



**Advancing Women's Rights Discourses in Conflict Regions: A Case Study of the Northern
Uganda Crisis**

By

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DECLARATION

I, Joanita Kokugonza Rwebangira declare that,

1. The research presented in the thesis except where otherwise indicated is my original research.
2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at another university.
3. The thesis does not contain other persons 'data, pictures graphs other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.

JOANITA KOKUGONZA RWEBANGIRA

Student Name

Signature

DATE

DEDICATION

To

My loving Parents,

Mr and Mrs Leonce Rwebangira

A special feeling of gratitude to you my dear Parents, you are the strength and the inspiration force of my dissertation. Your determination, commitment and dedication to my education have made me who I am today. I know I can never repay you for what you have done and I will for ever be grateful to God almighty for having you as Parents.

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To

Annalies Rwebangira

Martin Kaizage

Ethan Rweikiza Rutashongerwa

I dedicate this work to serve as an inspiration to you achieving greatness and academic success.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACCORD	African Centre for Constructive Resolution of Dispute
ACHPR	African Commission on Human Rights and People's Rights
ACHR	African Charter on Human Rights
AU	African Union
AVSI	Association of Volunteers in International Service Foundation
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CAR	Central African Republic
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All forms of discrimination against women.
CSOPNU	Civil Society Organisations for Peace in Northern Uganda
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DSM-IV-TR	The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
ECPAT	End Child Prostitution, Pornography and Trafficking
FARDC	Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (The Armed Forces of Republic of Congo)
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus infection / Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
HRW	Human Rights Watch 2009
HRW	Human Right watch
ICC	International Criminal Court
IDPs	Internal Displacement camps
LRA	Lord Resistance Army
MONUC	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
PVP	People's Voice for Peace
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNPF	United Nations Population Fund
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution.
UNTAET	The United Nations General Assembly placed East Timor
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Force
US	United States
WICCE	Women's International Cross Culture Exchange

ABSTRACT

Title: Advancing Women's Rights Discourses in Conflict Regions: A case study of the Northern Uganda Crisis

Violence in Northern Uganda perpetrated by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has continued for over two decades. Women and children have thus remained the most vulnerable, subjected human rights violations. In Northern Uganda the conflict is unique in terms of the damage it has triggered on women. The intensity of women rights violation mostly the sexual violence and torture related offences, is a solemn hindrance to physical and psychological health of women. This demonstrates the urgent need to address these conflict related criminal offences against women's rights in the region of Northern Uganda. Addressing the violation of women's human rights plus interrogating the delayed efforts to respond to these concerns by government and international organization, is the concern in this paper. The project is an empirical research exploration of effective methods to involve women in the process of recovering from conflict. This thesis reflects on human rights in the African context and how to address gross violations of human rights in Northern Uganda. It also looks at the factors that hinder the reintegration of women during the process recovering from conflict. It engages a critical discourse that advances women's rights as human rights in Northern Uganda.

Key words: Women's rights violations; Human Rights; Recovering from conflict

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Background

According to the international commission of jurists 1999, all individuals are entitled to certain basic rights in every part of the world, irrespective of the circumstances and as such no one is morally or ethically empowered to take away these rights from ordinary citizens. Rachel Murray argues that as democratic practices become common in Africa, the protection and understanding of basic human rights also become rooted on the continent (Murray, 2004). However, from the time of the adoption of the human rights framework in Africa in 1981 and the coming into force of the African Charter on Human Rights in 1986, adopted 27 June 1981, (OAU Doc. CAB/LEG/67/3 rev. 5, 21 I.L.M. 58 1982), entered into force 21 October 1986, this regional mechanism on human rights has been criticised for being ineffective, poorly funded, lacking impartiality and based on ambitious and unenforceable rights, and even neglected in the mainstream debate on human rights law (Matua, 2006).

Notably, the African charter on human rights and the African commission on human rights commission have questioned before whether such an ambitious document could ever be effectively implemented in Africa. Although it is clear that there are problems with the African human rights mechanism, as there are with all international and regional bodies, it has, however, made some significant contributions to the development of international human rights law in its relatively short existence. These contributions have been mostly related to issues affecting women's rights such as the right to own property, domestic violence and marriage rights (African commission on human rights and people's rights, 2008). The African commission of human rights and people's rights through its progressive interpretation of the charter, the commission has given guidance to states about the content of their obligations under the charter, and its provisions have inspired domestic legislation. In a number of countries, the charter is an integral part of national law as determined by the constitutional system in place, and in at least one state, Nigeria, it has explicitly been made part of domestic law through domesticating legislation (ACHPR, 2008).

It is generally acknowledged, especially within the African charter on human rights, that there are various types of human rights. This ranges from political to civil liberty rights to which human beings are entitled. Moreover, these rights are usually entrenched in a bill of rights and are meant to be constitutionally enforced by various prescribed laws. This fact notwithstanding, it is ironic that despite the existence of strict laws to protect human rights, there are parts of the world where the violation of women rights still remains extensive. This is the case especially in the region of northern Uganda, which is an area where violence perpetrated by a rebel group, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has continued for over two decades. Violence particularly against women and girls, including rape, marital rape, domestic violence, forced and early marriages, remains widespread in the country (Christopher, 2006). Civil society organizations in north Uganda working with victims believe that several categories of serious violations still occur in this region. The international security sector advisory team together with the Nexus Fund's civil society exchange program agree that killing, torture or cruel and inhuman degrading treatment which involve abduction, slavery, forced marriage, forced recruitment, mutilation, sexual violence, serious psychological harm, forced displacement, pillaging, looting and destruction of property, are all common illustrations of human rights violations taking place (ISSAT, 2013). Just like in any other region in conflict, women and children still remain the most vulnerable people in war zones area, subjected to child trafficking, sexual harassment rape, early marriage, child labour, polygamy, and slavery and many more atrocities (Avirgan and Martha, 1986).

The duration of the conflict in Northern Uganda makes it unique as it has been more than twenty years with the condition of women deteriorating intensely and sadly receiving limited concern from the government. Notably, the violation of women's rights as exemplified by sexual violence and torture is a serious infringement on women's general physical and psychological health and thus demonstrates the urgent need to address these criminal offences especially in the region of Gulu (African union report, 2003). Conflict in the region has aggravated the poverty levels which have mostly affected women and children. Since the late 1980s to 2006, the northern region of Uganda has been lagging behind in terms of development due to the destruction caused by the rebel group led by Joseph Konyi. The conflict has also displaced virtually the entire population in the region as people were still living in displaced people's camps by 2010 (Ferguson, 2007). As rebels are currently advancing further to the border in South Sudan and Congo, many people were forced to leave the camps and had to return to their

former villages. The journey back home, however, has not been easy due to many unresolved concerns that emerged during the conflict. Women in particular, faced many challenges relating to access, ownership and the use of the land which they had before the disruption and the loss of their bread winners in the war (Boulden, 2004).

The first main objective and focus of this study were to address not only the issue of the violation of women's human rights in this conflict, and to interrogate the delay on the part of the government and the international organisations whose involvement was not only indispensable but also imperative to respond to these concerns. After twelve years of war and displacement, Northern Ugandan women who have been affected are still not fully compensated or reintegrated back into their society and still face exclusions from most forms of participation in the process of recovering from the conflict. Highlighting the violation of women's rights as well as the effects on women's lives and the entire society is not only necessary and desirable but also imperative in Northern Uganda. This situation is considered as a major hindrance to the general development of the region. Raising the concerns and pinpointing the problem alone are arguably not enough. The second main objective of this study was to interrogate the government's approach as well as the measures taken to address this ongoing terror in Northern Uganda. Exploring a way forward regarding the consequential reparations for the women affected by the violence and also holding those who are responsible accountable were the major goals of the study. The exploration further describes the key role that women play in trying to bring peace to this region, as well as their resistance and survival strategies that have helped them restore their lives to normality.

The articulation of gender and feminist frameworks and the general inclusion of women from both formal and informal political arenas post the conflict have played a positive role in defining women's rights in relation to their recovery from the conflict. These women have clearly pointed out the state's reaction to the conflicts that obtained then as well as pointing out how much effort the state has injected into ensuring the safety of women during the war. These descriptions have put women's movements in a position to challenge and question whether various state-linked patronage practices are actually beneficial to the citizens. The emergence of such autonomous women's organizations has been a consequence of the loss of the state's legitimacy with the government acting as the principal agent regarding these matters. The lack of openings for political spaces, the economic crisis, and the shrinking of state resources without proper

justifications are all examples of the issues women's organisations try to point out. These women voice out the challenges they face, given that women's organizations and movements have often been clear on their fight against the violation of women's human rights. In addition to the attempts towards effecting change as well as promote women's organisational agendas on the subject, unity and the promotion of common political agendas on the issues of human rights, the most important aspect has been a creation of a link between the women's movements and the political arena to effect tangible change (Ferguson, 2007).

The core goal of this study was to focus on the ways in which support can be given to women who are trying to be part of the process of recovery from the conflict and also to facilitate proper reconciliation of the affected victims. The appreciation of women's potential in the actual contribution to peace building and reconciliation helps the national actors in achieving peace and reconciliation by engaging with grassroots women to ensure representation and accountability at all levels (Pugh, 2007). Recommendations to opening of various forums for the women survivors to deal with the faced trauma. It is important to keep in mind plus to be mindful of the fact that, finding multiple ways of normalizing the disrupted lives of these victims is the fundamental goal here. While they may have faced the horrors of war, this does not excuse their exclusion in the participation towards achieving the desired peace they want to have in their community.

In summary, this study has explored the effects of woman rights violations in the Northern Ugandan conflict and also explored the possibility of the positive contribution of women in the processes of recovering from conflict even after the traumatic experiences that they have faced. Holding the perpetrators accountable for their crimes against humanity where women have been used as a weapon of war, is ideally the starting point towards healing the society. This approach included the empowerment of women in Northern Uganda given that reintegration has been affected by the conflict from the settlement camps. The other broader issues to be investigated were as follows:

- (a) What is the understanding Women's Rights as Human rights in Ugandan Law?
- (b) What measures has the Ugandan government taken to implement and enforce women's rights?

(c) How is the government of Uganda dealing with the offenders of women's rights with specific reference to the war crimes in Northern Uganda?

(d) After dealing with the offenders, how do the affected women get reintegrated back into the society so that they can contribute to the development of the region?

In addressing some of the challenges posed above, the Ugandan Government is developing a transitional justice policy which will include a reparations component. The recommendations in the report and the discussions around it lay a solid basis for engaging the national stakeholders on a reparations policy and programming for victims of the Northern Uganda conflict. Kasper Agger (2012) in his recommendations "The end of Amnesty in Northern Uganda: the implication for the LRA defections", The Ugandan government's decision to end amnesty for fighters LRA in May 2012 is causing significant upheaval in LRA affected communities thus creating major hindrances to finally ending the LRA ordeal. This is due to the fact that former rebels fear that they will face prosecution and are certain that the removal of amnesty will discourage future defections and escapes from the LRA. This thesis highlights the implications of lacking a permanent solution to the LRA.

It would be premature to say that the right kinds of efforts are not being made to improve the situation but the progress and efforts from the government and international bodies are quite slow, which is also a form of injustice (Anup, 2000: 30). However, in order to explore and suggest holistic solutions to address the resolution of the conflict to women, it is important to firstly understand its origins and history. The following section attempts to provide a brief background to this conflict.

1.1 The history of conflict in Northern Uganda

Uganda has had evidence of conflict way before the Lord resistance army existed, ethnic and religious divisions as well as historical enmities and rivalries that contributed to the country's disintegration in the 1970. According to Bujira there was a wide gulf between Nilotic speakers in the north and Bantu speakers in the south and an economic division between pastoralists in the

drier rangelands of the west and north, and agriculturists, in the better watered highland and lakeside regions. There was also a historical division between the centralized and sometimes despotic rule of the ancient African kingdoms and the kinship-based politics elsewhere. The kingdoms were often at odds in regard to the control of land (Bujira ,2000). During the colonial period, the south had railways, cash crops, a system of Christian mission education, and the seat of government, seemingly at the expense of other regions. There also were religious groups that had lost ground to rivals in the past, for example, the domination of Muslims at the end of the nineteenth century by Christians allied to British colonialism. All these divisions prohibited the formation of a national culture.

On the other hand independence arrived without a national struggle against the British, who devised a timetable for withdrawal before local groups had organized a nationalist movement. This near absence of nationalism among the country's ethnic groups led to a series of political compromises. Mahoro (2004) recaps on history Uganda gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1962, and the country experienced five years of multiparty democracy under President Milton Obote before his regime began a slide toward violent dictatorship. Obote was ousted in 1971 by a non-commissioned army officer, Idi Amin Dada, whose coup was initially welcomed with widespread enthusiasm. Amin, however, quickly dissolved parliament and altered the constitution, granting himself absolute power and eliminating all opposition. His eight-year rule was epic in its violence. It is estimated that hundreds of thousands of people were killed during his regime (Mahoro, 2004). Amin particularly targeted the Acholi people of Northern Uganda, partly because of their support for his predecessor, but also because they traditionally composed the bulk of the army, and thus posed a potential threat to his reign. Amin's government devastated the country and its developing economy, in part by expelling all Asians from Uganda and essentially destroying a growing merchant class. A victim of his own excesses, Idi Amin was overthrown in 1979 and forced to flee into exile by a Tanzanian-backed rebellion that included Museveni. Rigged elections in 1980 returned Milton Obote to power, prompting Museveni to launch a guerrilla war in 1981.

The LRA began life in the early 1980's as the Holy Spirit Movement, led by a woman called Alice Lakwena who claimed the Holy Spirit had ordered her to overthrow the Ugandan

government, which was accused of treating the Acholi people of the North unfairly (Horowitz, 1985). As resentment towards the Ugandan government intensified, supporters flocked to Lakwena and the Holy Spirit movement gathered momentum, until a battle won by the current government led to Lakwena's exile. With no clear direction for the movement, a man claiming to be Lakwena's cousin, Joseph Kony, took over as leader and rebranded the movement in 1986 as the Lord's Resistance Army. Kony initially stated that the LRA's mission was to overthrow the government and rule Uganda based on the Ten Commandments. He rapidly lost support, however, and in frustration Kony began abducting thousands of children to swell its ranks, turning them into killers and unleashing them on villages.

Soon after Joseph Kony assumed management of the group, he changed the name to the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Joseph Kony, however, failed to gather popular support and was rejected by the population and local leaders. Kony increasingly turned against the civilians, accusing them of aiding the government in seeking his defeat. The conflict in northern Uganda escalated and resulted in large-scale killings, mutilations, abductions, and massive displacement. Civilians also suffered abuses committed by the Ugandan People's Defense Forces (UPDF), the national army charged with protecting them (Horowitz, 1985).

Given that Joseph Kony was not able to maintain the group's numbers or regional support, he started stealing food and abducting children to fill the ranks of his army. Subsequently, he lost any remaining regional support (Deng, 2004). What had started out as a rebel movement to end the oppression of the north became an oppression of the north in itself and Joseph Kony's tactics were considered to be very brutal. He often forced children to kill their parents or siblings with machetes or blunt tools. He abducted girls to be sex slaves for his officers. He brainwashed and indoctrinated the young and manipulated them with his claim of spiritual powers (Doom and Vlassenroot, 1992).

The LRA violent rebel group since then has been fighting the Ugandan government mostly limited to the northern part of the country. This uprising has been attributed to be a result from the longstanding political divide between the north and south of Uganda that was already in existence as explained before and it was a direct response to President Yoweri Museveni's

National Resistance Movement (NRM) plus its efforts to consolidate control over the northern part of the country. This specifies that the conflict in North Uganda is a complex dilemma due to the recent complicated factors that are additional contribution to the continued existing tensions ,thus its recently gained the title of one of the longest running armed conflict in Africa (UN Doc E/CN.4/2010).

At the height of the conflict in Uganda, children “night commuted.” That is, every evening they would walk miles from their homes to the city centers. There, hundreds of children would sleep in school houses, churches, or bus depots to avoid abduction by the LRA. Kony and the LRA abducted more than 30,000 children in northern Uganda (The Enough projects, 2006). Starting in 1996, the Ugandan government, unable to stop the LRA, required the people of northern Uganda to leave their villages and enter government run camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs). These camps were supposedly created for the safety of the people, but the camps were widespread with disease and violence. According to the enough projects in 2006 at the height of the conflict, 1.7 million people lived in these camps across the region. The conditions were squalid and there was no way to make a living, thus a generation of Acholi people was born and raised in these camps (Clark, 2001).

In 2005 the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants for Joseph Kony and four of his top commanders: Dominic Ongwen, Raska Lukwiya, Okot Odhiambo, and Vincent Otti. Of those, only Kony, Ongwen, and Odhiambo remain at large. Raska Lukwiya was killed in combat with the UPDF in August 2006 and Vincent Otti was killed on Kony’s command in November 2007 reportedly for wanting Kony to sign the peace agreement, a stance that Kony considered a betrayal (Clark, 2001).

In 2006 the LRA indicated an interest in peace negotiations held in Juba, Sudan (now South Sudan), and called the Juba Peace Talks. Meanwhile the LRA set up camp in Garamba National Park in northeastern Congo. In August of 2006, a Cessation of Hostilities agreement was signed by the LRA and the government of Uganda (Group report No. 124:2010).The talks took place over the course of two years. Joseph Kony sent a delegation to negotiate on his behalf, but when the final peace agreement was ready to be signed, Joseph Kony repeatedly postponed the date of

signing or failed to show up. Most notably, he failed to show up to sign the final peace agreement with the government of Uganda in April 2008 and November 2008. Throughout the peace talks, and in retrospect, it is suspected that Joseph Kony never intended to sign the final peace agreement. Instead, he possibly entered peace talks as a means of resting and regrouping. The entire time that the LRA was involved in peace talks they were provided with food, clothing, and medicine as a gesture of good faith. It now seems that the LRA was gathering its strength and stockpiling food (Burger, 2007). There is also significant evidence that Kony ordered his fighters to attack villages and abduct children in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) during the peace talks undermining the entire initiative.

In December 2008, when it became clear that Kony was not going to sign the agreement, operation lightning thunder was launched. It was the coordinated effort of Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, and Sudan, with intelligence and logistical support from the United States. The operation failed, Joseph Kony somehow learned of the attack in the hours before the air-raid and so he was able to escape. In retribution for the attempted attack, the LRA, led by ICC-indictee Dominic Ongwen, attacked villages in the DRC on December 24, 2008, killing 865 civilians and abducting 160 more over the course of 2 weeks (Burger, 2008). The LRA fighters were reportedly instructed to target churches, where people would be gathered with their families for Christmas Eve services. A year later the LRA reprised the Christmas massacres in the Makombo region in Northeastern Congo as a reminder of its powers of destruction (Mustafa, 2010). These attacks took place over four days, from December 14-18, 2009. This time they killed 321 people and abducted 250 (Human rights watch, 2009). Because of the remote region of the Makombo massacres in December 2009, the outside world knew nothing about the attacks until three months later. Human rights watch broke the news internationally on March 28, 2010.

The LRA left Uganda for good once the Juba Peace Talks began in 2006. Since 2008, they have carried out their attacks in the border regions of northeastern Congo, South Sudan, and Central African Republic. In its current state, the LRA is composed of several bands of fighters that are spread across the region. Some of these groups are nearly autonomous and have limited contact with one another but ultimately answer to Joseph Kony and the LRA command structure. Due to

increased awareness and global efforts to stop him, the entire fighting force of the LRA has been reduced from approximately 1,000 at the end of the Juba peace talks in 2008 to an estimated 300 fighters in 2012, not counting the abducted women and children who are used as “wives” and porters. While their numbers have diminished over the years, their capacity for destruction continues to be disproportionately large (Human rights watch, 2009).

South Sudan had been a traditional base for the LRA, with support from Khartoum, and it is possible that political changes in Sudan (that is, the comprehensive peace agreement (CPA) between North and South Sudan) prompted the LRA to enter the negotiations. It is also possible that the LRA entered the negotiations to avoid criminal prosecution by the newly established International Criminal Court (ICC) (Mustafa, 2008).

