

# **Compound Violence against women in War Zones**

## **Syria and Sudan as examples**

### **Aims of the seminar**

This 10 week seminar investigates the situation of the Syrian and Sudani women under authoritarian regimes, particularly during the war time. While some autocracies may promote women's rights to secure loyalty, Syria has a long-standing history of gender discrimination that has intensified during the ongoing conflict. Despite international recommendations, tens of thousands of women have been randomly detained since the 2011 uprising, and faced forced disappearance, abuses on all levels, sexual assault, and lived in harsh conditions. Nearly, 60% of the displaced and refugees, are women and young girls, which could amount up to more than 7 millions. They struggle to survive or adapt with the new situation, and this has led to increased cases of suicide. The regime and other Syrian opponents, targeted civil women activists, and human rights defenders, violating UN resolutions 1325 and 2139, and the international humanitarian law. On the political level, women have been excluded and degraded by both sides, the regime and the opposition.

Similarly, Sudan is currently experiencing unprecedented levels of conflict, with intense violence in regions like Khartoum, Darfur, and Kordofan. This ongoing crisis has significantly increased the dangers for women and girls, who face heightened risks of sexual violence, exploitation, and abuse. Nearly 5.8 million internally displaced women and girls are especially vulnerable, with many cases of abuse remaining unreported due to inadequate support services and fears of stigma and retaliation. According to recent LPC news, over 130 Sudanese women have reportedly committed suicide to avoid sexual violence by Rapid Support Forces (RSF militias). Women who have fled Sudan continue to endure severe hardships in neighboring countries, and those stranded in refugee camps lack effective solutions to their struggles.

Finally, the seminar sheds light on the systematic repression of women activists and the difficulties they encounter to survive. It advocates for a comprehensive strategy to empower women and ensure their meaningful involvement on all levels of governance, which is essential for achieving lasting peace in Syria and Sudan.

**The medium of instruction is English.**

## The seminar focuses on the following topics:

### 1. What is Gender-based violence (GBV): Historical Overview

#### Reading list:

- "Gender-based violence throughout the Syria conflict: A 7-year analysis"  
European Journal of Public Health, 28(Supplement\_4), 2018, cky213.571.
- "An Overview of Gender-Based Violence in Syria (2024)"  
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 2024.
- Banwell, S. (2020), "Structural Violence Against Conflict-affected Females in Syria", Banwell, S. (Ed.) Gender and the Violence(s) of War and Armed Conflict: More Dangerous to Be a Woman? (Emerald Studies in Criminology, Feminism and Social Change), Emerald Publishing Limited, Leeds, pp. 85-106. <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-78769-115-520201006> Download as .RIS

### 2. Syrian Women under the Authoritarian Regime and the Impact of War on them

#### Reading list

- "VIOLATIONS AGAINST WOMEN IN SYRIA AND THE DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT OF THE CONFLICT ON THEM". WILPF, (2016)  
[chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/WILPF\\_VAW\\_HC-2016\\_WEB-ONEPAGE.pdf](chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/WILPF_VAW_HC-2016_WEB-ONEPAGE.pdf)
- NATALIE NGAI, N. (2022). Women Under Authoritarianism: Precarious, Glamorous Women Politicians in Hong Kong Political News and Gossip. International Journal of Communication. 16(2022), pp. 3215–3232.
- Zamfir , L. (2024). "Violence against women active in politics in the EU A serious obstacle to political participation", European Parliament. Can be accessed via: [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2024/759600/EPRS\\_BRI\(2024\)759600\\_EN.pdf](chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2024/759600/EPRS_BRI(2024)759600_EN.pdf)

