender into its peace and security institutions and agenda. In particular, this paper will argue that the AU gender mainstreaming initiatives have been largely top-down and there is a need for it to take more concrete steps to actualize its normative claims. In specific, it will assess some illustration of efforts of the limited impact of the AU's norms on its member states, as a result of a lack of an explicit commitment to implementing initiatives to address gender concerns. Ultimately, the paper will propose how to further entrench gender mainstreaming into the work of the AU's conflict prevention and peace building agenda.

Security Sector Reform: A reflection on women's activism in Africa by Yaliwe Clarke

Attempts to mainstream gender in Security Sector Reform (SSR) has involved increasing the number of women employed in mainstream military structures such as the police and army, or ensuring that women are taken into account in demilitarisation, demobilisation and reintegration processes (DDR) as combatants or supporters of militia groups. Other efforts have included involving women in bureaucratic structures by way of attaching gender experts or ensuring women (preferably from the women's peace networks and women's rights NGO's) are represented in various reform committees and processes. A common theme that runs through these approaches is emphasis on addressing/preventing sexual and gender based violence within military structures and their interface with communities.

All these approaches blind activists and policy makers to addressing various problematic gender identities embedded in security structures. My paper will critically reflect on the elements of a 'well-functioning security framework'. Whose security is addressed and what kind of assumptions are made about the kind of security systems that require 'reformation'. Have governments and/or NGO activists gone beyond a technocratic inclusion of women in militaries? Have African women peace activists in post conflict countries offered substantive critique of militarised masculinities and femininities?

Dr. Comfort Ero – The Conceptual Issues: Transitional Justice and the Reparations Question.

Increasingly transitional justice initiatives have sought to provide redress for victims, both monetary and symbolic, instead of focusing solely on the punishment of perpetrators. Through restitution, compensation and memorialisation, reparations fulfil a number of practical and symbolic purposes of acknowledging the harm inflicted upon victims. According to gender activists, reparations have the potential to facilitate the rebuilding of women's lives through addressing the "political and structural inequalities that shape the lives of women and girls" (Nairobi Declaration on the right of women and girls to a remedy and reparation 2007). Nonetheless, while reparations are critical in the pursuit of gender justice, they are often an under-funded afterthought in transitional justice processes.

During recent transitions few reparations programmes have incorporated women's needs in their design or implementation. Further reparations programmes to date have often failed to recognise and address structural issues which have given rise to gender-based violations of human rights. Issues of implementation have also been of concern. These range from an absence of accessible information about these processes to the inability of women to have control over family finances. This article will address some of the recent developments in reparations policies in Sierra Leone, Morocco and Timor-Leste, as well as pose some critical questions over the need to challenge existing approaches to reparations.

Reparations in Sierra Leone: Lessons, Challenges and Opportunities by Mohamed Sidi Bah

The Reparations Programme in Sierra Leone, which took off four years after the presentation of the TRC Report to Government in 2004, has not, like many other recommendations in it, been given the urgent and necessary attention by Government and Civil Society Groups. There have been delays due to the lack of clarity of the concept of reparations vis-à-vis normal service delivery and development work of government, the lack of a follow up mechanism to the TRC process and lack of an Action Plan on its implementation. The general amnesty to all combatants in the Lomé Peace Accord, lack of the necessary legal frameworks for protection of women and girls during conflict and pervading traditional norms of society have contributed to the inadequate response to Women's Rights in major peace building processes in the country. This is manifested in various ways-exclusion of women from decision-making, increased violence against women, reduced access to basic social services, increased vulnerability to hunger and HIV/AIDS infection, and reduced access to and control over economic assets among others.

However, there are emerging opportunities within the legal reforms and Women's Rights (WR) movement, both nationally and regionally, which are impacting positively on the WR issues in the country, with varying levels of success and challenges. These include the domestication of major international Conventions and Protocols such as CEDAW, the Beijing Platform of Action and the International Convention on Economic and Social Rights (ICESCR); the enactment of WR bills such as The three Gender Bills and Child Protection Act; the establishment of vibrant Civil Society Groups/Activists like the Mano River Women's Peace Network, (MAWOPNET), 50-50 Group and Forum for African Women (FAWE) Chapters etc.

With the existence of these instruments, there are now mechanism and structures through which perpetrators and government will be held accountable for WR issues. The reparations programme is mainly funded by the UN Peace Building Fund which is a catalytic fund that expires in

November/December 2009, implemented by NaCSA and with oversight responsibility by IOM. It is currently on precarious programmatic and financial grounds due to weak engagement with Civil Society and oversight structures and reliance on donor funds. Major challenges include establishing of a credible database which would be used to develop and cost a long term comprehensive programme, depoliticisation of the process, establishing transparent and sustainable funding mechanisms to raise funds both internally and externally and managing expectations of all stakeholders.

Generating Political Priority for Gender-Based Violence by Lydiah Bosire

The policy-oriented literature on gender-based violence (GBV) can be divided into two broad debates: the debate on definitions, and the closely related debate on measurement. The former contains mostly descriptive literature, articulating the extent of the problem through describing the different elements of GBV and various efforts undertaken to address it. Here, a distinction is made between the public health and the criminal justice approaches to GBV. The implication of what is included in different definitions in the first debate of GBV is the starting point for the latter strand in the literature, which is about measurement of the problem. This literature is largely technical and is based on the premise that understanding the prevalence of different forms of violence and their attendant causes is important for generating adequate responses and interventions that are effective and well-targeted.

Two gaps emerge. First, while these debates on definition and measurement are aimed at creating robust linkages between GBV and social outcomes, this linkage is underdeveloped. The causal and correlative relationships are minimally developed and limited by confounding variables. More research remains to be done in determining the direction of these relationships – for instance, whether poverty and intimate partner violence are unidirectionally linked, or mutually reinforcing. Second, the literature is largely silent about the nature and level of political priority accorded to GBV.

To be sure, the GBV policy community notes in frustration that despite the wide acknowledgement of the scope of the problem in documents, declarations, frameworks and conventions, GBV continues to have a low priority on the policy agenda. Concerns flowing from GBV – such as reparations for sexual crimes in transitional justice measures – sit equally low on the agenda. Nonetheless, there are few initiatives that attempt to systematically understand why. This paper will make a modest contribution to the second gap by giving an overview of the nature of political agenda-setting, describing the factors that seem to advance national and international political priority in other issue areas, and suggesting avenues for assessing political priority for GBV and its related concerns.