The new peace talks offered the first significant prospect for peace. The LRA withdrew its forces from Northern Uganda, assembling in Garamba National Park in the DRC. With the guidance of the mediation team, the parties created a five-item agenda: Cessation of Hostilities; Comprehensive Solutions to the Conflict; Accountability and Reconciliation; Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration; and Formal Ceasefire (The enough projects, 2010). The government conducted a large-scale public consultation about measures for justice and reconciliation, but after several crises with walk-outs by the LRA, the peace process ultimately collapsed (The enough project, 2010). In response to Kony's refusal to sign the final peace agreement, the Ugandan government, together with the United Nations, the governments of Sudan and the DRC, supported by the U.S. government, undertook a joint military operation against the LRA. Operation lightning thunder, with significant support from the U.S. government, sought to neutralize the LRA leadership from Garamba National Park, in eastern DRC, and dislodged the LRA in December 2008 (Mustafa, 2010). Once again the LRA evaded the attack and regrouped but now the conflict had become regional, with the LRA operating mainly in the DRC and the CAR. Assessing from the above this is probably due to the increase security in Northern Uganda and it is much easier to hide out in the thick forests of DRC and CAR.

Supporting Adam branch's observations that ICC arrest warrants for Joseph Kony and his commanders remain to be executed and the involvement of the Court has been controversial. Critics have pointed to the lack of prosecution of government actors as a sign of partiality, and argue that the ICC arrest warrants threatened the peace process. Branch (2007) conversely, supporters of the ICC's intervention have argued it has put renewed focus on the conflict, that the arrest warrants have placed pressure on the LRA to seek a negotiated settlement, and that the involvement of the ICC has created incentives for an agreement that includes accountability measures (Branch, 2007). At the same time, the Ugandan Parliament passed the International Criminal Court Act on March 9, 2010, to make provision in Uganda's law for the punishment of the international crimes covered by the Rome Statute: genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

For now, the LRA continues its operations outside of Uganda. The Ugandan army is conducting joint operations in both DRC and CAR, and on May 13, 2010, the U.S. Congress passed the "Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act" which will fund efforts to apprehend the LRA leadership and provide humanitarian assistance to affected communities for a six-month period. However, in the same way it responded to previous military operations, the LRA is now taking revenge on the population, killing and abducting civilians. Agreeing with Dareshori (2009) the above over view gives a clear insight into on the difficulties of the conflict and how it has unfolded to its current state. The most crucial aspect here is what the way forward is for the most vulnerable victims who are the women and children.

1.2 Uganda's human rights record and violations of women

Uganda's human rights record deteriorated after Idi Amin seized power in 1971 and the end of the 1970s it was one of the worst places in the world in terms of human rights violations. Approximately 100,000 to 500,000 civilians died at the hands of local security forces. Idi Amin's regime was characterized by human rights abuses, political repression, ethnic persecution, extrajudicial killings, nepotism, corruption, and gross economic mismanagement. In 1986 when Museveni seized power, he pledged to improve Uganda's reputation on human rights. To achieve this goal, the NRM arrested and tried soldiers and civilians for such crimes, and the government

worked to improve its reputation by respecting human rights (Harlow & Chilver, 1990). In May 1986, NRM officials created a Commission of Inquiry into the Violation of Human Rights to investigate these crimes under all governments since independence (Rowe, 1988). This did not fully materialize due to lack of resources which hampered the commission's performance. Financial and transportation problems initially confined its activities to Kampala and later, these difficulties temporarily brought public hearings to an end. Although a February 1988 Ford Foundation grant enabled the public hearings to resume, the commission's final report was unavailable in late 1990's (The Uganda human rights commission act 1997, Act 4/1997.)

The war in the northern part of Uganda is now twenty two years old and the conflict has been mainly between UPDF (formerly NRA) and the LRA, although other fighting forces were also involved at earlier stages. The fighting has been confined to the Gulu and Kitgum Districts and to some extent in Lira, Apac, and Ajumani districts. The main target of the war has been the civilian population like school children in particular, being prime targets. The education sector has therefore been worst hit given the manner of operation of the fighting forces. As part of the strategies to maintain their forces, the LRA resorted to abducting school children to boost their numbers and this was mainly because children are more easily indoctrinated than adults and cannot easily escape and trace their way back home. Hence the abduction of thousands of school children has been taking place from both Primary and Secondary Schools: Cases in point included the abductions from: Sacred Heart S.S. from where between June 1987 and March 1998 a total of 138 cases of abduction have been recorded (Avirgan and Martha, 2000). Other examples are Sir Samuel Baker School from where on 21st August, 1996, 39 students were abducted from their dormitory, St. Mary's College Lacor from where 23 girls were abducted on 23rd July, 1996 and another 32 on 20th August, 1992. Primary schools have recorded as many as 3384 known abductions, Total cases of known abductions of school children, however, stand at 5545, but it is likely to be higher than this. In the case of Primary school children, abduction also takes place at night from their homes or from their bush hide-outs where they spend nights for fear of the LRA (Avirgan and Martha, 2000:51-57).

According to Dorothy L. Hodgson, over 61% women of the total population live below the poverty line compared with 31% nationwide (UBO, 2007). The HIV/AIDS prevalence is placed

at 10.5% for women and 8% for men compared to 6.4% in the country (Uganda HIV/Aids sero-behavioral survey, 2004-2005). Infant mortality rate is placed at 172/1000 live births, maternal mortality at 700/10,000 (UBOS, 2007), reflecting a high level of poverty in the region. The 2002 population census indicated that 27% of the chronically poor households are female headed and 16% of the women-headed households are landless compared to 10% of male-headed households. Similarly, surveys in the region show that women have a higher preponderance of HIV infection across all age categories and regions of the country and there is an increase in GBV especially in conflict affected communities (Hodgson, 2008).

This war between the LRA and the national army, the Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF) has led to the loss of land that was owned by the affected families before the conflict. This leaves the women as the most vulnerable victims since they are the ones who then have to fend for their children and also ensure protection for them. The three districts of Acholis region, Gulu, Kitgum and Pader, have been particularly hit hard. Death and disease rates are high meanwhile food is scarce due to the disruption of the production process. Currently, about eighty percent of Acholi's people live in "protected villages" and camps (Internally Displaced Places) IDPs, which are often overcrowded and lack adequate water, sanitation and health services. Devoid of a means of livelihood in the camps, farmers and cattle farmers have been reduced to near total dependence on donated food and other humanitarian aid (Adekeye, 2002). Child abductions have long been a major feature of the conflict, but the number shot up after the UPDF launched an attack against the LRA in March 2002. The rebels kidnapped more than 10,000 children between June 2002 and October 2003, up from 101 in 2001 (Boulden, 2004). This brought the total number abducted by the LRA since the start of the conflict to more than 20,000 (Atkinson, 2000).

Abductees are made to carry heavy loads over long distances. Those who lag behind or fall ill are beaten or killed. Some are forced to kill, wound and injure or abduct innocent victims, and in some cases to watch while such abuses are committed. Sexual violence against girls and women is rampant and they are used as domestic servants or forced into sexual slavery as LRA commanders' 'wives'. They are subjected to rape, unwanted pregnancy and the risk of infection, including HIV. One of the visible signs of the collective trauma to which the people of northern Uganda have been subjected to is the phenomenon of "night commuters". These are vulnerable

people who, fearing abduction, move from the countryside into slightly more secure villages, towns or camps at the end of each day. Most of them are children and women who walk up to 10 km to seek refuge from the threat of abduction and violence (Pugh, 2007). They gather in schools, hospitals, district offices, and NGO compounds wherever they think they can spend the night in safety. Many have to sleep in the open, where they are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. The UN has estimated the number of night commuters in Gulu and Kitgum districts to be at 25,000 (Pugh, 2007).

The most recent recovering from conflict programs seek to ensure that women and girls have the capacity, opportunity and freedom to express themselves and participate in decision making processes at all levels (community, districts and national). The intended programme works to address gender inequality reflected in the fact that women have less political power than men, less economic clout and say within the community. They are subjected to gender-based violence both inside and outside the home (Christopher, 2006). The programme works to challenge the status quo through the creation of awareness and advocating for women's rights. Despite prevention and response mechanisms to SGBV, sexual and gender based violence continues to be a social evil, even after the conflict in the region. The problem is exacerbated by the high level of impunity, weak laws as well as a patriarchal society (Christopher, 2006). Record of the existing literature debates the conflict, the variation of human rights, and looks at what the rebels have done in Northern Uganda to the women and explaining the situation but there is little on the role that women can play in the recovering from the conflict process, since they are the ones mostly affected by the conflict. In most cases, they can understand the impact the conflict has brought to the community and thus have a useful contribution to make to the rebuilding of peace.

Over the past six years, most news reports have documented, analyzed, and reported on serious crimes and human rights violations committed by all the sides of the conflict between the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the government of Uganda in northern Uganda. This chapter gives brief description of the conflict in Northern Uganda explaining how deep rooted the conflict is. This specific focus gives a clear indication of how long the conflict has lasted in this place, thus to a clear image of how long the victims have face trauma and human rights

violations as women. This was to provide an analysis that will contribute the need for advancement of women's rights in Northern Uganda, thus a background to the conflict.

Chapter 2

Human rights, Women's Rights and the legal framework in Uganda

Undoubtedly and positively supporting Mawa (2002) that human rights in Uganda have had a limited recognition since precolonial times, Uganda's human rights record has been characterized by more violations than protections and promotions. According to Aili (1995), respect and acknowledgment of human rights gives a sense of dignity to an individual's value and worth. The existence of human rights demonstrates that human beings are aware of each other's worth. Thus human dignity is not only individuated but also extends to the community. Human rights enable community members to respect each other and live with each other in harmony. In addition, they are not rights to be requested or demanded since they are compulsory rights to be valued and for which all members should be responsible. The denial of human rights and fundamental freedoms is not only an individual and personal tragedy, but also creates conditions of social and political unrest, usually sowing the seeds of violence and conflict within and between societies and nations. This chapter give Universal Declaration of Human rights to interpret , reflect and draw understanding of the violation of women rights in Northern Uganda ,while unpacking this task it also gives a broader rationale of the study.

Human rights are set out as principles to reaffirm the fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women to determine and to promote social progress and better standards of life .Article 3, 4,16,18,19 and 21 of the universal declaration of human rights communicates directly to this study and the objectives it seeks to discourse. However even though the declaration is not legally binding but it positions the principles of humanity and respect of other, intentions which carry moral weight. Consequently many countries sum up their laws and legal documents based on the principles set forth by the Universal Declaration.

It is important to note that as much as the 1948 Universal Declaration and Genève 1864 convention is a step in the accurate foundation and direction to peace and harmony albeit not enough. Signing the declaration should be enforced on countries, a covenant, and convention

between states. Once it is signed, it must be ratified by the signatories. This means that the treaty must be accepted by the country's own parliament or equivalent legislative body. Then it becomes law. A declaration has the force of law and thus signing the document makes the parties signatories and by so doing give a moral obligation as well as a legal obligation to respect its terms. One of the greatest achievements of the United Nations is the creation of a comprehensive body of human rights legislation. Such legal obligations have huge impacts in terms of understanding the essence of human rights mostly to a society like Uganda. The existence of this universal code of human rights which all nations can subscribe to and to which all people can aspire to is a grate framework for peace (Atkinson, 2000).

Perhaps the limited understanding of the fundamental principles of Human rights has also contributed to its decline in Uganda. Rachel Murray's (2004) overview on the progress and problems of "The African Charter on human and People 1987-2000" Adopted 27 June 1981, OAU Doc. CAB/LEG/67/3 rev. 5, 21 I.L.M. 58 (1982), entered into force 21 October 1986) examines the provisions of the African Charter. ".....freedom, equality, justice and dignity are essential objectives for the achievement of the legitimate aspirations of the African peoples"; reaffirming the pledge they solemnly made in Article 2"(OAU Doc. CAB/LEG/67/3 rev. 5, 21 I.L.M.58 1982). Murray (2004) voices out her opinions, and agreeing to the criticized unrealistic and radical approach on the praised progressive inclusion of civil, political, economic, social and cultural and people's rights and she brings out detailed clarity on the concerns in line with human rights in the African perspective. Furthermore, the Rights and individual duties in this document and the eleven-member Commission created by the Charter have asserted a mandate to promote and protect human and people's rights. The challenge though is securing rights through state reporting and communication procedures as well as interpreting the provisions of this charter.

Most of its jurisprudence related to violations of Human Rights remains unclear, the foundation was laid in the 1980's but the structures were not fully developed. Uganda like other African countries has suffered the same fate. Article 5, 6 and 7 of the Charter explains that the membership of the Commission did not create a dynamic organization either. Its silence in interpreting the more unusual provisions of the Charter could be explained by the Commission's

unease at developing rights where there was little other international existing jurisprudence (OAU Doc. CAB/LEG/67/3 rev. 5, 21 I.L.M. 58 (1982)). The efforts to make a link on the necessary areas like the implication of interpreting women's rights and the interpretations of the Charter's provisions result from communications largely from within civil society, many of which have been submitted by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). As they deal with cases which are related to violations, they are usually on a one to one basis with victims (Tripp, 1995).

The comprehensive legally binding human rights agreements negotiated under UN patronages are the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. There are six committees within the UN system that try and check to see whether countries comply with the human rights treaties they have signed. These include 'treaty monitoring bodies and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee against Torture, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, The Committee on the Rights of the Child (OAU Doc. CAB/LEG/67/3 rev. 5, 21 I.L.M. 58 1982) . The committees may call upon Governments to respond to allegations and may adopt decisions and publish them along with criticisms or recommendations (Tripp, 1995).

Over the years, the United Nations has developed different approaches to scrutinize human rights abuses and to press for remedial action. Experts known as special rapporteurs or representatives gather facts, visit prisons, interview victims, and make recommendations on how to increase respect for human rights. They investigate situations in specific countries and conduct thematic studies on issues such as torture, religious intolerance, racism, the sale of children and violence against women (OAU Doc. CAB/LEG/67/3 rev. 5, 21 I.L.M. 58, 1982). Each year they send thousands of urgent cables to Governments requesting the release of prisoners, the commutation of death sentences or other vital action. Working groups have been established to investigate such issues as involuntary disappearances and arbitrary detention. Their reports highlighting human rights violations help to mobilize international attention. The UN high commissioner for human rights coordinates the UN human rights programme and promotes universal respect for human rights. Human rights activities in the United Nations are coordinated by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva. The Office, services the UN Commission on

Human Rights and most UN human rights treaty bodies. Every year, the Office receives about 400,000 complaints of human rights violations (Benedek, 2000).

According to BBC report in 2003, Uganda was seeking military assistance from the United States of America, to deal with the war in Northern Uganda against the LRA rebels. The LRA was classified by the United States as a terror group after the September 11, 2001 attacks. During President Bush's visit in July 2003 of African countries, he pledged \$150 million to help African countries fight terrorism. The independent report provides clear evidence to no doubt that it is the LRA that has committed most of the terrific crimes against civilians in Northern Uganda. This has shown signs of continuing because the views of human rights groups and peace groups in Uganda is doubtful of any possible successful fruits of the Ugandan government's military operations against the rebels even if it should gain additional international military assistance. On the other hand, President Museveni, who publicized "Operation Iron Fist" as war strategy on terrorism, and had proclaimed his troops to be largely successful. In 2002, Uganda launched Operation Iron Fist in an attempt to definitively defeat the insurgency, but the operation sparked more intense and violent attacks by the LRA and instigated the LRA's return from Southern Sudan to northern Uganda. The failed operation dramatically increased the number of internally displaced people, and failed to end the war adding to more female headed homes. At the height of the conflict, nearly 2 million northern Ugandans were living in displaced camps (Quinn, 2008). He has additionally requested increases in military spending and promised that if the army had new helicopters it would be able to finish the job.

Throughout late 2005 and early 2006, the LRA shifted their base of operations into North-eastern Congo, near Garamba National Park, underscoring the regional dimensions of the conflict. Around the same time, the International Criminal Court, or ICC, unsealed arrest warrants for five senior LRA leaders, including Kony. The ICC investigation began after the Ugandan government referred the LRA situation to the Court in late 2003. The ICC's actions, coupled with pressure on the battlefield, pushed the LRA to agree to peace talks with the Ugandan government, and these negotiations began in July 2006 in Juba, southern Sudan. While many Ugandans, activists, and diplomats were hopeful that a deal might be struck, talks fell apart late in 2008; with Kony repeatedly refusing to sign a deal that his delegation had helped draft (Burger, 2010). Meanwhile

other stake holders like the religious leaders, women groups and women's foundation support, have called on the government of neighboring borders like Sudan to stop providing arms to the rebels, and on the international community to take a more active role in pressing for peace, plus on the Ugandan government to end human rights abuses using its own security personnel. Gina Bramucci of Association of Volunteers in International Service, Italy-AVSI who writes "Uganda: A War Ignored" reports that the Acholi people are both the source of forced recruits for the rebels and the primary targets of rebel attacks. AVSI is an Italian NGO that operates in Northern Uganda. Bramucci's press release summarizes the latest human rights watch report on the conflict (African action, 2003).

On the political front, relations between Uganda and Sudan grew tense with renewed accusations that Sudan is supporting the LRA. Youth who escape captivity report large supplies of arms coming from elements within Sudan and questions continue to circulate about whether Museveni is aiding Sudanese rebels. International mediators made significant progress in pushing for Sudanese peace talks in early 2003 although the inextricable link to northern Uganda is often considered a minor issue (BBC, 2003).

Directing to UN intervention in other African conflicts, Acholi leaders and women's organizations like AVSI now call for outside intervention, international pressure for protection of civilians, and consideration of the crisis at the United Nations. Aid agencies have been vocal as well, calling attention to the Ugandan army's duty to protect civilians (African action, 2003). Until some semblance of security is established in Acholiland, agencies seeking to deliver aid remain largely unable to access remote areas. This, combined with a second consecutive planting season lost due to insecurity, caused the U.N World Food Program to declare 1.6 million people in need of "life-saving" food aid. The European Union and the U.S government have taken some notice of the upsurge of conflict and the desperate humanitarian situation. In early July, members of the European parliament offered a resolution demanding greater protection of civilians and a return to dialogue (African action, 2003).

Recently, in 2010, approximately 20,000 young people and women marched through the town in July 14, carrying messages directed at Uganda's political and religious leaders, and protesting

against a rebel insurgency that has put countless children on intimate terms with violence, hunger and death. They held signs that asked for a lasting peace and an end to fear saying: "We don't want to become killers." "We do not want to die." "We children cry day and night for peace." This is a clear indication of a society led by women that wants to be part of the process of recovering from conflict (Bramucci, 2003). They want to engage the important players like the government to hear them out and do something.



Demonstrators in Kampala, Uganda

Credit: Beatrice Lattwala

2.1 Compensation of female victims and their reintegration back into society

The gravity of the conflict situation and urgent need to place more attention on the needs of the victims of this conflict is very critical. Even though the process of healing is very gradual, it has to start at some point. On the other hand, the process cannot start without an understanding of the nature of damages and inhuman acts that were committed. According to *The Berkeley Tulane Initiative on Vulnerable Populations* which conducts research in countries with experience of serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, unpacking and analyzing this violation of human rights in details is a good start. The conflict in Northern Uganda was one of their many projects. The organization used empirical research methods to give a voice to the survivors of mass violence in Northern Uganda and their motive was to ensure that the needs of the survivors were recognized and acted on by governments, UN agencies, and nongovernmental organizations (Wierda *et al*, 2007). This was intended to support and improve the capacity of local organizations to collect and analyze data on vulnerable women and children so that their human rights could be protected (Human rights watch, 2010).

At present, their initiatives include assisting centers mostly with former child soldiers in Northern Uganda to improve their capacity to collect and analyze data and provide follow up services to returnees and helping the Victims and Witnesses Unit of the International Criminal Court develop questionnaires to improve their services for witnesses (Wierda *et al*, 2007) . They also assist Human Rights Watch in improving its capacity to collect and analyze empirical data on violations of human rights; and collaborating with the International Center for Transitional Justice to conduct research on transitional justice mechanisms in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, and Uganda since this is where some of the abducted women are hidden or where the crimes were committed.

