



Sexual Violence and Armed Conflict

Janie L. Leatherman

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Every year, hundreds of thousands of women become victims of sexual violence in conflict zones around the world; in the Democratic Republic of Congo alone, approximately 1,100 rapes are reported each month.

This book offers a comprehensive analysis of the causes, consequences and responses to sexual violence in contemporary armed conflict. It explores the function and effect of wartime sexual violence and examines the conditions that make women and girls most vulnerable to these acts both before, during and after conflict. To understand the motivations of the men (and occasionally women) who perpetrate this violence, the book analyzes the role played by systemic and situational factors such as patriarchy and militarized masculinity. Difficult questions of accountability are tackled; in particular, the case of child soldiers, who often suffer a double victimization when forced to commit sexual atrocities. The book concludes by looking at strategies of prevention and protection as well as new programs being set up on the ground to support the rehabilitation of survivors and their communities. Sexual violence in war has long been a taboo subject but, as this book shows, new and courageous steps are at last being taken at both local and international level - to end what has been called the "greatest silence in history".

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