### 3. Understanding Women's Experience of violence: Types and Nature of GBV Under the Syrian Local Authorities

## Reading list

- Kelly, J. (2010). "Rape in War: Motives of Militia in DRC "(PDF). United States Institute of Peace Special Report. Retrieved 20 August 2015. <https://www.usip.org/publications/2010/05/rape-war-motives-militia-drc>
- Alodaat, L and Sarah Boukhary, S. (eds) (2016), Violations Against Women In Syria and the Disproportionate: Impact of the Conflict on Them. Flymoskito.
- Lynn Welchman, L. (2023) Gendered impact of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic on women and girls. UN: Accessed through the following website:  
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2023/06/gendered-impact-conflict-syrian-arab-republic-women-and-girls>
- Types and nature of GBV under local authorities: Understanding Women's experience of violence

## Reading list

- 'I Lost My Dignity': Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in the Syrian Arab Republic" London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), 2017. It is Also available on reliefweb, 2018, through the following website:  
<https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/i-lost-my-dignity-sexual-and-gender-based-violence-syrian-arab-republic>
- Barmania, S. (1 2012)" .Women Under Siege: The Use of Rape as a Weapon of War in Syria". The Independent. Retrieved 11February 2025.
- "Women's Human Rights and Gender-Related Concerns in Situations of Conflict and Instability"  
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).
- "Report: No One Unaffected by Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Syrian Conflict"  
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), March 2018.

#### 4. Measures to stop GBV at conflict zone: Issues and Instruments.

##### Reading list

- **Whole of Syria Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility: Voices from Syria 2023 Assessment Findings"**  
ReliefWeb, 2023. Accessed via: <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/whole-syria-gender-based-violence-area-responsibility-voices-syria-2023-assessment-findings-humanitarian-needs-overview-enar>
- **"Women and Girls Most Affected by Conflict-Related Sexual Violence"**  
United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe (UNRIC), June 2023.  
**"Investigating Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Conflict"**  
Human Rights Watch, December 2023. Via:  
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/12/12/investigating-sexual-and-gender-based-violence-conflict>

#### 6. Gender-Based Violence in Conflict Zones: The Case of Sudan

##### Reading List:

- **"Sexual Violence in Conflict: The Case of Sudan"** by Sara E. Davies
- **"Women, War, and Gender-Based Violence: Insights from Sudan"** (International Review of the Red Cross, 2013)
- **Violence Against Women and Poverty in the Global South"** (Journal of Gender Studies, 2020)

#### 5. Social Norms and Traditional Practices Contributing to Gender-Based Violence.

##### Reading List:

- **"Child Marriage and its Impact on Gender-Based Violence in Sudan"** by Mariam Elamin
- **"Female Genital Mutilation in Sudan: A Cultural Practice or Gender-Based Violence?"** by Nada M. K. Ahmed

- **"Patriarchy and the Perpetuation of Violence: The Case of Sudan"** by Amina El-Eid
- **"Culture and Gender-Based Violence in the Global South: Power and Control"** by Amina Mama

## **8. The Role of NGOs and International Aid in Addressing GBV in Africa**

### **Reading List:**

- **"NGOs, Gender-Based Violence, and Humanitarian Interventions"** by Melissa Houghton
- **"The Humanitarian Crisis in Sudan: Responding to Gender-Based Violence"** by Heather A. P. Irvin
- **"Gender-Based Violence in Humanitarian Contexts: Case Studies from Sudan"** (UN Women, 2018)

## **9. Legal Frameworks and Gender-Based Violence: Challenges in Sudan**

### **Reading List:**

- **"The Legal Framework and Gender-Based Violence in Sudan: A Critical Review"** by Zeinab K. A. Mohamed
- **"Sudan's Legal and Institutional Response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence"** (African Journal of International and Comparative Law, 2014)
- **"The Role of International Human Rights Law in Combating Gender-Based Violence in Sudan"** by Eman Ali Hamed

## **10. Mental Health Consequences of Gender-Based Violence**

### **Reading List:**

- **"The Impact of Sexual Violence on Mental Health in Sudanese Refugees and Internally Displaced Women"** by Aliaa Abdrabo and Mohammed Elhaj
- **"Understanding the Nexus Between GBV and Conflict in Sudan"** by World Health Organization (WHO)