If one observes the survivors who have come to the centers and the temporary accommodation (replacement camps) most are abductees of the LRA. They can be distinguished by subgroups based on gender, length of abduction, experience, and exposure to violence. This is because they all need different kinds of assistance according to the nature of their condition. Programs aimed at providing psychosocial assistance to former abductees and helping them reintegrate into their

communities should be mindful of these characteristics. In general, more programs need to be developed to provide all children and youth in northern Uganda, including former abductees, with educational opportunities, vocational training, meaningful jobs, and leadership training. The delay in addressing some of these urgent issues is a typical example of injustice to the already fragile victims. Of the majority of former abductees, 61% were women between 10 to 18 years old when they arrived at the reception centers. It is clear that females stayed longer with the LRA than males (Wierda *et al*, 2007). Young women between the ages of 19 and 30 tended to stay longer with the LRA, averaging 4 and half years. Three factors may explain why women between 19 to 30 years old stayed with the LRA for long periods of time (Human rights watch, 2009). First, the LRA abducts girls and women to serve as long-term sexual partners and domestic servants to the commanders. Fourteen per cent of the females who passed through a reception center in the district of Apac self-reported that they had been “given” to commanders and 10 percent reported giving birth while in captivity. Second, women forced to serve as “wives” are likely to be kept in encampments and villages located some distance from combat zones, offering less opportunity to escape, surrender, or to be captured by army troops. Finally, women who had babies while in captivity may fear trying to escape or simply chose not to leave the rebel group (Human rights watch, 2009).

The LRA abductees have suffered a wide range of abuses during their captivity. Information about these abuses is contained in data collected by a Population-Based Survey on Attitudes about Peace, Justice, and Social Reconstruction in Northern Uganda at three of the eight reception centers. At the same time, it must be recognized that many if not most of the young ladies have children with the LRA rebels, in some cases they were only able to escape by them leaving their children behind or taking some children and then leaving other children behind (Wierda *et al* 2007) . The abducted survivors this crises have all been affected deeply in some way by the violence plus displacement, loss of family members, witnessing horrific events, and lack of access to health care, education, and other services is a constant anguish to their already disrupted life (Nakayi, 2008).

Indeed, a disproportionate amount of attention has been paid to former LRA abductees in the form of media attention, “resettlement packages,” and direct cash aid to returnees and their

families. This situation has caused resentment in some communities and diverted the focus away from the general situation of women and children in northern Uganda. Rather than creating a set of general services for formerly abducted people like resettlement packages, emphasis should be placed on integrated, community based programs that invest in women and children's empowerment and recovery in Northern Uganda, including those who were never abducted. More support programs need to be developed for them to be able to raise their children and provide for them. In addition they also need to have the ability to have access to educational opportunities, vocational training, for their children so that they can have meaningful jobs, to contribute to the economy including good leadership for the future (Adoko & Levine, 2004).

It is clear that as the war winds up and many people have started leaving the camps to return to their former villages, examining the challenges that women are still facing is the critical question for this study. This also leads to a need to investigate the compensation process and ensuring that these women do not continue facing any further violations. Even with the little effort from the government and international organizations to ensure protection of women rights in Northern Uganda, the challenge is still huge in terms of accessibility of these opportunities so that they can exploit them.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework and Research Methodology

3.1 Theoretical framework

In the 1960s and early 1970s, both theory and research in relation to gender inequality focused on males and the contribution to the patterns of gender inequality. Many critical feminist scholars and activists stayed within the scientific ground preferring to conceptualize the gender process in more neutral theoretical terms. In particular, those in the scientific camp worked within the boundaries of the conflict theory approach analysing gender inequalities as another form of conflict producing social stratification (Saltzman, 1984). This study used a combination of trauma, conflict and feminist theories including peace building approaches to explain and address the violation of women's human rights in the region of Northern Uganda. This combination was meant to explain the various concerns as to why women are experiencing such violations against human rights. Before one could fully grasp the intensity of the violation of women's rights in conflict and war, there was a need to comprehend the trauma that the violations can cause to a human being. Explaining how and why these situations then occur to women was also very vital and thus the use of theories as a critical foundational tools.

Trauma is serious injury or shock that impacts on a human body, from violence or an accident, emotional wound or any shock that creates substantial lasting damage to the psychological development of a person. Sandra L. Bloom (1999) gives detailed exposition on trauma and its effects on a human body and her theory explains that people are traumatized whenever they fear for their lives or for the lives of someone they love. Traumatic experiences can impact on the entire person. Bloom also asserts that trauma affects the way a victim thinks, the way a victim learns, the way a victim remembers things, their self-feelings and also that trauma will have an impact on a victim depending on the damage caused. Extending this to war and conflict where traumatic experiences are daily occurrences, it is safe to assume that the damage of conflict and war on women can have lifetime impairment. In addition, Bloom further expounds that these

traumatic experiences can also impact on the way the victims feels about other people around. The way the victims make sense of the world can also be impacted upon as all these are profoundly altered by traumatic experience. Bloom also asserts that human behaviour is complex to understand even in a normal setting. Thus it becomes even more complicated to fully comprehend particularly when this behaviour is combined with responses to trauma. Bloom explains that overwhelming emotions can and do damage on our bodies as well as our organs and this then impacts on our psyche (Bloom, 1999: 10-15).

As a species, we survive largely because we developed as social animals for mutual protection. This social nature of human beings is the need to attach ourselves to other human beings. Women, who suffer disrupted attachments caused by war, may suffer damage in respect of all their developmental systems, including their brains. They may thus become particularly ill-suited in extreme cases where the victim is somehow attached to the people who are violating her. Bloom also points out how complex the brain is and how powerful memories distinguish us as the most intelligent of all animals. It is that very intelligence that leaves us vulnerable to the effects of trauma such as flashbacks, body memories, post traumatic nightmares and behaviour re-enactments (Bloom, 1999:12). Proving how serious the traumatic experience face is in conflict and war by female victims can have lasting injury on their brain and body.

The social nature of our species is guaranteed by an innate sense of reciprocity that can be observed even among primates. The same sense of fair play leads not only to the evolution of a justice system, but also to the need for revenge. In this regard, Bloom gives a physiologically designed function clarifying that human beings are best understood as an integrated whole, just like a computer. The fragmentation that accompanies traumatic experiences degrades this integration and impedes maximum performance in a variety of ways. Human beings function best when they are adequately stimulated but simultaneously protected from overwhelming stress, which explains our need for order, for safety and for adequate protection (Bloom, 1999: 15-17).

Rae Lesser Blumberg (1984) developed a theory emphasizing women's degree of control of the means of production and the distribution of economic surplus. Blumberg's theory is based on a

broad empirical knowledge of diverse society types, ranging from hunting and gathering through horticultural and agrarian systems to industrial societies. Her theory thus explains the position of women relative to men in all types of societies, from the earliest to the most complex societies of the late twentieth century. The greater women's economic power is relative to men's and the more women control their own lives, the greater their access will be to other sources of value in stratified social systems, especially honour and prestige, political power, and ideological support for their rights. Blumberg's approach has also been included in this study to explain a variety of critical issues that deal with the empowerment of women mostly when dealing with the tools to reintegrate women back into the society after the displacement in a post war context.

Blumberg's theory is mostly representative of not only scientifically oriented feminist approaches but also gender inequalities as it goes further in detail to describe that gender inequalities exist when men control disproportionate resources. Conversely, the men decline as women gain economic, political, and ideological resources if resources are distributed equally. For women to gain access to these resources requires mobilization by women and their allies, plus change in their current conditions to influence how effective the progress develops. This theory tries to cast gender inequality in a more comparative light, viewing patterns of gender stratification in all types of societies, past, present and future (Blumberg, 1984).

Blumberg 1984 also argues that gender inequality is not only influenced by the control of resources, but that women's mobilization to pursue their interests is influenced by other forces, especially industrialization, urbanization, and expansion of the middle classes. When these events occur, middle-class women might begin to seek expanded opportunities outside their domestic responsibilities and they are more likely to have the resources (material, educational, and symbolic-ideological) to pursue opportunities. As they do so, however, they confront the existing system of gender stratification which creates role dilemmas. As women overcome these dilemmas, they acquire a sense of efficacy and begin to change their frames of reference in ways counter to dominant gender definitions (Hodgson, 2008). As women pursue interests outside the domestic sphere with this changed frame of reference, especially if they do so in a context where other women are also in proximity pursuing the same goals, they will experience an escalated sense of deprivation as they encounter the gendered division of labour and the distribution of

power. For now, they interpret these obstacles as perceiving that they deserve more than old gender definitions allowed, and their sense of deprivation increases relative to their dramatically escalated expectations for what is possible, or what should be possible.

When women experience these sentiments collectively and in proximity, they begin to form women's movement organizations to pursue the interests of women in eliminating or at least mitigating gender inequality. Even if these movements split into diverse factions, the ideological and political ferment created will begin to erode old gender definitions and to instil the values of those of the more moderate organizations of the women's movement (Hodgson, 2008). As public support increases for these moderate definitions, more expansive efforts to change the gender-based division of labour, the system of gender ideology, norms, and stereotypes, and the distribution of power can proceed. And, if elites begin to support these efforts, the women's movement will proceed more rapidly.

3.2 Research methodology and techniques

The study uses qualitative research methods, as qualitative research is primarily an exploratory research, used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations. It best provides insights into the problem or helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research; it is also a principal form of research in social science. It is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). In this study it provides insights into the research problem. Qualitative research is employed in this study to as it is the best technique that will explain and convey the understanding of women's right violation as human rights violation. Desktop research methodology is employed gather data/information that is used in the study (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). The study embarks with a historical summary of war and conflict in Uganda prior to the existence of LRA as a way of providing background to the factors leading to women violation in Northern Uganda. Desktop research is gathering and analysing information already available in print or published on the internet.

The secondary material used was already documented interviews and testimonies of the victims of the Northern Uganda conflict/war that was obtained from the researched material and produced by other sources, individuals and organisations on the internet as it was a desktop study. This information was also accessed from government documents like police cases that have been reported, court cases still in progress, and those with conviction, testimonies retrieved by global organisations like the United Nations in the replacement campus, news reports (newspapers and television documentaries) from main newspapers, digital sources and civil societies like the ISSAT and ACHPR. These testimonies (see Appendixes) from the women in Northern Uganda have been deployed to develop a clearer understanding of women rights. The testimonies have also been used as information for exploring and giving reasons to explain the injustices perpetrated against the women and also explain the effects it has had on the growth of the region. This intense investigation of human rights violations also included suggestions and ways of including women in the peace building process after addressing the injustices that they have faced in the conflict. The dissertation concluded with recommendations on the benefits of including women in the peace building or the recovering from conflict process.

Data analysis which is a systematic search for meaning that was used to process this qualitative research. The data analysis was then delicately employed so that the data that was used to get to the conclusion of the study can be communicated to others. The analysis done was used for organizing and interrogating data in ways that allowed seeing patterns, to identify themes, to discover relationships, to develop explanations, to make interpretations, to mount critiques, and to generate theories. The process involved a synthesis, evaluation, interpretation, categorization, hypothesizing, comparison, and pattern finding, which was engaged with my own intellectual capacities to make sense of qualitative data. This included examining aspects of social life in the past combining theory and qualitative data collection usually used for descriptive research. This study included secondary materials since it was aimed at conveying an exploratory and explanatory detailed description of advancing women's rights as a discourse in conflict regions.

This dissertation employed the above methods because the choice of methods has advantages in this particular case study. These methods expanded the actual issues that needed to get addressed regarding women rights. The methods also detailed a variety of information that was required on

the importance of women' rights as human rights in conflict regions. Qualitative research is a non-numerical way to collect and interpret information and it focuses more on human behaviour which is the best approach in this case. (White, 2000:28-29).

Due to the nature of the research, interviews (see Appendixes) conducted by reliable research material sources from like the NGO's, civil societies, UN project reports and the likes have been the best tactic in undertaking this study, simply due to the consideration of the fact that every woman's testimony varies and the reaction to the injustices committed is different. The sensitive nature of the research also limited the data collection to documented interviews as mentioned above. In addition to the testimonies of the victims the study has been supported by examining archival material such as books, documentaries, testimonies, internet electronic sources, newspapers, articles and government records. Other reasons that informed this preference have been the nature of relevant material like government records and the relative ease in accessing these documents and also the cost element of accessing materials was highly minimised. The process involved accessing information from published resources and non-published sources (Delaney, 2005). The steps were systematic, starting with identifying relevant library holdings and then assembling relevant international secondary data on human rights.

Due to the limited time line of the project, the location has been the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, Howard College Campus, where all developments of the study took place and all the resources were complied. According to Kevin Durkheim there is a wide spread agreement that when conducting research data should not only be valid but should also capture the meaning of what the researcher is observing. In compliance with this injunction, the data that was collected from the various sources was valid and helped in the understanding of human rights in Northern Uganda (Terre, 2006).

Lastly, the information collected was analysed to arrive at relevant conclusions and recommendations. The aim of the research design was to plan and structure the research project in such a manner that the eventual validity of the research findings was maximized. The research design is usually determined by the paradigm, purpose, context and the techniques used (Blanch, 2006:296).

It is worth reiterating that the method of research used in this study was a qualitative approach aimed at answering the study questions through observation and interview as well as documentary review. The research questions were:

- 1 How is the violation of women rights addressed in Northern Uganda?
- 2 What are the factors that limit women rights in Uganda to be considered as human rights?
- 3 What obstacles hinder the integration of women and their recovering from conflict?
- 4 How do these obstacles affect women's reintegration back into the society so that they can contribute to the development of the region?

These questions have been explored from the perspective of the victims and the activists of women rights. Using a qualitative approach was more appropriate in this study due to the fact that it is a naturalistic non-manipulative inquiry that focuses on intact situations of a conflict or war condition. The qualitative approach enables the researcher to note the opinions of women and also victims of women right violations in their natural setting, interview, and interpret the material used according to the real situation that the victims faced.

This included examining aspects of the social life in the past by combining theory and qualitative data collection usually used for descriptive research. The secondary material that was used was selected because the study aimed at conveying an exploratory and explanatory detailed description of advancing a women's rights discourse in conflict regions. Using the qualitative approach gave the researcher opportunity to employ both historical and comparative research methods in addition to the secondary research data which entailed meaning already documented interviews. The interviews used in the study were obtained after observations in a one on one interaction with the participants in their own setting. Applying the qualitative approach enabled the process to be interpreted in the situation of the study. It allowed the use of expressive language and the presence of the participants' voices in text. The critical information used in this study represents the participants' views of the specific situation that was under investigation.

3.3 Study design and process

The study adopted an analytical approach from participatory documented material that was already archived by NGO's mostly carried out by the *Women's International Cross Culture Exchange* (Isis-WICCE) as they carried out their operations in Northern Uganda filled “ Amplifying the women's voice and power. The interviews were considered in both design and actual implementation of interview process with the victims, through a process of consultation, sharing of views, opinions and experiences between the researchers, research assistants, respondents and opinion leaders.

A series of workshops, held from June 1998 to 2000 gave women from all war affected districts of Uganda the opportunity to share their experiences. During these workshops concept papers prepared by the *Women's International Cross Culture Exchange* (Isis-WICCE) were handed out to gain access to the women affected by war in Northern Uganda. Various topics were discussed during these workshops which were also a valuable source of information on numerous subjects regarding women rights as human rights and violation of human rights in conflict and war. The districts selected to participate in the workshops included, Luweero, Iganga, Soroti, Gulu and Kasese and were identified as study areas during the series of the workshops and interviews.

The research material used was documented as raw field data used in previous research which included:

- (a) Reports, documents and publications from various NGOs and organisations like ACCORD, World Vision, World Food Programme, AVSI, NRC, Action Faim, GUSCO and Gulu Development Agency.
- (b) Fieldwork conducted by Isis-WICCE in collaboration with *People's Voice for Peace* (PVP); a local NGO based in Gulu District and The report from Members of PVP who had previously collaborated with Isis-WICCE in other programmes and activities.

(c) The report of the fieldwork team consisting of seven female and two male research assistants. Most of these research assistants had already carried out other research projects including the collection and documentation of the oral testimonies of both women and men about their experiences during the armed conflicts.

(d) *Women's International Cross Culture Exchange (Isis-WICCE) -WICCE - Research Report 7.*

(e) The literature review materials produced on the study subject by various researchers was carried out before the actual consultation of the documented raw data of the experiences of the women. Some of the material was used from the *Exchange Programme Institute* participant's that were from the area where it had documented 20 case studies as part of the participant's individual project.

(f) Other case studies documented by Isis-WICCE during workshop visits to Gulu (the 1998 involvement in the Advocacy workshop in collaboration with UWONET and field investigation) became part of my research material for the study.

(g) The study also used another field research data from a case study that included the 30 oral testimonies on "women and war" documented in 1993 by the *Agency for Co-operation and Research in Development (ACCORD)* 2 five (5) men's testimonies on the theme *Men and their attitude to violence* collected in 1998, and studies done by World Vision and Unicef.

The objective of using these particular materials was to ensure that:

(a) The process of the data collection respected the communities and the communities were sensitized on the objectives of the proposed workshops

(b) The data was intended to solicit support and build rapport with the people in the communities and their leaders.

(c) The interactions aimed at obtaining ideas from opinion leaders/women leaders in the identified communities on how best the study could be carried out and identify potential respondents for the study.

(d) The community's expectations and the ways that they felt could be included in the process of recovering from conflict.

(e) The participants of the sub-county meetings included sub-county chiefs, LCIII chairpersons, village LC leaders, women LC leaders, CBO and NGO local leaders, widows, single mothers, married women and the youths.

Various methods were used to collect this data used for the study with evidence provided. These included individual interviews, focus group discussions, in-depth interviews/case studies and key informant interviews with various categories of respondents. Video and audio recordings as well as still camera photography of the process and the destruction caused by the war were carried out.

Individual respondent interviews were carried out in homes by the organisations through their employees like doctors working with the victims using a structured questionnaire. The individual interviews also happened as a result of professional engagement with no intention to use the information given for research which allowed the victims to evaluate and give a true reflection of their lives and the situation before the war thus giving their true feelings of the war experiences which included various atrocities committed by the fighting forces, respondents' experiences during flight and in hiding, life faced in camps and "protected villages", women's survival strategies during the war, and changes in traditional gender roles and the impact of war.

Group victims Discussions / in depth interviews/case studies

Information was also gathered from the testimonies of groups of women who had suffered similar problems. Previously documented testimonies narrate a variety of stories including the general hardships that women went through during the war, problems of abduction, sexual abuse

and the general destruction caused by the war. There were also in-depth interviews conducted with women who had been subjected to various human Rights abuses, which included: maiming and mutilation; sexual harassment including rape and other forms of violations; physical torture including burning with paraffin; injuries caused by land and personnel mines as well as other explosives; and witnessing the brutal murder of close relatives.

The selected groups formed unions as a coping method as well as to share ways regarding the way forward. The groups included:

- (a) The landmine victims (1 female group).
- (b) The sexually abused (female group in Gulu).
- (c) Those who suffered abduction (1 female).
- (d) Child mothers (1 female group).
- (e) Those who suffered displacement (1 female).
- (f) Soldier's wives and/or "camp followers" (1 female group).
- (g) Ex-combatants (1 female group).

Filming and photography

Video and audio recording as well as still camera photography that was publically available on YouTube, details was also used throughout this project as a way of capturing the general environment of the readings and as a way of data capturing that was used to inform the study . The effects of the war on the infrastructure and on several women who were physically maimed were captured in pictorial form. Publication of some of these, however, may involve express permission being sought from those photographed, and hence, they are not included in this report.

- Uganda's 20 years Holocaust, 2007 by Micheal Nease
- Night Commuters by 2010 Alex Wilson
- Night commuting by the Big Rorg
- Cinderella Children – 2010 The Documentary by Cinderella Children
- Nothern Uganda Rising from the Ruins of war. 2009 By Mugrich

- War in Northern Uganda – 2010 Alison Berardi
- The children’s war – Uganda December 2003 by Jouneryman Pictures
- Women Rights Uganda ,15 May 2015 –The open society initiative for Eastern Africa Orsen

Chapter 4

Conflict Resolution and Transformation Approaches

4.1 Conflict and violence

Conflict tears the social fabric of a stable society apart thus contravening the ethical view that civilians should be immune to violence when in conflict. Sadly, this is not the case in practice as women rights violations vary extensively depending on the nature of conflict as well as the characteristics of the society in particular. The type of violence experienced against women also varies and rebel groups and governments' soldiers have practiced indiscriminate violent acts against civilians, and thus a subject of wide popular scholarly examination. In light of these considerations, conflict, feminist and trauma theories examine the rationale of women rights violation in conflict with the view of understanding this rationale in relation to the advancement of women rights in conflict state. This chapter examines the structure behind the violation of women partially violence that women face at the hands of armed combats and rebels. While critically discussing this, the chapter also explicates patterns of violence in conflict, thus bringing out a clear picture of what actual violation of women rights is. Beliefs may shape the use of selective versus to justify the use of violence by an armed group, but this does not mean these beliefs are right or should not be challenged.

Conflict, according to Wallenstein (2002), refers to a condition where two or more parties strive to acquire at the same time an available set of scarce resources, which can be either material or immaterial. Also, it is argued by Malender & Pigache (2000) that conflict in itself is frequently a constructive element of a dynamic society though it becomes detrimental and problematic when the involved parties opt for violent means to advance their cause. Essentially, conflicts are not only about economic resources in nature but also involve class, status and power (Swanström & Weissmann, 2007). In most cases, conflicts are based on perception rather than on attitudes or behaviour. When it comes to conflict, that are violent, usually forceful factors in the society that compel people to disagree ,be on opposite sides and even provoke each other. Some of these factors like ethnicity or religion may not appear to be conflict-ridden. Repeatedly, nonetheless, the same factors may also harbour lenient and cooperative prospects (Malan, 2008). Conflict is

common, part and parcel of human relationships and therefore conflict is a motor of change (Lederach & Michelle, 1995). Every single time ideas, activities, structures and people's relations to each other alter, some type of conflict is likely to be experienced.

There are basically three types of conflict and these include intrapersonal conflict, interpersonal conflict and intergroup conflict. Intrapersonal conflict takes place within an individual. An individual facing guilt as an outcome of inner conflicts usually becomes depressed, irritable and restless (Allwood, 1993). Nonetheless, identifying the real source of the conflict and distinguishing between what one leads to daydreaming and continued conflict while realistic wanting can contribute directly to a particular behaviour (Francis, 2002). Therefore, where there is follow through behaviour, an individual feels stronger and more confident. He has risen to a personal challenge and brought about personal change.

Interpersonal conflict on the other hand takes places among individuals in the same society or organization. It subsists when people interact in some way to produce results or attain goals. Kellermann (1995) states that interpersonal conflicts are generally present in human relations and become especially visible in group psychotherapy. The mere fact of being together in a group assures that there will always be some amount of friction among its members. Although such frictions may have an apparent 'negative' effect on the group, they are not necessarily something 'bad' or pathological to be got rid of (Allwood, 1993). The result of the interpersonal conflict makes the accomplishment of the goals difficult due to the fact that they differ in many ways like attitudes, personality, value, goals, background experience and many others. Thus, learning to make the proper adjustment is a significant factor in dealing with interpersonal conflict.

Lastly, intergroup conflict exists between groups in the same society or organizations. Bornstein (2003; 129) states that the tension between the collective interest of the group and the interests of its individual members is unavoidable. It stems from the fact that the benefits associated with the outcome of intergroup conflicts (for example, territory, political power, status, pride) are public goods that are non-excludable to the members of a group, regardless of their contribution to their group's effort.' There are three sources of intergroup conflict; Cohesion "sticking together" within a group which usually causes out-group hostility, structure type of leadership and status

within a group are factors that tend to escalate the conflict (Swanstrom & Weissmann, 2005). A conflict between states can fall under the above three categories that is out-group hostility and the structure type of leadership and status due to the fact the various causes of conflict between states subsists from the three categories. Such causes include the following; opposing interests and capabilities (specific sociocultural differences and similarities between the parties), contact and salience (awareness), significant change in the balance of powers, individual perceptions and expectations, a disrupted structure of expectations, and a will to conflict. These are aggravated by sociocultural dissimilarity, cognitive imbalance, status difference and coercive state power (Rummer, 1979).

Conflicts according to Mitchell (2002) are changing all the time, instantly from incompatible interests that arise into parties' consciousness through the mobilization of support for the accomplishment of shared objectives, the increase of coercive and finally violent behavior (and unavoidably, of the costs of prosecuting the conflict) to the contribution of third parties as sponsors, allies or intermediaries. Furthermore, conflict structures comprises of three parts; Attitudes, behaviour and circumstances that correlate and create conflicts amidst actors (Mitchell, 1981). Swanström and Weissmann (2005) argue that often the circumstances tend to impact the behavior. The failure to accomplish the targeted goals particularly central goals generates frustrations and escalates the willingness to reach these goals at all costs even if it means through conflict. Moreover, the circumstances also affect the attitudes in such a manner that discordant goals escalate the suspicion and cynicism amidst the actors.

Behaviour, on the other hand, affects the circumstances in that the success can present new questions in the conflict as the demands intensify. Also, the behaviour impact the attitudes in a way that destruction proliferates hatred, eventually, success impact the group solidarity and the idea of "us" (Swanström and Weissmann, 2005). Also, attitudes impact the behaviour in that as expectations like "our traditional enemies will attack again", impact the defensive planning and preventive actions. Lastly, attitudes impact the situation in such a manner that the more the conflict continues, the more questions will be presented.

Consequently Kalyvas defines civil war as armed combat within the boundaries of a recognized sovereign entity between parties subject to a common authority at the outset of hostilities (Boulden, 2004). Whilst looking at women and men's relations in war, it is important not to forget the easily sloughed off superficial notions and the socially constructed identities of the two which also impact on their dealings while at war. Ideally, the society is constructed with all its ideals and norms and these should not shape the deeply encoded descriptions of man and woman associations in war situations. Boulden (2004) further states that this is not the case, however, as social construction has a lot to do with how men and women behave in conflict. At the same time, these animated notions still tap on contemporary male and female ideals plus attitudes of war and these then results into the justification of violent acts and war fighting. Non-combatants 'do not participate in armed conflict by fighting, carrying weapons, or serving in the uniformed military or security services', violence against civilians, in conflict occurs when armed combatants intentionally harms non-combatants. The armed groups practice a range of violent acts that may include killing, wounding, kidnapping, sexual violence, assault, property destruction and forced displacement (Cramer, 2006).

According to Swanström and Weissmann (2005), a conflict is not a static situation. The level of intensity transforms over a conflicts' life cycle. Conflicts tend to have different stages and for one to have a full comprehension of the conflict cycle, it is crucial to comprehend how, where and when to apply different strategies of conflict prevention and management. Scholars have come up with plentiful suggestions and models of conflict patterns and amidst these models and suggestion, there are a number of patterns that stand out. Usually, conflicts are described as cyclical in terms of their intensity levels (Cramer, 2006). They intensify from relative stability and peace into crisis and war and subsequently into relative peace. These cycles are occurring and durable hence peace is made an extra stage in which the conflict is considered to be resolved. Likewise, most models divide both the escalation and de-escalation of the conflict cycle into phases.

Moreover, the divisions into phases and the reoccurring perception of conflict have become the starting point of investigating the conflict prevention, management and resolution (Swanström and Weissmann, 2005). Conflict prevention, conflict management and conflict resolution in

principle are considered as appropriate measures of different phases of conflicts that escalate from (relative) stability and peace into crisis and war and thereafter deescalating into relative peace. Conflict prevention is significant as it is intended for the early phases before a conflict has become overt. Conflict management, on the other hand, is important as it is applicable to the later stages when a conflict is manifest although earlier to the occurrence of violence. Conflict resolution is applicable in the de-escalation phase after an intense conflict has transpired.

World War II strategic bombing aimed specifically at civilians, not at combatants; in modern conflict fighting has drawn a distinction between combatants and non-combatants but this line is still blurry. The assessment of women and war in contemporary context means going back to the historical separation of the enshrined divisions in male and female identities and also consider the current influence they play in power relations in a war. Conflict may have psychological and bodily impact on the victims and can both destroy people and bring into being men and women of a particular kind. Elshtain JB (1978) asserts that “war is productive destructiveness in the sense that it shifts boundaries, defines the states and alerts balances of power but in a more profound sense.” She further clarifies that war has created a certain perception of who is significant and female contribution in conflicts remains formless. It is usually portrayed as the victims or the weak ones and female violence and resistance falls outside the boundaries of received narratives on conflict and stories of women fighters’ in resistance movement remain silent. For example, in the Soviet Army the Yugoslav partisan resistance and other resistance movements in conflict are hardly mentioned (Elshtain, 1978).

A woman in war is known a lot as the beautiful soul and the Spartan mother, but little is said about the female warrior. In the midst of war destructions, women as non-combatant remain the prototypical symbol of trust to whom others turn. Women are designated non-combatants not only because of the part they play in the reproductive role but because they have been linked symbolically to images of suffering victims and nonviolence. Just like there are many ways through which women have inhabited the world of war in various capacities, there are sorts of ways for women to get recognised as soldiers too. J Glenn Gray (1941) writes about women who have been brutally dehumanized and those who attain camaraderie which would have been

unthinkable in any civilian life and a preparedness to sacrifice themselves for others which many have called a compassionate warrior.

4.2 Feminist conflict presumptions

Focusing on conflict systems and its mechanisms or why different rebel groups carry out violent acts in a certain way are not adequate enough to enlighten conflict as well as its forms. Feminist theory looks at the extension of feminism into a theoretical or philosophical discourse of conflict conditions. Consequently, a range of studies have been conducted in an attempt to understand the phenomenon of women's violence in various spheres (Swan & Snow, 2003; Miller & Meloy 2006; Spinelli, 2001). Despite the growing numbers of women soldiers and women participants in "violent unrest" (such as Rwanda's 1994 genocide) in different contexts, there have been limited attempts to explore women's violence on the African continent (Adinkrah, 2007; Tibatemwa- Ekirikububinza, 1999; Pretorius and Botha, 2009). In South Africa in particular there is a dearth of empirical research. (Swan & Snow, 2003; Miller & Meloy 2006; Spinelli, 2001) While it may be argued that women's low levels of violent perpetration do not warrant feminist attention, the failure to explore this simply reinforce stereotypes about the meaning and shape of "gendered violence" and adds to the sensation and demonization of violent women in media and popular discourse. Theory, in this context, aims to make sense of the nature of gender inequality in conflict. It also examines women's social roles, experiences, and interests while providing critiques of social relations that reinforce women rights violations. Feminist theory in addition focuses on analysing gender inequality to minimize its negatives and to promote women's interests.

Conflict theory generally emphasizes the role of coercion and power in constructing the social order. This perspective is derived from the works of Karl Marx, who saw society as a fragment of groups that compete for social and also economic resources. In his rationalised view, social order is maintained by domination, with power in the hands of those with the greatest political, economic, and social resources. When consensus exists, it is attributable to people being united around common interests, even though they may belong to different classes in society (Oberschall, 2010)

Even though most sociological theories focus on the positive aspects of society, it is clear that the conflict perspective focuses on the negative, clashing and ever changing nature of society. Thus, society will always continue to engage in conflict due to the lack of balance and also because social partitions exist to limit resources to the few who matter. Unlike functionalists who defend the status quo, avoid social change, and believe people cooperate to effect social order, conflict theorists challenge the status quo, encourage social change and also this may even reach to the extent of social revolution. The functionalists also believe the rich and powerful influence social order on the poor, the weak and sometimes the minority groups in society on their own terms to benefit their agendas. This then clashes with the aspiration of the poor majority.

Radical feminism evaluates the role of patriarchy in perpetuating male dominance. In patriarchal societies, the male's perspective and contributions are considered more valuable, resulting in the silencing and marginalization of the woman. This same attitude is also present during war time where the same patriarchal system of power that organizes society, make in relation between men and women a complex of relationships based on the assertion of male supremacy. Patriarchy as a social organization gives reasons as to why women are excluded in the process of recovery from conflict. According to Sandra Whithworth (1999), the "reasons for the under representation in these positions are varied in societies. One popular form of explanation is the socialization of women away from the actives that have to do with conflict. It is young boys, according to this view who are encouraged to play with guns and military toys, not little girls. By extension, arms control and security issues are a man's topic about which women are assumed to have no expertise.

Sandra Whithworth (1999) "Feminism and International relations", dealing with women's underrepresentation looks at the systemic barrier to their participation, it is not simply the case that women lack the will to participate in the upper echelons of international relation but that they are systematically discriminated against by the men and the authority too that is mostly male dominated. The system is structured to limit women promotion using legislation which restricts their employment opportunities. Even when they get the chance to beat the system, they still have to work twice harder to be taken seriously by their male counterparts. Jean Kirkpatrick

1975 alleges in the companion volume *Women in World Politics*, that she failed to win the respect or attention of her male colleagues on issues of foreign policy because she was a woman. Liberal feminism and modern liberal feminists writers like Judith Evans, Debbie Lisle, Jacqueline Rhodes, Eunice Myers, Ginette Adamson advocate and also emphasizing equal individual rights and liberties for women and men and downplaying sexual differences. Liberal feminists defend the equal rationality of the sexes and emphasize the importance of structuring social, familial, and sexual roles in ways that promote women's autonomous self-fulfilment. Accentuating the similarities between men and women rather than the average differences between them is their focus, attributing most personality and character differences between the sexes to the social construction of gender, and tends to promote a single set of intersexual virtues for both women and men. While rejecting strong claims of sexual difference that might underwrite different and potentially hierarchical rights and social roles, liberal feminists otherwise avoid the promotion of particular conceptions of the good life for either men or women, instead defending a broad sphere of neutrality and privacy within which individuals may pursue forms of life most congenial to them.

While liberal feminists acknowledge that some choices made by women are questionable because conditioned by sexist social practices, they also tend to avoid materialism and any second guessing of those choices made without coercion, or threats. Fully informed and mentally competent adult women are assumed to be the final judges, of their own best interests. Thus liberal feminists tend to resist legislative intervention that would gainsay the judgment of women. They explain that societal attitudes, the division of labour within the home, educational and career opportunities must all change before greater numbers of women enter international decision making positions.

The feminist perspective on gender stratification in more recent years has taken into account intersectionalist, a feminist sociological theory first highlighted by feminist sociologist Kimberlé Crenshaw. Intersectionalism proposes various biological, social and cultural categories, including gender, race, class and ethnicity which interact and contribute towards systematic social inequality that also determines the actions of men mostly when there is lack of order in a

society. Mary Ann Weathers demonstrates inter sectionalism in action in her book *An Argument for Black Women's Liberation as a Revolutionary Force*. In this publication, Weathers reveals that in the twentieth century, working class women of colour embodied the notion of inter sectionalism (Weathers *et al* 2013, 79). The first and second waves of the feminist movement were primarily driven by white women, who did not adequately represent the feminist movement as a whole. It was and continues to be important to recognize that women in ordinary social functioning community not in war do not face the form of discriminations and violation of rights as those running for their lives every day (Weathers *et al* 2013, 79).

In addition to the above, Feminist epistemology studies have explained gender, that it does and ought to influence our conceptions of knowledge, the knowing subject, and practices of inquiry and justification. It identifies ways in which dominant conceptions and practices of knowledge attribution, acquisition, and justification systematically disadvantage women and other subordinated groups, and strives to reform these conceptions and practices so that they serve the interests of these groups (Anderson, 2004). It has made attempts to investigate in depth whether the different ways of knowing, the diverse criteria of justification and different emphases on logic and imagination, characterize male and female attempts to understand the world (Anderson, 2004). This is extremely important in modern society as such concerns include society awareness of the 'masculine' self-image itself and this is still not obvious. A socially variable and potentially distorting picture of what masculinity ought to be and action should be is where the confusion lies (Anderson, 2004). A particular target of much feminist epistemology is enlightenment conception of rationality, which is seen as a device for claiming domination and control, for refusing to acknowledge differing perspectives and different relations to life.

Thus it is still unclear how differences between individual capacities, training, and culturally reinforced aspirations, work together in explaining how people acquire knowledge. Again the spectrum of concern is highly theoretical to the relatively practical, in this latter area particular attention is given to the institutional biases that stand in the way of equal opportunities in science and other academic pursuits, or the ideologies that stand in the way of women seeing themselves as leading contributors to various disciplines (Weathers *et al.*2013) . However, to more radical feminists such concerns merely exhibit women wanting for themselves the same power and

rights over other rights that men have claimed, and are failing to confront the real problem, which is how to live without such asymmetrical powers and rights.

Rae Lesser Blumberg emphasises the degree of need to control and participate equally in the means of production as well as the distribution of economic surplus. Blumberg's theory is based on a broad empirical knowledge of diverse society types ranging from hunting and gathering through horticultural and agrarian systems to industrial societies. Her theory thus explains the position of women relative to men in all types of societies, from the earliest to the most complex societies of the late twentieth century (Blumberg, 1984). The superior women get the more economic power that is relative to men and the more women control their own lives, the greater their access will be to other sources of value in stratified social systems, especially honour and prestige, political power, and ideological support for their rights. Her approach also includes to this explanation critical issues that deal with the empowerment of women in conflict regions mostly when dealing with tools to reintegrate women back into the society after the displacement in a post war context (Blumberg, 1984).

This approach is mostly a representative of not only scientifically oriented feminist approaches but also gender inequalities. Furthermore, Blumberg describes in details the gender inequalities which exist when men control disproportionate resources. Conversely, the men will decline as women gain economic, political, and ideological resources if resources are distributed equally. For women to gain access to control these resources, it requires mobilization by women and their allies and change in their current conditions to influence how effective the progress will go. This theory tries to cast gender inequality in a more comparative light, viewing patterns of gender stratification in all types of societies, past, present and future (Blumberg, 1984).

Blumberg (1984) also argues that gender inequalities are not only influenced by the need to balance the accessibility to equal the resources but also to close the gap of political excision in public. Women's mobilization to pursue their interests is influenced by other forces to industrialization, urbanization, and expansion of the middle classes (Blumberg, 1984). When these events occur, middle class women might begin to seek expanded opportunities outside their domestic responsibilities and they are more likely to have the resources (material, educational,

and symbolic-ideological) to pursue opportunities. In contemporary context as technology advances so do women and they become more aware and want to participate in all the progress and thus they have to break all the standing blocks. In conflict too, the trend is changing in the army as female numbers are increasing (Blumberg, 1984).

However, as they go ahead with this progress they confront the existing system of gender stratification which creates role dilemmas. Hodgson (2008) supports the view that as women overcome these dilemmas, they acquire a sense of efficacy and thus begin to change their frames of references in ways that counter dominant gender definitions. As women pursue interests outside the domestic sphere with this changed frame of reference, especially if they do so in a context where other women are also in proximity pursuing the same goals, they will experience an escalated sense of deprivation as they encounter the gendered division of labour and the distribution of power (Hodgson, 2008). For now, they interpret these obstacles in light of a sense that they deserve more than old gender definitions allowed and their sense of deprivation increases relative to their dramatically escalated expectations for what is possible or what should be possible.

Women experiencing these sentiments collectively and in proximity, the need to contribute to the process of production, begin to form women movement organizations to pursue their interests in eliminating or at least mitigating gender inequality. Sometimes these movements split into diverse factions, to work better and to deal with various roles so that they cover a wide range (Hodgson, 2008). On the other hand ideological and political ferment created begins to erode old gender definitions and to instil the more moderate organizations of the women's movement. As the public supports increases for the more moderate definitions, more liberal efforts to change the gender based division of labour, the system of gender ideology, norms, and stereotypes, and the distribution of power also slowly improve. Moreover, if this is received by those in power then women movements developed more rapidly and they also spread around other areas (Hodgson, 2008).

Some of the feminist contributions in women right confrontation include a huge focus on the gendered dimensions and social constructed meanings of a woman's role in conflict and

recovering from conflict. The role of women is often ignored and the diverse application of feminist perspective in conflict engages the masculinity literatures that fail to address adequately if not at all the examinations of, women rights.

4.3 Trauma

Trauma is not exclusive to women only in conflict. Conflict is a commonly and relatively a powerful source of enduring psychological disturbance due to the nature of horrific experiences involved. These are not easy for a human body to comprehend or ever to totally recover depending on the extent of the damage. Kulka (1990) posttraumatic difficulties have been identified in victims of war. War involves a very wide range of violent and traumatic experiences, including immediate threat of death and or disfigurement, physical injury, witnessing injury , death of others, and involvement in injuring or killing civilians (Kulka et al., 1990; Weathers, Litz, & Keane, 1995). In some cases war includes witnessing or participating in atrocities, like rape and violation of women rights as well as undergoing, capture, and prisoner of war experiences. These traumas, in turn, can produce a variety of symptoms and disorders. Often trauma is used to refer both to negative events that produce distress and to the distress itself. According to Dr. Wilkinson 2013 he supports that ideally, “trauma” refers only to the event, not the reaction, and should be reserved for major events that are psychologically overwhelming for an individual.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV-TR; American Psychiatric Association, 2000) specifically defines trauma as direct personal experience of an event that involves actual threatened death, serious injury, other threat to one’s physical integrity, and witnessing an event that involves death. This definition provides an understanding to what extent trauma can damage a person, for the reason that when in war people’s response involves intense fear, helplessness, or horror. In children, the response to trauma involves disorganized or agitated behaviour if not dealt with (Criterion, 2000: 463).

Bloom (1999) elaborates on trauma and post-traumatic stress by asserting that people are traumatized whenever they fear for their lives or for the lives of someone they love. Traumatic

experiences can impact on the entire person. Bloom further argues that traumatic incidents affect a human being entirely, the way they think, the way they learn and the way they remember things. It also affects the self-feelings which the way one feels about him or her-self, in terms of self-image, self-understanding and how one perceives life as a whole. These experiences can also impact on the way one feel about other people and the way they make sense of the world. All these are profoundly altered by traumatic experience. Bloom further explains that human behaviour is complex to understand and it becomes even impossible to fully comprehend mostly as regards responses to trauma. Thus, without dealing with individuals affected by trauma in health approaches in a one to one basis the process of recovering is almost impossible. Sandra argues that overwhelming emotions can and do damage our bodies, as well as our organs and this then impacts on our psyche (Bloom, 1999: 10-15).

Human beings survive primarily as social animals and develop mutual protection and it is this social nature of human beings that needs to get attached to other human beings. Women, who suffer disrupted attachments cursed by war, may experience damage to all of their developmental systems. This includes their brains which are particularly ill-suited to extreme cases of attached members to the victims who are also involved in the trauma. Bloom makes a worthy elevation pointing out how complex the brain is and how powerful memories distinguish us as the most intelligent of all animals. It is that very intelligence that leaves us vulnerable to the effects of trauma such as flashbacks, body memories, post traumatic nightmares and behaviour re-enactments (Bloom, 1999: 12).

She further continues, the social nature of our species is guaranteed by an innate sense of reciprocity and this can be observed even among primates and the same sense of fair play leads not only to the evolution of justice system, but also to the need for revenge. Bloom gives a physiologically designed function asserting that human beings are best integrated as an intergraded whole, just like a computer. The fragmentation that accompanies traumatic experience degrades this integration and impedes maximum performance in a variety of ways. Human beings function best when they are adequately stimulated but simultaneously protected from overwhelming stress, which explains our need for order, safety and adequate protection (Bloom, 1999: 15-17).

Extreme torture, for instance, is an act of severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental and is intentionally inflicted on a person for purposes of obtaining from a third person information to get confession by punishing him or her for an act committed or suspected of having committed (Vesti and Kastrup, 1995: 214). Trauma, on the other hand, is the result of experiencing this act and this can have permanent damage in some extreme cases. Forms of harmful acts include beatings, strangulation, electrical shock, various forms of sexual abuse and assault, crushing or breaking of bones and joints. Sensory deprivation and threats of death or mutilation are other ways of frightening the victims into surrendering their will to the party in control of their fate at that time. This is regardless of the function or the context and the methods of torture that are involved in both physical and psychological techniques of punishing victims while people are experiencing war (Vesti and Kastrup, 1995).

The war in Northern Uganda has been characterised by the term “Night Commuters”. This derives from the fact that it was mostly at night that families were forced to vacate their homes for the fear of the rebels who would raid them. The raids are very horrific as the rebels’ perform mock execution and forced to watch the killing of their relatives. This image can be very overwhelming for any human being as well lead to trauma. The incidents of torture in Northern Uganda lack proper documentation and this is due to the state of anomie coupled with the lack of law and order. Thus, the protection of the people is limited despite Amnesty International (2002) “estimation that more than 111 nations currently sanction the use of or at least tacitly allow torture.” However it has also been indicated that torture victims are dramatically overrepresented among refugees, thus it’s hard to have the exact picture (Baker, 1992:27).

4.4 Recovering from conflict

Conflict recovery, according to Hugh (2004), refers to a process of engaging with and changing the relationships, interests, discourses and, if necessary, the very constitution of society that supports the continuation of violent conflict. Lederach (2009) argues that the new route is largely about theory, or rather theories. A great number of scholars have developed theories on peacebuilding, conflict resolution, conflict management, conflict transformation, etc. But theory

without practice in the context of peacebuilding is, if not dead, at least lifeless and of little use. Therefore, the descriptions and explanations of theory are accompanied by practical examples in order to make them more comprehensible and more based on real life experiences (Lederach, 2009). With conflict recovery , it is not merely enough to resolve one set of issues amidst parties who then continue in a mental frame of mutual suspicion and resentment, in relation to loathed interdependence and protected in a structure from which major salient contention will unavoidably arise (Mitchell, 2002). Peace in in a society like Northern Uganda is vital as it brings into focus the horizon towards which the journey especially in the building of healthy relationships and communities both locally and around the neighbouring countries like Sudan, and Congo globally is to be taken. The term ‘peace building and recovery from conflict’ certainly suggests coming up with some changes in some aspects of the conflict or the social-political system in which it is embedded (Mitchell, 2002). The central concept of transformation includes some sort of significant change. The major problem is that conflicts themselves are intrinsically forceful phenomena despite their being in the initial phases when no-one either involved in the conflict or observing it is even considering resolving , terminating, or change it.

Adekanye (1997) states that certain issues are identified as key issues in the recovery in process the post-conflict environment due to the fact that there are empirical interconnections which should not be ignored between “conflict and “post conflict stage”, between “violence” and “politics” between “war” and “peace” (Adekanye, 1997). Thus, the key issues that are appropriate to the recovering process from conflict and peace process are acknowledged as follows: the contradiction of three transitions in one, reintegration of ex-combatants; problems of illegal surplus arms; power-sharing versus political inclusion, making committed electoral players out of former guerrilla leaders, reconciliation versus justice; market-driven liberalization versus post-conflict peace building and countering the phenomenon of “return wars” (Adekanye, 1997).

Recovering from conflict is a progression most especially for the countries that have just come out of a conflict situation (Albert, 1995) and it takes time depending on the efforts injected. It engages programmes of reconciliation and development and advocates for participation of every civilian of that society including women (Adekanye, 1997). Recovering from conflict demands the mending and reconstruction of physical and economic infrastructure in a country that has

recently faced a widespread violence or where the preoccupation of the state is armed warfare or where a substantial part of the population is involved with armed struggle with the state (Albert, 1995). The state institutions tend to be weakened in the post-conflict situation in that they show little ability to carry out their traditional functions. Post-conflict reconstruction likewise involves a number of critical external interventions directed to rebuild the weakened institutions (Adekanye, 1997). These include reviving the economy, restructuring the framework for democratic governance, rebuilding and maintaining key social infrastructure and planning for financial normalization. In Adekanye's words:

Post conflict intervention tends to have explicit objectives such as supporting the transition from war to peace, resumption of economic and social development, reconciliation and reconstruction, human and institutional capacity building, and establishing special investment funds to maintain social cohesion during the period of economic adjustment and poverty reduction and decentralization [...](Adekanye1997).

As mentioned above, it is clear that recovering from conflict operations necessitates thorough monitoring to ensure their continued relevance, effectiveness and efficiency (Diamond & John, 1996). There are four pillars that are inextricably linked and have a positive outcome in each area depending on the extent of the success of integration and interaction across them and these include post-conflict reconstruction-security, social and economic well-being, justice and reconciliation and governance and participation . Francis Fukuyama (2004) distinctly describes post-conflict reconstruction as the first phase of nation-building, which is applicable to failed states after violent conflict and where international community has provided security and all essential needs and/or services. The second phase of nation-building, according to Fukuyama (2004), is the creation of self-sustaining state institutions which provide security and all essential needs with the help of the international community. It normally starts after the completion of the first phase and once the international forces have assured security and stabilized the situation. The third phase contains the strengthening of weak states (Fukuyama, 2004 pp 135-136).

After the conflict has come down the reconstruction is only needed when international community is dealing with failed states, the government institutions of which are not functioning

effectively. As a term, peace building was first defined by the World Bank in 1995 as “the rebuilding of the socioeconomic framework of society” and the “reconstruction of the enabling conditions for a functioning peacetime society [to include] the framework of governance and rule of law” (Hamre and Sullivan, 2002 p.89). If the peace and stability are not efficiently implemented and all stake holders sufficiently re-integrated into the community rebuilding of society, there is a high possibility of endangerment of the re-occurrence of a war and in most case worse than before (Diamond & John, 1996).

Conflict transformation does not recommend the basic elimination of control or controlling of conflict but rather recognize and work with its dialectic nature. Social conflict is naturally created by individuals who are involved in relationships. However, as soon as it happens, it transforms the events, people and relationships that created the initial conflict. Therefore, the cause-and-effect relationship goes both ways, that is, from the people and the relationships to the conflict and back to the people and relationships. Consequently, conflict transformation is a natural occurrence and as a result conflicts change relationships in expected ways, altering communication patters and patterns of social organization, changing images of the self and the other. Including women in this process would be very beneficial as they are also members of the community and have better communication skills. Joni Lovenduski advocates for the inclusion of women in the process as they have the best interest of the children who are the future of development (Lovenduski, 2012). Its empirical concerns have always been almost exclusively those of the exercise of public power, aspects of political elites and aspects of institutions of government. Such finds are bound to exclude women mostly because women usually do not dispose of public power; belong to political elites or hold influential positions in government institutions.

Recovering from Conflict participation including women is a prescriptive concept. It advocates that left alone, conflict can have dire and destructive consequences. Conversely, the consequences can be adjusted or changed so that self-images, relationships and social structures are improved as a result of conflict rather than being affected by it. This frequently involves changing perceptions of issues, actions and other people or groups. Conflict recovery and peace building tends to improve a mutual understanding since conflict itself usually changes the

perceptions by accentuating the differences between people and position. Although people's interests, values and needs differ or even non-reconcilable, progress has been made in order each group could gain a relatively accurate understanding and be indulgent of each other.

Furthermore, maintaining peace involves transforming the way conflict is articulated. It may be uttered competitively, antagonistically or pugnaciously or yet still, it can be uttered through a nonviolent advocacy, conciliation endeavour and cooperation. Unlike several conflict theorists and activists, who recognize mediation and advocacy as being in disapproval to each other, Lederach (1989) perceives advocacy and mediation as being different stages of conflict to raise people's awareness of an issue. Therefore, activism uses a nonviolent advocacy to intensify and confront the conflict. When awareness and concern is generated, then mediation can be used to change the expression of conflict from "mutually destructive modes toward dialogue and interdependence" (Ledereach, 1989; 14). Thus, such transformation must take place at both the personal and the systemic level. Peace at the personal level entails the pursuit of awareness, growth and commitment to change which may happen through recognition of fear, anger, grief and bitterness. Lederach (1989) recommends that the emotions need to be outwardly shown and be dealt with accordingly in order to achieve effective conflict transformation.

Peace-making necessitates a systemic transformation. The process of increasing justice and equality in the entire social system may require the elimination of oppression, improved sharing of resources and the non-violent resolution of conflict between groups of people. Each of these actions reinforces the other. That is to say, transformation of personal relationships simplifies the transformation of social systems and systemic changes enable personal transformation (Lovenduski, 2013). Truth, justice, mercy empowerment and interdependence are core concepts to both kinds of transformation. In as much as the core concepts are observed to be in contrast to each other, they must come together for reconciliation or peace to happen.

4.5 Women and war

Jean Bethke Elshtain claims that the two descriptions of a man and women in war serve to reinforce one another and the powerful female model she calls the 'beautiful soul' positions

much assumed expectations of women. A woman is the one who should be waiting at the home front, who prays before battle and she is not herself deeply immersed in the bone crunching, body destroying business of war. Violence against women in civil wars is generally explained as any other production or outcome expected in a conflict just like destruction of property or another damage. Women amongst other civilians are attacked to terrorize, deprive the enemy of support and for material gain. However, in some cases, the war strategy along with war policies and how they affect civilians may be determined by other dynamics in society, depending on the grounds of war and the motives of the rebel ideology (Elshtain, 1973). Recently, it is the outlook is more closely at the driving force behind rebel groups in conflict regions, thus establishing the goals of rebel groups in fact plays a central role in determining the character of the rebel groups and predominantly how they wage wars (Elshtain, 1973). Restrained groups, on the other hand, limit their violence against civilians, discriminate against the target selection, a central principle opposing the random violence against civilians that can constrain fighters and prevent atrocities.

The violation of women' rights cannot stand single-handedly. It is attributed to other factors also, like any other social crisis and various forms of oppression, such as discrimination, tribalism or sexism, do not act independently of one another. Instead, these forms of oppression are interrelated, forming a system of oppression that reflects the "intersection" of multiple forms of discrimination and oppression even during war. Charlotte Bunch argues that abusing women physically is a reminder of this territorial domination and is sometimes accompanied by other forms of human rights abuses, such as slavery (forced prostitution), sexual terrorism (rape), imprisonment (confinement to home), or torture (systematic battery).The oppression and marginalization of women is thus shaped not only by gender, but by other factors such as race and class. The distinction is that when in war the already existing vices in society are aggravated, blown up and war presents an opportunity for every crime to happen freely (Elshtain, 1973).

The crucial debate which feminist notions make is the ability women have to communicate in social life in a philosophical way, and to the ethics that is committed to correcting biases leading to the subordination of women or the disparagement of women's particular experience and of the voices women bring to discussion. In Modern society feminist ethics has become more sensitive to the gender bias that may be unspoken in philosophical theories (for instance, philosophers'

lists of virtues may be typically ‘manly’ or culturally masculine), and in social structures, legal and political procedures, and the general culture. From a different theoretical perspective which is psychologically informed towards women’s development. Women approach practical reasoning from a different perspective from that of men. The argument is that there is a difference when women are included in society as they have more emphasis on community, caring, and bonding with particular individuals, in place of abstract impartiality. It is controversial whether or not this is a real difference, and if so whether it arises from innate differences in male and female psychology, or whether the different values reflect the way men and women have been taught to form different aspirations and ideals.

4.6 Managing trauma among women as victims.

Positive participation of the peace keepers and NGO’s social workers as well as the victims is very crucial to the healing process of women victims. By using the success stories of the female victims in Northern Uganda, the results of dealing with victims of war indicated that the kind of program that is implemented mattered a lot on the recovery of the victims (Pathfinder International, 2010). This means that the programme should be suitable for the particular people and the one approach on all war victims did not work. Both program implementers and the women involved in receiving post traumatic treatment and intervention for psychosocial difficulties related to conflict need to be broad in scope and moreover primarily positive (Pathfinder International, 2010). Notably, according to Pathfinder International 2010 report the failed cases identified lack of willingness to receive support as indicated in the assessments done by the NGO’s in Northern Uganda. This was related to either the difficulties associated with changing negative stereotypes initially held by the community, giving up hope by the victims or lack of cooperation from parents and relatives mainly when providing mental health services and support to the extreme cases of trauma (Hughs and Jones,2000). Positive results in qualitative analysis generally corresponded with the intended effects on the victims. This entailed, for example, the impact of skills acquisition, communication, and open corresponding of stated goal of the program to promote adaptive post war psychosocial adjustment through psycho education.

The introduction of focus groups while working with trauma victims in Northern Uganda was an initiative that already existed among the women in the temporary camps. NGO's like Pathfinder International working in the region developed this concept further by encouraging more women victims to participate in the focus group. However the perpetrators and victims of the genocide continue to live together and therefore have to engage in a reconciliation process in order to avoid future violence. The challenge of reconciliation focuses on several interrelated issues and attention has to be paid to the suffering of individuals and of the nation as a whole (Richters, Dekkers, De Jonge, 2005 p.203). Moreover, the truth about past atrocities has to be established. It is very important that the basic human emotional needs of justice, empowerment, security and recognition are met in order for the victims to heal. Like what happened in Rwandan, the society that managed to move forward from the genocide violence and atrocities (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008 p.116).

In the past the majority of research related to conflict resolution centred on the realist approach, as conflicts were believed to be based on material interests (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008 p.116). Subsequently, conflict resolution aimed at satisfying the material needs of the parties in conflict in order to resolve the conflict. The increase in intra-state protracted social conflicts after World War Two demanded a new approach to conflict resolution, as former adversaries continued to live together within the same area. These points towards the importance of reconciliation rather than merely the satisfaction of material interests in recent decades became evident in that emotional needs are often at the core of the conflict and have to be addressed in order to resolve the conflict (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008 p.116). The significance of emotional needs is underlined by an increasing number of restorative justice approaches (Shnabel, Nadler, Canetti-Nisim, Ullrich, 2008 p.160) of which the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa is a well-known example.

Focus groups is the most frequently identified program which has benefits for the women victims as this is a forum where they meet to discuss what happened to have a way forward. This is recently becoming more effective mostly because the shared traumatic experiences become easier to deal with as the victims get to feel that they are not alone. In most cases the pain they feel is due to the fact that they do not have their family members whom they are still missing.

Thus, Focus group meetings help to discuss ways to recover their children from the rebels and those that have been affected by the trauma of war. It was identified by the NGO-Pathfinder International in 2005 that the focus group member meetings were the acquisition of effective coping skills and positive attitude. The social workers in the peace camps identified that they attained 23.2% of increase in constructive comments made by the victims and the leaders of the focus groups in addition also identified coping skills (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). This high progress is not surprising, given that the primary objective of the focus group was a concept borrowed from Rwanda's recovery from conflict programmes such as the Agachacha courts after the Rwanda Genocide. The focus group is not a direct treatment to trauma but it is an excellent coping mechanism for the victims.

The process is, however, not easy as the skills to communicate openly and to have a discussion regarding violent acts that caused trauma to the victims needs a lot of courage and thus the presence of a professional is extremely important to facilitate the process (Pathfinder International, 2010). "This program gave the women in Arua district the opportunity to speak about their traumatic experiences for the first time." Thus, it was identified as a positive effect of the program and the exercises done in the focus group meetings focused explicitly on recruiting and providing effective support from others to contend with both traumas related and everyday post traumatic stresses and challenges. Other positive program impacts include increasing the hope for the future, self-esteem, problem solving skills, cognitive restructuring and insight (Pathfinder International, 2010:50).

Advocacy through Broadcasting and sharing the coping skills were learnt in the groups for those who were still hiding, ashamed, alone and not seeking help. They were not getting the benefits of program, skills, and materials. The advocacy was to encourage them and educate those still in hiding. One of the somewhat unanticipated but widespread program impacts identified was the extent to which all members of the community and group leaders were able to disseminate various parts of the program to others. Mostly, the modelling of newly acquired coping skills like women empowerment ideas were learnt by distributing program materials. The NGO's reported that community members participated in transmitting at least some of the skills and information learned in the program to others outside the focus group (Pathfinder International, 2010). This

material was typically shared via informal discussions with parents, siblings, and peers. The women in Arua also worked hand in hand with each other to make available the program materials and information to others in both formal and informal settings through presentations to the school staff meetings and homerooms, hand outs to students, posters, radio shows, television coverage, flyers, columns in the local newspaper, and newsletters.

There were referrals of the extreme cases of trauma and post-traumatic stress to the professionals in addition to disseminating programs skills and materials and the women did more. Several women in the temporary peace camps recommended and reported their relatives and friends who were troubled by their traumatic experiences by referring them to the pedagogue. While in the camps women stuck up for one another mostly for those still dealing with the pain of trauma related problems and this process helped them recognize and formulate a new bond and develop new memories.

A third major domain of program impact identified by the UN report consisted of changes in group members' relationships with others outside the group. According to the comments made by the victims of these violations the impact of program participation was not always positive even though it made the situation feel much lighter and ready to deal with life again. The peace building programs made them realize that they were not alone and others were also facing trouble to deal with the trauma that they experienced (Pathfinder International, 2010). Even though on the other side of the coin they discovered that they fell under the domain of interpersonal relationships, this negative impact focused on issues of stigmatization of program participants and this was mostly common among the young females. Specifically, a significant number of focus group participants reported that when the groups were initially formed, many of them felt stigmatized by their peers and family in some cases.

This chapter has discussed the main arguments on the violations of women rights in conflict situations using conflict, feminist trauma theories and peace building ideologies to act as a backbone of this discourse. A clear understanding of conflict has been made to give a sympathetic consideration of the women position when in conflict/war situations as these concerns of women rights are worries to human right advancement. Having an effective and fair

argument on women rights is vital in illustrating support or taking into account the feminist approach on the matter. The inclusion of feminist theories permits the assessment of the particular institutional and policy biases that affect the lives of women in conflict situations and also access the manner in which these socially organised challenges have come into existence. These social barriers create, slow progress and the possibilities of change in relation to how women are treated in war circumstances. Thus, trauma and peace theories give more backing on the discussion. The combination of conflict concepts, feminist and trauma principles is meant to bring out the strengths of better suggestions as regards a way forward in dealing with women right violation in war conditions. This kind of synthesis of theories not only improves the understanding of the practical conditions faced by women in addition to the normal encounters of the empirical world. It also addresses some political imperatives of feminism that want to achieve or to make an excellent constructive standing position on women in society. Contrary to the mainstream vision of despair on how to advance human rights in conflict times, in both inaccessible and fixed way, the vision construes the problem and challenges holistically. This vision views women's rights violation as both accessible and subject to change towards a positive direction

Chapter 5

Women in Conflict and Conflict Recovery

The human rights declaration(1948) clearly designates that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status (Article 3, 4,16,18,19 and 21). Furthermore, it is declared that no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty. The declaration was adopted by the UN general Assembly in December 10, 1984 as a result of the Second World War. Unfortunately, the declaration is still vague in its reference to the “all” and every one having equal rights (Article 3, 4,16,18,19 and 21). As such, this declaration of human rights is still fraught with interpretative problems and practice in the society which compromise society’s appreciation of the difficulty attendant in the advancement of women rights (CEDAW, 2007).

The discourse on the violation of women’s human rights is intricately carved thus posing both discussion and interpretive problems relating to the consequent violation of the said rights. Even though the law is the core back bone that protects human rights as it is used as a reference point for the resolution of many a legal dispute. It is important for reparations to go beyond payment and address other effects of the war, such as continued suffering faced by woman in conflict. Engaging a broad cross-section of all issues on women rights in the regions affected by conflict makes provision for the weak voices and most vulnerable survivors to be heard. This chapter will thus engage in this discourse with the aim of ensuring it elaborates how vital peace after war would bring greater opportunity for women in Northern Uganda. This chapter, therefore, explores a holistic victim-centered approach to remedy the major factors surrounding the violation of women’s human rights. It also outlines the effects of war on women such as the eruption of diseases. It will explain to detail and draw a vivid picture why women rights in conflict regions like Northern Uganda is a worrying matter.

5.1 The affirmation of women rights in Northern Uganda.

Society has always had difficulty accepting, understanding, interpretation and implementation of women's human rights. As a consequence, the violation of women rights in conflict times varies and is often confused with issues relating to equality and equity. Maintaining respect and recognition of women rights perspective help focus on addressing the diverse forms of violence, such as sexual abuse, physical and psychological violence, organizational violence, to mention but a few. A consideration of violence through the lens of women rights involves much more than merely being concerned with the consequences and implications of the violations of women rights in conflict.

Although international and internal conflicts may differ in various aspects, their impact on women's lives is similar. Thus, when talking about conflict zones, it is necessary to understand this expression as constituting not only lawlessness but also a state of anomy. It is also essential to interpret the term 'internal conflicts' in its broad sense by encompassing situations that are not officially recognized by the respective States, which nevertheless, due to their characteristics could be acknowledged as conflict regions (Kunio, 2002). As a matter of fact, in many cases of internal armed conflict, governments refuse to admit the existence of a conflict situation to avoid the recognition of armed groups in fear of granting these groups legitimacy (OSIEA, 2014). In accordance with the provisions of the common article 3 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions and article 1 of the Additional Protocol II, the ICRC defines internal conflicts as protracted armed confrontations occurring between governmental armed forces and the forces of one or more armed groups, or between such groups arising on the territory of a State. The armed confrontation must reach a minimum level of intensity and the parties involved in the conflict must show a minimum of organization. With a solid amount of certainty it is possible to apply this definition to numerous cases of a number of armed confrontations happening in Uganda. Although Uganda has not declared officially any of its zones of violence as conflict zones, it has been fighting armed groups for decades in many of its States (Kunio, 2002). Thus this lack of definition and recognition is foundation of women right violation.

The policies of militarism and wars either intended for regime change or in pursuit of the world's resources have increased the threat of armed conflicts which expose women to violations against humanity (Nease, 2010). The continuation of sexual violence as one of the common violations in this region has led to the view by many media groups plus humanitarian organizations that sexual violence as exemplified by rape is used as a weapon of war. The Constitution of Uganda prior to the conflict was biased towards women (Nease, 2010). The post conflict constitution approved in February 2006 is theoretically accommodating of gender-based discrimination. Nationally, impunity for those that commit these crimes has become a norm. Internationally, violation of women rights has long been mischaracterized and diminished by military and political leaders which lead to the belief that there is a strong undercurrent of patriarchal phenomenon involving many global institutions of power. The implication of gender-based discriminatory provisions in the constitution and the failure to implement policies that empower women has more often than not strengthened the social construction of masculinity and its idolization which are perceived as the social roots of violence against women during wartime (Nease, 2010).

In many armed conflicts similar to that of North Uganda women have always been the victims. On the contrary, men involved in combat have often negotiated peace between themselves rather than justice for the victims. Justice for women in this part of the world remains elusive (PCDN- Peace and Collaborative Development Network, 2013). Even though women's rights are a general concern in any situation what makes time of conflict become a question of alarm is the level of violence against women commonly increase since the breakdown of law and order enables the exploration of all forms violence. The availability of weapons gives men more confidence and power often that they never held before (Austrian Development Cooperation, 2006).

This is particularly troubling and even worse when the in particular society accepts violence against women as a normal thing even in times of peace. Since the women are vulnerable in conflict times the violence rapidly increases during conflict and war (ADC, 2006). Civil society and government participants agree that state action on reparations is both needed and legally required. What they seek here is the balancing of the equation which would entail prosecution of the offenders without forgetting the victims. Uganda's Peace Recovery and

Development Plan was not addressing the particular needs of women as victims, and had not adequately consulted them as it had been intended as part of the processes.

It is also important to note that the kinds of violence experienced by women during conflict are linked to their social, political and economic vulnerabilities (Documentary "Staging Hope: Acts of Peace in Northern Uganda, 2011). Atrocities committed against women have always been a significant concern in feminist agendas and discourses in times of peace as in time of war (Bouta & Frerks, 2002). Thus, women remain at the center stage of male violence. Sexual violence against women in North Uganda is believed to be one of the worst in the world. Women are raped, forced into prostitution, mutilated, and to some extent, subjected to further inhumane acts such as shooting. HIV and AIDS, and other sexual transmitted diseases constitute some of the extra diagnosis associated with the victims. What is complex to comprehend is that to date these atrocities still happen to women in Northern Uganda on a daily basis. Despite having a democratically elected government and legitimate institutions such as courts of law and tribunals, crimes of this kind committed against women continue unabated (Bouta & Frerks, 2002).

Violation of women rights is regrettably a very common part of armed conflict and in some cases it was considered normal as a by-product of war. Notably, efforts have been made to establish criminal tribunals with the view of apprehending the perpetrators of the atrocities. The assault and disrespect of women' rights are often taken as means of punishing the members of their families. Acts like forced impregnation, forced termination of pregnancy or forced sterilization have been used with the intention of making the women permanently damaged goods in society thereby preventing them from getting married (Documentary "Staging Hope: Acts of Peace in Northern Uganda, 2011). The consequence of rape can be very critical for the victim as well as the family. Physical and psychological injuries caused by such acts of violence thus instantiates a breaking point in the women's lives resulting in undesirable consequences (Berardi, 2007). In many societies which highly esteem the chastity of women admit that a woman who has been raped could be ostracized. As a consequence, she would not be considered worthy of marriage and could also be rejected by her husband and family or even accused of adultery and prostitution for bringing dishonor to the family (Kilimani, 2009).

Trafficking and sexual slavery are closely linked and interrelated with sexual violence, In Northern Uganda, trafficking of human beings is condemned by the constitution. Northern Uganda as a region is a resource and destination country for men, women, and children trafficked for purposes of forced labor and sexual exploitation. Ugandan children are trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation within the country, as well as bordering countries. Karamojong women and children are sold in cattle markets or by intermediaries and forced into situations of domestic servitude, sexual exploitation, herding, and begging. Until August 2006, the terrorist rebel organization, Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), abducted children and adults in Northern Uganda to serve as soldiers, sex slaves, and porters (UNDP, 2009). Although no further abductions of Ugandan children have been reported of late, 300 additional people, mostly children, have been abducted during the reporting period in the Central African Republic and the D.R.C. The Government of Uganda does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so (UNDP, 2009).

5.1.1 Military masculinities

Peace keepers' sexual exploitation is on the increase because it has been viewed as one element of this critical debate on women right violation. Higate elaborates on the topic that men's approach within the context of the concept of military masculinities is very crucial as it points out and explains the dynamics of gender social power relations in conflict. It is expected that their social practices toward local women and girls flow from the military masculine identities constructed around the notion of the inferior feminine "other". It is explained that Peace keeping and prostitution differ in the extent to which they draw on the concept of military masculinities and also differ in the extent to which they draw on the concept of military masculinities as an explanatory variable (PCDN, 2000).

UN peace keepers were noted to be rationalizing their presence instrumentally by reference to the remuneration they could generate in the form of mission subsistence allowance and salary. When in the field the exchange of goods and service for sex is seen as a positive, nearly altruistic intervention. The peacekeepers are reputed to be generous with their money when paying for sex and time with local women. The presence of the Rwandese and Uganda militia indicates that peacekeepers from neighbouring countries also do exploit the local women as many have been

raped by these soldiers. Different rate, the Rwandese and Ugandan militia paid the US\$ 1 to US\$ 5 while the UN peacekeepers pay upwards to US\$50 (PCDN, 2000).

5.2 The process of recovering from conflict

From 2002 to 2010, it was documented that the LRA abducted an estimated 12,000 women some of whom had their kids with them. These women were subjected to torture and were also forced to witness those who were close to them such as their husbands and relatives being murdered. Sometimes they were even forced to commit inhuman violence which made it hard for these victims to join the civilian society again. This in turn compelled them to remain with LRA as fighters, porters, and wives. By April 2002, the number of displaced people in Northern Uganda was estimated to be 450,000 and towards the end of 2004, this number had increased to an estimated 1.5 million, making a mark in records resulting to the world's third largest population of internally displaced people (IDPs), after Sudan and Colombia (Olsen ,2007). An approximated 90 percent of the total population of the three provinces that constitute Acholil ,Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader is displaced in the IDPs camps. The nature of the situations these women have encountered is complicated in various ways and if not handled with sensitivity, serious caution along with attention to individual case, reintegration and recovering from conflict will be almost impossible.

The gathering of precise data reflecting the number of the victims of these sexual violations on women in Northern Uganda is also a challenge. This is due to the difficulty in accessing the victims given the pathetic infrastructure available in the country at the present time. Even if accessed, many victims do not report the crime committed against them. The conflicts have uprooted many families and communities and destroyed their livelihood. The continuation of mass violence against women in Northern Uganda is done by members of the army as well as members of the rebel groups (Olsen, 2007). This has led to the view by many humanitarian Organizations and media groups, amongst others, that "women are used as a weapon of war." Alongside these views exists a convincing indication that many factors may have contributed to the mass violation against women till today.

In most cases, during conflict women remain unarmed and unprotected. This is due to the assumption that the social position and gender of women will protect them against assaults.

As a result, they are then left behind to take care of the property and livelihood and to visit members of the family that are in detention while others flee. This does not always turn out positively as they are exposed to harm from the rebels. They get assaulted by Kony's men specifically because they are women and for the symbolic value their humiliation can bring to the community. Thus they are constantly reminded of the trauma and the effects caused by war and conflict because of the gender roles and expectations they play in the community (Okello, 2009).

According to the victim testimonies the violation of women rights is committed by all parties involved in the conflict namely, the rebels groups including Kony's people, the army that is meant to be protecting the people plus the peace keepers sometimes while in the temporary camps for protection. In other words both sides of the conflict, that is, the bad side and the good side, are responsible for women rights violations when at war (Tracking Joseph Kony - Africa's Most Elusive War Criminal, 2012). In many instances, there are cases of women who face violence from the insurgents themselves. Women are caught in between the fighting not knowing where to run for help and who to trust. Women are caught not only in between the fighting of the Ugandan army and Kony's rebels plus other different small rival organizations that are fighting their own causes. There has been cases of abduction and rape of women relatives by the militants belonging to rival organizations and women suspected of being informers (Ahikire, 2000).

5.3 Obstacles to the reintegration and post conflict participation in society.

The political unresolved tensions sandwiched between the LRA and the current government still puts the victims at harm's way and are thus not able to normalize their lives after the traumatic experiences they faced in the conflict. The LRA attacks on Acholi civilians have always been more often than the campaign it launches against the Ugandan government. "On the surface, the LRA's raids on Acholi villages and camps for the displaced restock the forces with supplies and food (the LRA commonly loots villages before destroying them) as well as with new soldiers comprised of kidnapped children". This was their way of attracting attention as they are aware that the media is watching and sometimes the rebels will use these attacks mostly on women to

provoke the attention of International bodies and organisations like the UN to in turn push the Ugandan government to respond to their demands.

In 2006 some signs of stability started to appear and the conditions in the regional camps improved a little bit. This was attributed to peace talks between the rebels and the government of Uganda then resulted in some people deciding to go back to their former villages. Notably, at the initiation of the peace talks the rebels had already retreated to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in the Garambe forests, creating some calm in the region. Although the talks never yielded any positive outcomes, the calm that resulted from the rebels' withdrawal to the DRC enabled people to start going back to their homes. The government too put in place a plan of action, that is, Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) to guide the return and reconstruction process in the region. Amidst the various challenges the PRDP is supposed to address, access, use and ownership of land by the various categories of people have remained as a major challenge in the return process.

a) Fossilization of temporary measures

The internal displacement of people has led to the attendant challenges regarding women's land rights in the return process in the region. In order to protect the displaced population, the government, in the early 1990s, was compelled to put people in the Internally Displaced People's (IDP) camps. At the outbreak of the conflict between 2003 and 2004, the population of IDPs was extended to 1.8 million, ranking Uganda as the third largest country with IDPs out of the total of 23,700,000 IDPs in 51 countries worldwide (PRDP, 2007). During this time there were about 218 IDP camps with a population between 10,000 and 60,000 people in a camp (PRDP, 2007). Many young men and girls were abducted and conscripted into rebels while others were killed. Men who failed to protect and provide for their families while in the camps abandoned their families and resorted to drinking, stealing and violence while others joined the rebels (Tracking Joseph Kony - Africa's Most Elusive War Criminal, 2012). The demographic changes resulting from displacement as well as the adverse conditions in the camps such as congestion, diseases, alcoholism, domestic and gender based violence, poverty, among others, increased incidences of widowhood and female headed households estimated at

30.8% (Norad 2008), orphans (estimated at 15%-28%), and child headed households being 12% (PRDP, 2007).

During the brutal wave of attacks by the LRA in 1996, the Ugandan government decided to force all civilians in the Northern region out of their homes and into what is termed protected villages which in reality is a gentler name for a network of IDP camps. This idea was meant to offer safe protection to the families in camps that were often surrounding the existing or newly constructed army outposts. These were closer locations as opposed to the highly dispersed, quasi rural settlements of the traditional the Acholi people. “Further, the Ugandan government hoped that with the vast majority of civilians no longer residing in the countryside, the army would have a freer hand to root the LRA out of the bush, leading to a quick military victory”. Referring to the UN intentions, originally the protected villages’ policy was derived from the UN’s Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998) and application plus the implementation were consistent with the UN principles. Principle 6 and 7, allow for the displacement of civilians with certain boundaries when in extreme circumstances and when the security of civilians so demands. The same principle clearly specifies that the temporary internal displacement should last no longer than is required (UN, 1998).

The above explication of protected villages is not an exact portrayal of the situation as it is at odds with the definition of protected villages. Notably, the camps in Northern Uganda have existed for more than ten years now. In addition, this establishment plus the system in place did not ensure that such displacements are conducted in satisfactory conditions in terms of safety as would be desirable in minimizing the adverse effects. As indicated above, nearly a decade after the establishment of safe villages, the military virtually lost control of the LRA because it became even harder to trace them in the dark bushes. With less possibilities of military victory in sight, it is difficult to reconcile the continued existence of the villages with the UN's Guiding Principles that define the so called protected villages. Critically examining this policy made by the Ugandan government it is fair in most accounts to say that the increased activity surrounding the camps by the Ugandan army gave reasons and made it more possible for the LRA to become extra mobile including establishing bases inside southern Sudan. This then diminished the sense of hope that someday the women will receive some peace of mind.

Through an oversight site or perhaps lack of prediction on the side of the Uganda government side while implementing the protective village's strategy, this temporary solution has intensified the women's rights violation to become more serious predicament and crisis. The design of the camps has helped facilitate these abuses of women as the camps are built around an army base or outpost with often thousands and sometimes tens of thousands of tiny thatch huts surrounding the base. Ethically and in theory, the huts closest to the army posts ought to be the most protected where women feel more secure, with those on the outskirts feeling less secure. This could be plausible in its relation to protection against the LRA, but not from the soldiers, other non-government organisations offering help, NGO's for example who are also human and would take advantage of the situation (UNHCR). Soldiers have been implicated in numerous cases of assault and exploitation, including raping women and girls and threatening to harm family members if women refuse to have sex with them. In addition, it is pointed out that victims have accused soldiers of rape at water sources and in the fields outside the immediate camp vicinity (UNHCR-The refugee Agency).

Soldiers have also been reported of accusing women to be rebel collaborators, as they move outside the camps in search for water and firewood for daily home use. Since these tasks fall exclusively under the domain of women and girls due to African traditional social stratification, the women cannot be excused from these duties. Whether the soldiers are guilty or not of the accusations, they use this to their advantage by threatening to report them to camp population as a bargain for the women to offer sex in exchange for being not reported. The government's slow reaction to respond increases more numbers of gazetted cases in the recognized camps and thus make the issue of women rights violation in Northern Uganda a continues discourse starting with the legitimacy of the gazetted and not gazetted camps.

Until mid-2006, it was only a small number of the many IDP camps in Northern Uganda that were gazetted by the Ugandan government and many still remain unofficial. The dilemma here is that the Ugandan government is only willing to deal with the gazetted camps as they are the only camps that are eligible and qualify to receive official humanitarian assistance. This leaves tens of thousands of IDPs in camps in the whole region with very little or no assistance at all. The women that fall outside this gazetted definition and as a consequence they often leave the immediate confines of the camps to search for firewood, tend small gardens, collect water, or

perform other domestic necessities with no protection (Ayoo, 2009). Despite the fact that this resolution is necessary for family survival, it is very risky for the women and girls as it puts them at greater risk of abduction by the LRA. Mostly at night this is when the LRA are more likely to attack. Thus the night times are the precarious security times in Northern Uganda as a whole, resulting to what is called Night Commuting.

b) Night commuting

The phenomenon called night commuting has raised disturbing conversation by the opposition parties including women representative groups in the parliament of Uganda by raising awareness on the seriousness of this matter of Night Commuting (Emilia, 2012). Every night, as darkness falls, as many as 50,000 women, children and teenagers flee from these villages and camps mostly the not gazetted villages to larger towns up to five or more miles away, where they feel less vulnerable to abduction. The children crowd together on the front steps of police stations, hospitals, schools, or other public buildings in the city centre of Gulu and Kitgum in an attempt to sleep as much as they can. They then walk back in the morning repeating this on a daily basis. The environments in which night commuters constituted of both boys and girls stay in overnight are often unsupervised thus leading to risky sexual behaviour, sexually transmitted diseases, and unintended pregnancies. This is one of the major concerns of the women rights organisations, movements and groups in their battle to impact change to the situation. Some of the women and older girl children make a plan of earning supplementary income for the night in the process of night commuting and victims have mentioned doing this for a longer than four years .

Night commuting seems to be a better option in comparison to getting abducted by the LRA and the frequent long walks along pitch-black roads make these children, especially girls more vulnerable to other kinds of exploitation and attack. Unlike their male counterparts, female night commuters are often forced by their families to remain at home longer into the evening in order to finish chores and other domestic responsibilities. Thus, they often travel later at night and in smaller groups than do many boys. Also, young girls are also vulnerable to exploitation by men who know the routes night commuters use and take advantage of the dire situation and relative

immaturity of the girls walking past to convince them to trade sex for money, food, or other necessities (Emilia, 2012).

c) Sexual exploitation

The living conditions in the camps expose women and young girls to violations while they are in the peace camps. Young girls are kidnapped by the army soldiers who often forced them to become sex slaves or so-called "wives" for the duration of their stay in the camp and subject girls to forced pregnancies (Barlonyo - Documentary on the attacks of Lord's Resistance Army in Northern Uganda, 2011) . These girls/women are also at extremely high risk of contracting HIV. A 2004 survey by the non-government organization (NGO) World Vision found that the HIV/AIDS rate in Northern Uganda is more than twice that in the Southern part of the country. More so, when women become HIV positive or otherwise they are no longer of use to their partners and as a consequence they may be sent back to their villages. Readjustment to civilian life and the return to families and communities are not easy for any ex LRA combatant, male or female (UNICEF).

Paula Higate's article entitled: Peace keepers, masculinities, and sexual exploitation, analyses a set of gender power relations played out in and in post conflict settings. Paula argues that sexual exploitation of local women by peace keepers continues to be documented. In her enlightening analysis she includes NGO's, UN soldiers, government agencies who are entirely not on the side of the rebels in the bracket of peace keepers. She brings clarity to many concerns on women rights violation when in gazetted peace camps as in the case of Northern Uganda. Basically she sums it up by underlining the main contributory factors when she asserts that indicators here are gender power relations; male peace keepers; military masculinity and exploitative social masculinities (Human Rights Report, 2005).

The sexual exploitation of local females during peace support operations is her concern in her writings and , with passion she argues giving an expression of gendered power relations through discussing how peacekeepers themselves, together with individuals who work and live alongside them end in such exploitative deeds and conduct. The circumstances of war are already very precarious situations for the women because they expose women to any would-be rebel who would in all likelihood take advantage of the lawlessness. Also, due to the fact that the chances

of getting aware of it are very high, the chances of believing the victim are very slim. Her article is based on the fieldwork done in Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone in 2003.

The motivation of her study was to treat the views and meanings conveyed by peacekeepers surrounding sexual exploitation as a resource with which to enhance the effectiveness of in mission gender sensitivity training. She also intended to signal the incidence of sexual exploitation perpetrated over many years by peacekeepers in and in post conflict recovery. In her quest to meet these goals she relies heavily on the concept of military masculinity to highlight the limitations of analysing peacekeepers sexual exploitation. She demonstrates some of the ways in which peacekeepers and others close to them like NGO and Health workers take advantage of the victims in war.

Peacekeepers have been accused of using their position and what they have to get sex, in most cases it is evident that peacekeepers exchanged food and other resources like clothes and medication. They also used reading books for the school children and other materials for sex with minors and adults in Peace camps. These cases continue to be documented (AL Jazeera - Ugandan women fight for rights, 2012). Peacekeepers implicated in these activities hail from the developed and developing countries and have been involved in exploitative activities like rape, sex with minors and manufacturing of pornographic films with local women. The view that the local women are secure because they receive donated food, grants, and resources like shelter is problematic because in most cases this situation is making them even more vulnerable to secondary violations related to the war (HRR, 2005).

The peacekeeper babies create additional economic constraints on the mothers and the families. This is even worse when it comes to the minors as they are then forced to drop out of school and raise these children. They then remain at the mercy of the offenders who sometimes are only deployed for a particular period of time and then sent to another post. This leaves the girls with the burden of taking care of the children on their own. Later on, the marginalization of those labelled as prostitutes from their communities and the spread of HIV/AIDS and other STDs are also concerns for a significant number of the exploited women (AL Jazeera -Ugandan women fight for rights, 2012).

The duration of the peace talks usually is undetermined as they sometimes take so long with Northern Uganda as a case in point. This means that the duration of the peacekeepers is also undetermined and those that don't get posted get comfortable with the camps. They start to make demands in the camps mostly the military men, they become very influential on how things are to be run. The intention to serve the victims of war is then undermined and the effectiveness of the Peace keeping mission thus remains questionable. The more time the peacekeepers spend in the peace camps the more likely hood of "rest and recreation" facilities which entail the development of sex tourist sites.

d) Lack of security

The lack of security extends even in the protected villages, displaced women and girls in Northern Uganda have few places to turn for protection from the various entities that seek to harm them. For women and girls, the term "protected villages" is unfair in all honesty and this is for a variety of reasons. First of all, Northern Uganda women in prolonged camp situations are more vulnerable to abuse from male relatives or partners. In many cases, the increase in domestic violence found in refugee and IDP camps occurs as a result of the progressive destruction of traditional family and community customs and support structures and this is combined with pervasive and seemingly endless poverty (AL Jazeera -Ugandan women fight for rights, 2012). In Northern Uganda, the camp environments are further strained by massive overcrowding (particularly problematic for people who are used to living in large family compounds), insufficient food and services, and a near complete lack of any type of employment opportunities. Women and girls in the camps also face sexual violence and exploitation by the very soldiers who are supposed to protect them (Ayoo, 2004).

The increasing lack of security and law enforcement in the region with the police, for instance, make it worse when they don't avail themselves for they too are in fear of the rebels. Thus, men get subjected to forced labour and boys are kidnapped by the LRA and brutally indoctrinated into life as soldiers to the opposition. This even makes matters worse for the healing process of their mothers and the rehabilitation process as they are very much aware of what their young sons are

forced to do (Journeyman tv- Northern Uganda rising from the ruins of war, 2009). According to the newspaper reports the victims always put the blame on the lack of security in the villages. They also put more emphasis on the incessant pain that they still feel due to the fact that their children are still in the hands of the rebels. Displaced women and girls are especially at risk because of the manner in which the war is being fought and because of their unique vulnerability as informed by their gender. Women and girls also face particular difficulties in seeking physical and legal protection from both sides in the conflict. The intensity of the conflict has fluctuated during the past two decades, with the most recent increase in violence occurring in the last two years. By all indications, the LRA is now based in the brush forests of Northern Uganda, and has exponentially increased its attacks and the abduction of women and children (HRR, 2005).

e) Access to land and land rights

The location of Gulu, its terrain, climate and vegetation, have played a significant role in the intensity and duration of the war. In addition, they form the main natural resource base on which, the agriculture that the women and their households rely on their personal existence. Gulu district as the centre of the conflict is found in the middle of the whole region of Northern Uganda. It lies between longitude 30° 21'' East to 32° East and latitude 02° to 4° North. It is bordered by the Republic of Sudan in the North, Kitgum district in the North East and East, Apac district in the South East, Masindi district in the South, Nebbi district in the South West and Moyo and Arua districts in the West (see Map: I, Appendix 2). The district has a total area of 28,834 sq. kilometres (11,264sq. miles). Of this area, 10,301 square kilometres is the arable land under agricultural activities, the rest being covered by open water swamps, forests and game park reserves. The whole region experiences marked dry and wet seasons throughout the year. The average total rainfall is 1,500 mm per annum with a monthly average rainfall varying between 14 mm in January and 230 mm in August. The wet season normally extends to October with the highest peaks in May, August and October (Africa Affairs, 1999). The dry season begins in November and extends up to March. The average maximum temperature is 30° C with a minimum of 18° C. The relative humidity is high during the wet season and low in the dry season. The vegetation consists of intermediate savannah grassland characterised by open canopy

of trees and underlying grasses. However, man's activities have interfered with the natural vegetation and this has led to the introduction and development of secondary vegetation (Africa Affairs, 1999).

➤ *The map of Uganda showing the region of Northern Uganda.*



The region comprises various tribes that belong to the society in the area which the society has remained relatively non-hierarchical, being basically organised along the clan line. Historically, there was no central political authority, though clans did rally under the leadership of a chief (Rwot) for religious, political and defensive purposes. There was no unifying economic system or religion, though they spoke common languages, and shared common traditions and customs. Marriage, in particular played a central role in binding different clans together. Land is still communally owned on clan or family basis with fragmented plots apportioned to individual clans and family members. Traditionally, the society's gender relations used to display some sort of "balance" in the management of resources by men and women, albeit with men enjoying a pronounced favourable position to that of women (Africa Affairs, 1999).

While women controlled food crops, which were never sold for cash and which men had no direct access to men had total control over livestock, which could only be sold or slaughtered with the consent of the man. Cash crop proceeds were also under the direct control of men and they used such money to cover family expenses such as paying tax, buying clothes and paying school fees for the children. The men's traditional control of the family income, including the wives' earnings put the women at a great disadvantage and has been a source of tension in recent years.

The importance of women's land rights especially in Sub-Sahara Africa (SSA) has to be understood against the backdrop that whereas it has been relatively easier for women to make some gains in education, access to formal employment and participate in politics, achievements in land rights have been rather difficult. Because of the male-centred nature of land tenure systems in many societies of SSA, particularly customary tenure, a number of agencies including governments have been slow, if not reluctant, in their approach to fight for women's land rights. In the context of violent conflict, women's land rights infringements are further exacerbated by the effects the conflicts impose on them (AL Jazeera -Ugandan women fight for rights, 2012). Most humanitarian agencies, NGOs and governments often concentrate on women's access to social services, training and education, and domestic violence, among others, despite women facing land related challenges in the aftermath of the conflict. Thus, addressing all the other challenges is dependent on the security women have in access and use of land. As Foley (2007) argues, land rights cut across a number of different sectors including displacement and return, human settlements, agriculture and livelihood, economic development, environmental issues, urban and rural planning, security, land mines, and justice and the rule of law. Land is a basis for shelter, food, economic activities, and is the most significant employer of women's labour in SSA (Kamjathy & Nicholas, 2001). Hence, whatever short term or long term programs designed for women in post conflict reconstruction, access to, ownership and use of land remains a key aspect in rebuilding their lives (Kabonesa, 2002).

Available works so far indicate that armed conflicts often exacerbate women's existing problems of insecure land tenure and access, besides generating new ones (Baranyi & Weitzner, 2006). In situations of high mortality of men during the war, the women who have survived have found it difficult to secure access to land that was formerly owned or jointly owned by the husbands or

with other male relatives. This is because such women might be denied access to land by their in-laws or by other surviving male relatives. This phenomenon has been widely reported in countries that have experienced armed conflicts. For instance, UNHCR (2001) notes that in the aftermath of the genocide and massacres in Rwanda in 1994, many women who became widows met stiff resistance from in-laws or male members of their own family in accessing land. While in Kenya Mwangi (2001:19) reported that the conflicts of 1991-1993, including one of 1997 due to general elections, had serious consequences that adversely affected social patterns, including access to land and property rights. Women whose previous access to land were through marriage but became widows were left in a vulnerable position especially when the husbands' relatives lay claim to the land.

Women, who lost documentary evidence attesting to their ownership of the land, were dispossessed of their land in the aftermath of the conflict. Similar repercussions for women have been reported in the aftermaths of civil wars in countries such as Mozambique Waterhouse 2001; Bruck Vothknect 2008, Burundi 's Sabimbona 2001 and Uganda Hetz et al, 2007; Oxfam 2008; & World Bank 2008 to mention but a few. Women's accessibility to land also gets complicated by the subsequent land disputes that tend to characterize the resettlement process as evidenced by countries that have experienced civil wars such as Mozambique, Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, and the Sudan, among others, (Hetz, *et al* 2007). The inevitability of these disputes is largely determined by the duration of the conflict and extent of displacement the conflict imposes on the population. As Hetz, *et al* (2007) argues, the time span of displacement tends to correlate often with the incidences of disputes and conflicts over access to land and land rights. In such a context, women's chances to own and access land are thinned as most of them flee from such conflicts. And because in most cases women have secondary rights to land through their male counterparts, they might be over looked when it comes to the resolution of such conflict.

When deprived of access to, ownership and use of land, women are left without the means to create stable and sustainable livelihoods in the aftermath of the war. This has the effect of not only making women vulnerable to poverty but also reinforce and perpetuate their social, economic and political inequalities. Notably, most women in SSA depend on agriculture for subsistence, hence the significance of land to them. Women's participation in agriculture in SSA

accounts for close to 70-80% of labour, 90% food processing and storage, but own less than 20% of the land (Murisa 2008; Tripp 2004; Kabonesa, 2002). When they lose access to land, it means that their societal responsibilities and obligations of production and reproduction are curtailed (Kabonesa, 2002). As a result, many of the women may be compelled to seek alternative livelihoods outside agriculture wherein they are prone to exploitation such as working as maids, waitresses or sex workers. Loss of access to land also affects agricultural productivity in that the labour force lost from such women, gradually, may have a long term diminishing effect on productivity. Intervention by the state and other agencies working in post conflict settings is therefore necessary to alleviate the plight of women and ensure their full access to land and other property rights. Indeed, post conflict situations have been argued to present opportunities for integrating women's land rights in the recovery and resettlement processes.

f) Economic conditions

Kathy Relleen, Oxfam's Policy Advisor to Uganda, claims that twenty years was enough: "The Ugandan Government, the rebel army and the international community must fully acknowledge the true scale and horror of the situation in northern Uganda," she explains Relleen. "Twenty years of brutal violence is a scar on the world's conscience. The government of Uganda must act resolutely and without delay, both to guarantee the effective protection of civilians and to work with all sides to secure a just and lasting peace" (Ayoo, 2004). Further reports on the conflict have documented the estimated devastating economic cost and damage to the amount of US\$1.7 billion (GBP £1bn), which is alarming for a developing country. This amount is equivalent to the USA's total aid to Uganda between 1994 and 2002 and is double the UK's average annual bilateral gross public expenditure on aid to Uganda from 1994 to 2001. The average annual cost of the war to Uganda is US\$85 million.

The change in the settlement patterns as a result of the conflict has led to increase in high cost of living, in terms of the provision of basics needs of everyday living and particularly on basic social services such as health, education and transport. All this is coupled with the massive displacements, destruction of the means of livelihood and the lack of marketing opportunities has left many women more vulnerable than before (Rehn & Sirleaf, 2004). The cost of medical

services, secondary and tertiary education is rising yearly such that many single parents in families can hardly afford the costs. Consequently, this negatively impact on the school's enrolment as it forces it to steadily decline throughout the district and mostly among girls. This then becomes an additional concern generally when looking at the future of the women in relation to the creation of opportunities that will empower them so that they also actively participate in the progress their society and finally recover from the crimes committed to them as a result of the conflict.

The displacement also has made the women lose their land/homes which were a source of income from subsistence farming. Lack of control of the land and livestock that they owned as wives has put them at high risk. The disruptions of the war have also destroyed some of the families making women lose most of the rights that were automatically attached to marriage. This has put them at high risk especially during separation or divorce, because these factors leave them desperate with no means of survival, since marriage gave them the rights to the land use. Widows too lose their homes and the ability to use the deceased husband's land in the absence of their sons. Refusal by the relatives to have the land inherited also invariably results into eviction from the land. With the war and an upsurge in HIV transmission awareness, the situation has become even worse, as most women do not want to be inherited by the in laws for fear of impoverishment and contracting HIV (Rehn & Sirleaf, 2004). Widows without male children and divorcees currently depend on the kindness of relatives. On the surface, it appears that since land is communally owned, men and women have equal access and use of the land. However, a closer examination of the land tenure system indicates that even before the insurgencies, women's access to land was considerably limited and often pegged to their marital status. All this makes the reintegration of women very complicated and thus they don't get to fully participate in the change they want to see in their community like on the subject of women's right violations as they have a lot on their plate to deal with (Rehn & Sirleaf, 2004).

The economic condition of most of the victims is also aggravated by the lack of support from the government, as they remain responsible to take care of the wounded, the sick and other homeless relatives. Some women in the community have also lost the financial support they used to get from the relatives who have been retrenched from the civil service, the privatized government

companies and the armed or security forces. Development activities have been seriously interrupted by civil the strife and insecurity from the 1997s to date (Rehn & Sirleaf, 2004). There have been no meaningful development activities going on in the district. This is a recipe for disaster mostly for the young women who resort to alternative behaviors that can put them in a venerable position and sadly in the process they get violated as women.

g) Health and the wellbeing of women

Modern warfare has had a devastating effect on the lives and dignity of women and girls, as well as on the health and educational services that are essential to family and community survival. Along with reproductive health complications, the adverse effects of conflict hit women and girls harder than it does their male counterparts, since deliberate gender-based violence and discrimination are rampant in these settings. As such, these gender-specific threats to women and girls compound the challenges of ensuring their protection. This has resulted in gaps in the design and delivery of assistance and protection, short-changing the priority population of women in conflict and post-conflict situations (Journeyman.tv-The children's war, 2003). Essential services such as basic health care, including reproductive health care and counselling, are often disrupted or become inaccessible during conflict situations. This compounds health risks for all affected populations, at times when public health needs soar. Women and girls become the individual and systematic targets of sexual violence, specifically when rape and sexual assault are used as weapons of war. Efforts channelled at responding to the systematic application of gender-based violence must confront the aftermath of previous events, as well as education efforts relative to gender and human rights.

By nature women have special needs owing to their sexual and reproductive role. Thus, for women in general, health is very important regardless of the condition and is even worse when it happening in a conflict zone. The health of women is affected by conflict in many ways due to the disruption that takes place. It is notable that in conflict women and also men get injured or ill as a direct result of general violence. Nonetheless women's health often faces further burdens due to the nature of their biological and social status. The exposure of women to sexual violence results in them contracting sexually transmitted diseases (Journeyman.tv-The

children's war, 2003). More often than not, they do not receive sufficient pre-and post natal care or have access to emergency obstetric care. As a matter of fact, these are crucial to the health and well-being of a woman or a mother. Cultural restriction and discrimination can also pose as a serious health problem to women in relation to them having to access health care. This situation derives from fear of being marginalized and judged. Sometimes women are just afraid that they will not be understood mostly in reference to sexual transmitted diseases (ECPAT-Uganda, 2008).

According to the Red Cross there are many reasons which account for the prevalence of discrimination in health care preventing women from receiving rehabilitation and prosthetic assistance. Women's infections are not as visible as those that affect men. Sometimes their families do not see the need to seek prosthetic assistance for women who in most cases remain at home anyway as they can afford transport, accommodation and treatment costs involved in being fitted with prosthesis and the care it involves and also the fact that women's access to such services is restricted. Women are also expected to be the care takers and givers to others who are ill, traumatized and hurt in society. The concern is not only with the physical harm in conflict that threatens the health of women, but also the large amount of stress and suffering which impacts severely on their mental health.

Gender plays a significant role in determining which people are most likely to become infected with STIs, including HIV/AIDS. Armed conflict increases the rate of new infections across affected populations, but women and girls are significantly more likely to become infected than men and boys. A recent post conflict study in Africa found that the HIV- infection rate of adolescent girls was four times that of adolescent boys. Rape, high-risk behaviours, the inability to negotiate safe sex, and sexual exploitation are risks that have disproportionately impacted on women and girls (ECPAT-Uganda, 2008)

Even in ideal, peaceful settings, adolescence is a challenging time of life. When conflict erupts, the risks associated with adolescence increase for boys, but multiply for girls. Trauma and lack of social support and services are especially harmful to young people and may have lasting effects on their physical and mental health. When social structures break down in the face of war and instability, young adults frequently engage in high-risk drug use or sexual behaviour. The

presence of peacekeeping organizations in post-conflict settings sometimes has negative ramifications on public health, again with severe repercussions for women and girls. Personnel and military forces used for peacekeeping missions are predominantly adult men from differing cultures, health and education statuses and, subsequently, expectations for conduct (ECPAT-Uganda, 2008).

Increased demand for the commercial sex trade has serious ramifications for the entire community, particularly through the presence of sexual, physical and economic exploitation. Despite the perverse hardships facing women in conflict settings, it is important to underscore that positive outcomes for women do exist. A central point of reference is that women have organized themselves in numerous locations to respond to conflict at the grass-roots level, particularly attending to empowerment of women and girls. There are many ways to reap the benefits of women's leadership and to establish them as agents of change in post-conflict redevelopment efforts. Pursuing the most comprehensive reproductive health services in emergencies and clarifying the extent to which those services can be made sustainable are a notable concern for the entire United Nations system, including UNFPA.

h) Structural constrains and obstacles

Women, including young girls, are further failed by the legal system meant to be non-discriminatory in protecting their rights. On the contrary, the legal system fails to meet their expectations. The legal system resorts to the punishing of the perpetrators of sexually-based offenses like rape and even then very few of these perpetrators get punished. It does not address the core dilemma of women rights violation to help the victim fully recover the victim. In this way, it ignores the actual damage done to the victim and concentrates on the surface thereby subjecting the victims to a predicament (Journeyman.tv-The children's war, 2003). The most traumatic experience for the victims which adds salt to their injury is the fact that the sexual violence in Northern Uganda is gender-specific. This is best exemplified by the fact that women victims of sexual abuse are also often rejected by their own families and communities who when they look at raped girls as damaged goods no longer clean women. This leads to intense trauma for the victim due to the lack of support and ultimately hinders the recovering process. This is

an extension of human right violation resulting from the delay on the part of those who administer justice to act decisively and promptly as the situation dictates (Rehn & Sirleaf, 2004).

Girls in displaced families are in an even more precarious situation since they are fully dependent on the government and army assistance for survival and are generally poorer than non-displaced families as they often lack even the most basic education and knowledge of their rights. Thus, in most cases, the desire to change the economic position on the part of the victim's family puts the victim's needs last. Receiving compensation rather than seek punishment through the judicial system becomes the primary motive due to dire economic straits. Other offenders then just know they can commit crimes of gender violation and still get away with it. Sometimes families just lose hope and faith in the judicial system as they know that they are unlikely to achieve any positive outcome which is satisfactory in legal or monetary terms. It is especially difficult for women and girls who have been assaulted by soldiers to come forward to report such incidents of assault. As a result, few, if any soldiers, are ever prosecuted thus leading many to continue misbehaving with absolute impunity (ECPAT-Uganda, 2008). Subsequently, bureaucracy in the legal structures process too is a hindrance to the fight against women rights violations. As part of the course of action in holding offenders accountable all legal avenues and procedures have to be followed regardless indisputable evidence having been adduced. Taking all this precaution could also disregard the victim as the victims then revisits the traumatic experiences all over again every time they are requested to provide evidence or testimony thus the process of holding war criminals accountable can also be a hindrance to women rights. Considering all the course of action involved, all the paper work is usually too much for the victims and thus they give up the battle of getting justice done by the legal system with specific reference to the process of gathering evidence.

In October 2005, the International Criminal Court (ICC) based in the Hauge, announced arrest warrants of Joseph Kony including four of his top direct deputies. Their charges ranged from the mutilation of civilians to the forced abduction of and sexual abuse of children. To date Konny is still continuing to be more defiant than ever. With proposals of negotiations as the only way forward to end the terror in the region the chances are that these charges might not stand and the possibility of them getting away with what they have done are high. This means the victims will

not get justice at all. The people of Ugandan did voice out their concern on how the warrants would undermine the peace process by forcing the LRA leaders into a situation of facing trial at the Hauge or continue fighting. Either way, the options do not include, consider or put the victims who most cases, do not have a voice first and the time has passed without getting the justice so desired (ICC, 2005).

5.4 Relevance of peace keeping missions in relation to women's rights.

The purpose of the United Nations presence in conflict regions like Northern Uganda is to bring peace and ensure protection, some sort of helping hand in the transition period and to normalise the disturbed peace. This is in line with their goal to bring all nations of the world together to work for peace and development, based on the principles of justice, human dignity including the wellbeing of all people. It affords the opportunity to countries to balance global interdependence and national interests when addressing international problems. Looking at the relevance of United Nations peace operations in Northern Uganda and other conflict regions in Africa, it is fair to assess the relevance of their presences mostly in terms of women rights and women rights violation

Emphasizing while agreeing that the protection of civilians must be given priority, during and after the conflicts, this means that peace agreements are still extremely relevant in the region and in all conflict regions more so to derive better strategies of preventing reoccurrence of conflict. Most importantly, the UN has also deployed personnel and other agencies of women rights protection [...] to carry out the protection mandate, including humanitarian personnel and human rights defenders to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence. This mission in Northern Uganda did not only look at civilians like women but also at the protection of United Nations personnel, facilities, installations and equipment. The Mission also supports Government efforts to fight impunity and ensure the protection of civilians from violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, including all forms of sexual and gender-based violence (Edmonds, 2009).

The intention of the peace keeping operations is to restore some form of stability and a calm situation in the middle of all the disruption of lives and peace in conflict and even post conflict

recovery. The tough times when lives of the civilians have been disrupted including employment, displacement and loss of property, all these need an immediate plan when recovering from conflict and thus peace keeping operations, missions and organisations. For these major reasons it is clear that peace operations are still necessary even in the case of Northern Uganda. Among all other objectives to assist the Government of Uganda in the crisis which it is facing, along with international and bilateral partners, there is a need to strengthen its military capacity, including military justice and military police; support the reform of the police; develop and implement a multi-year joint United Nations justice support programs in order to ensure the safety of the people during this time of need (Edmonds, 2009).

MONUSCO continued to support the Ministry of Mining of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the establishment of mineral trading counters in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. This is an indication that the UN is in support of peace as they are working hand in hand with government development, based on the principles of justice and human dignity. The first counter has been constructed in Mubi, Walikale territory, and awaits the deployment of administrative and Police national Congolese staff who are in the process of being trained. On the basis of illicit trade patterns, additional counters are being built in Itebero and Rubaya, in North Kivu, and in Mugogo and Numbi, in South Kivu. The construction of the mineral trading counters in Mubi, Itebero and Numbi will deal predominantly with metals and minerals produced in Walikale. Combined with the mining ban announced by President Kabila the trading counters aim to increase the transparency and legality of the mineral trade (New York: United Nations 2000).

The presence of armed groups and high levels of violence against civilians, women and children in particular because of the so many blend of troops in the region like UN troops, the army, the troops from Rwanda (FDLR) and Uganda rabbles have led to the increase in the abuse of women and children and this factor on its own has made the protection of innocent people a difficult task on the behalf of the UN. Martin Edmond gives an example of the North Kivu in the DRC which shares political boundaries with Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi and Tanzania and the region is rich in resources which explains the rebel interest. In addition to this, in some incidences the same civilians the UN is supposed to be protecting while in the field, the UN troops end up attacking and causing harm to the civilians thus making the situation worse for them in the time

of conflict. The contrast here is that the UN has sometimes violated the same code of conduct and principle of civilian protection that it is meant to stand for. The use of new indicators to detect risk and report sexual violence, such as movements of armed groups and pillaging and the high incidence of rape and other acts of sexual violence throughout the Democratic Republic of the Congo remained a matter of serious concern” (Monusco, unmissions.org). Thus, as much as these facilities are needed in Northern Uganda too, a lesson should be drawn from the experiences of the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo. The intention to do well through the peace keeping operations is not in dispute. It is the implementation on the ground that needs more work and change of strategy for an effective positive contribution to happen.

The concern of women and children soldiers is still continuing in the DRC and the new re-recruitment of children by armed groups and FARDC continued during the MONUC reporting period. Most of the children who had been separated from armed troops and young girls who escaped from armed groups or FARDC reported to MONUSCO that they had been re-recruited several times by armed elements. Since March, MONUSCO facilitated the release or escape of 868 children from the national security forces and armed groups, primarily in eastern DRC and handed them over to the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and child-protection actors for protection and reintegration (New York: United Nations, 1996). This indicates that the United Nations has put some measures which are a clear indication of some efforts on their part. However, in the DRC there is still very little that has been done because the damage caused by the conflicts is still very intense and only 868 children have escaped from the armed groups. Thus, due to the low numbers in the success of this mission it may be explained why the UN operation in the DRC may start to lose meaning.

It is also important to note that in most cases the United Nations’ operations tend to put more effort in the addition of troops when in conflict as a way of protecting the victims of war disregarding the fact that there are immediate hindrances to human life like lack of food and water which still remain very important. UNEP was among several participants in an event in the capital, Kinshasa, staged by the National Water and Sanitation Committee, which brought together government representatives, development partners, financial institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and researchers to discuss steps to address the water

challenges in the region. Speaking at the forum, UNEP's DRC Programme Manager, Hassan Partow said the study confirmed that despite recent progress, including water sector reforms, the scale of the challenge means that the country will not be able to meet its water targets under the UN-set Millennium Development Goals which calls for reducing by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water by 2015. They would have to supply an additional 25.3 million people with safe drinking water by 2015 even to meet its national development goals, which are significantly below the MDGs water target. The reason for all this was to indicate that peace is not only preventing physical harm to victims of war but is also about the provision of food and water. Women have to walk long distances in search for water which puts them at risk of attacks by rebels.

The mission was led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and included representatives from the Department of Field Support, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of Legal Affairs, OHCHR, and the Office of Military Affairs of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNHCR (Edmonds, 2009). The mission concluded that MONUC had made significant efforts to incorporate the conditionality policy into its overall protection efforts, but that serious challenges remained (New York: United Nations, 2000). MONUC had established screening procedures, primarily based on the human rights records of known commanders, in order to determine the eligibility of FARDC units to receive United Nations operational support. The mission had also made a good-faith effort to establish mechanisms and procedures for monitoring the behaviour of those FARDC units in the field that were receiving support from MONUC and for interceding with the FARDC command where there was evidence of abuse of civilians by FARDC personnel (New York: United Nations, 1999).

The relationship between UN members and the peace operation is a complex one as it is composed of political, technical and financial obstacles and may be best addressed by enhancing the dialogue among the concerned parties. In most cases, only some member states have the political, financial and human resources needed for a successful UN mission. This means that there will always be an unequal balance of power which discredits the UN and thus due to the limited resources that the UN has, it faces diverse problems in executing multiple complex missions like the one in Uganda currently. Many of these problems are amplified by the organizations' image

problem which holds that the UN lacks credibility as an actor since the motive really is to help other nations in crises because the states with an advantage may use the mirror of helping Uganda and yet the actual drive is to invest or have a hold in the country (Bariagaber, 2008).

The UN and its operations in conflict regions have their pros and cons and it is clear that the UN is still relevant in Northern Uganda for the protection of the civilians and the advancement of women rights in particular. However, the challenge is now how to relate the objectives it has on paper in the field and translate the intentions into effective practice in the field. The UN needs to embrace its values on the field in order to improve the organisations' credibility (Bariagaber, 2008). This includes how peace keeping is understood as it is not only from the top down approach that dealing with major issues at government level like structural adjustment programs will be a success but also from the bottom up approach which constitute the local level. It is fair to note that the UN also has tried to revisit its laws and guiding principles and the rules of engagement have undergone fundamental changes. In the past, the UN troops could fire and kill only when under attack or in self-defence, recently they have been permitted to fire not only in self-defence but also to protect innocent civilians.

Conclusion

The 20 years long running brutal conflict in Northern Uganda, has received little attention compared to other such long running conflicts. There is clear indication of disregard by the responsible parties, the international body and the regional organisations, which are showing no concern to the harm caused by the, LRA rebels and the current government in their violent dispute. Most touching is the fact that it is the poor civilians who get trapped in the middle of all the distractions caused by the conflict. The conflict in general continues to cause more harm than the good that both side tend to mirror to be the reason behind the fighting as the consequences to civilians are devastating. This evidenced by the fact that their breadwinners, and men, women, and children suffer physical injuries that dramatically change their prospects of living and providing for themselves and their families.

Chapter four outlines the various contributory factors that make the conditions of women in conflict regions become worse and the obstacles impacting on their reintegration. In the region

of Northern Uganda, various segments in the nature of this conflict make it hard to protect the rights of women. Thus, the chapter unpacks four major sectors; the political contribution, the economic situation of women, the law (both international and Ugandan law) and the international bodies including other organisations such as the NGO's.

To date the number of peacekeepers punished for sexual exploitation remains inconsequential, the same holds for the others particularly in the case of the tourists. In most cases, it is not seen as a crime but a form of power exercise. It is also hard to prove the crimes committed against humanity. Some of the acts are committed in deployed isolated team or sectors and sites free from surveillance of the commanders and thus it is easy to do what they want to the locals because of the isolation of the areas in which such incidents take place. There is lack of respect for the code of conduct put in place which peacekeepers have to abide by. Sometime the commanders do away with the investigation mostly if it was supposed to be under their watch.

According to NGOs in Northern Uganda, as well as displaced women themselves, the most severe punishment a soldier implicated in rape is likely to receive is a transfer to a different camp. Stories abound of individual army soldiers and commanders that have been transferred over and over again for this reason and were never brought to court. Moreover, victims of sexual and gender-based violence who do come forward are treated harshly than the perpetrators. Uganda's highly patriarchal society generally views girls as a financial burden on their families who should be married off as soon as possible. In this environment, rape or other forms of sexual assault are not always interpreted as crimes in the first place by anyone except the victims.

Following decades of civil strife and insurgency in northern Uganda, there has been much discussion on how to achieve lasting reconciliation and to deal with the committed offences. One of the most pressing issues has and still is women rights violations and the reparations for women victims. Reparations can acknowledge the rights and dignity of those harmed by conflict by providing some justice, and the resources to rebuild lives and communities. Yet any such programs and frameworks must respond to the particular needs of all its victims, including those considered especially vulnerable like rape victims. Women in North Uganda are not different from other women in traditional patriarchal societies. In times of armed conflicts women are raped, killed and subjected to humiliating social subordination by men,

but even when armed conflict is absent, women are subjected to subordination and this is done in a more brutal manner. According to MacKinnon in patriarchal societies, when no war has been declared, and life goes on in a state of everyday hostilities, women are beaten and raped by men to whom they are close to. (MacKinnon, 2006: 180). Thus, study of rape in Northern Uganda is potentially useful for a general analysis of gender violence in both war and peace times, depending on the society which is under consideration.

Considering the constantly ever changing state of human security in post-conflict countries, it is important to be flexible in conveying a positive response that is in accordance with the people's real needs. The Coordination of all parties involved is a good starting point and communication between local authorities and other donors is also a critical factor in order to respond adequately to the most urgent needs of the women victims. The planning process and activities should take into account the internal individual processes with procedures. It is noted that the disruptive effects of the war on the socioeconomic fabric of the affected society presents opportunities to engage new and transformational measures and processes that have regard for women's rights including addressing and reforming land related conflicts and inequalities in the post conflict reconstruction. According to Zuckerman and Greenberg (2004) in post conflict reconstruction it may be possible to establish new norms and rules, engage new leaders, and build new institutions and social structures that are sensitive to gender and women's needs and interests. El-Jack (2003) notes that in the aftermath of the war, avenues for change to gender equality may be possible, 'if we ask some fundamental questions about what kind of society we want and how gender relations will function within it'. Similarly, Cockburn and Zarkov (2002:11) argue that it is a moment when 'social upheaval opens a door to the changes we hope for'. Although hitherto there are no specific studies that have explored these claims, a look at some of the studies that have examined the measures used to address some of the land related challenges in other post conflict reconstruction settings can help to provide some insights.

Chapter 6

Conclusion and Recommendations

War impacts on women in different ways depending on the intensity of the atrocities committed. Notably, in contemporary conflicts, the impact has escalated causing more severe damage on the lives of women in particular. Although women remain and are among as the greatest victims of injury, they also still remain a minority in terms of combatants and perpetrators of war crimes. This is attested to by the assertion that “in contemporary conflicts, as much as 90 percent of casualties among civilians, are mostly are women and children.” (Women Security, 2012). The previous chapters have not only analysed and described the ramifications of the women’ rights violations during and after war, but they have also brought out the phenomenon of its reign of terror in Northern Uganda (S/Res/1325 2000). This is a profound reflection of the conditions of a fragile state not only when it is in conflict but also when it is recovering from the conflict. The violation of women’ rights is one of the major difficulties which the situation of the conflict tends to take advantage of given the conditions at hand. War has other effects such as the infrastructure damage; the transitions from a planned economy to a market economy which has negative outcomes for conflict victims ranging from severe ethnic divisions to the flourishing of the sex trade. Poverty or impoverishment, not to the exclusion of other circumstances women in conflict find themselves in, exacerbate existing problems. The existing socially constructed gender inequalities complicate the problems which already exist in addition to the conflict which makes life even harder.

The nature of conflict including the forms of violence faced by women in Northern Uganda and the devastating sexual violence are usually intentional and are intended to make a point to the Government and international bodies. This is systematic in achieving military or political objectives as the rebels believe the only way they can be taken seriously is by engaging in outrageous violent acts. There has been a monumental failure of the Ugandan government to forge a true national consciousness on agreed set of principles to all the dilemmas surrounding

the issues of women's rights subjugating the insurgents would be a way forward to fight the offenders of women's rights and thus provide a social safety net for the women during war and when recovering from the conflict (New York: United Nations, 2002). This chapter delivers a summary of a discourse on women rights violation in conflict and recovering from conflict. The variations that affirm women's rights in post conflict recovery, the limitations that affect the progress in Northern Uganda. The chapter also uses examples from other past conflict and ongoing conflict regions to suggest recommendations. The chapter concludes by suggesting some non-violent management prospects and the attendant impasse both during the conflict as well as when recovering from conflict.

6.1 Strengthening security capacity

The exclusion of women in the security capacity measures has been a hindrance to the envisaged progress towards the attainment of peace and security for the women in Northern Uganda. However, a positive advanced stage towards a more productive resolution of the protection of women's rights is the fact that the UN Security Council recognised that the exclusion of women from peace processes contravenes their rights and continues to put their security at risk. Thus, including women in the decision making in addition to taking the experiences of the victims in consideration especially those that have been subjected to human rights violations is the best way forward towards ensuring their future security. The UN Security Council formalized this recognition in October 2000 with the unanimous adoption of resolution 1325 on women, peace and security (New York: United Nations, 2002). On 18 October 2013, the UN Security Council demonstrated renewed determination to put women's leadership at the centre of all efforts to resolve conflict and promote peace. The Council adopted a resolution that sets in place stronger measures to enable women to participate in conflict resolution and recovery, and puts the onus on the Security Council, the United Nations, regional organizations and Member States to dismantle the barriers, create the space, and provide seats at the table for women.

This Resolution positions a road map for a more systematic approach to the implementation of commitments on women, peace and security. In concrete terms, these measures include: the development and deployment of technical expertise for peacekeeping missions and UN

mediation teams supporting peace talks; improved access to timely information and analysis on the impact of conflict on women and women's participation in conflict resolution in reports and briefings to the Council; and strengthened commitments to consult as well as include women directly in peace talks (Journeyman.tv-The children's war, 2003). The boosting of security in terms of equipped personnel is very critical mostly when recovering from conflict as this helps the women to feel protected so that a repeat of what they experienced does not reoccur (New York: United Nations, 2002). According to Rehn and Sirleaf, countries contribute troops known as 'blue helmets' or 'blue berets' to serve under the UN flag and, depending on their mandate, these troops may patrol borders, monitor ceasefires and assist local communities in their search for durable peace. However, this has recently been revised to include the local civilian police officers, electoral experts and observers, mine action experts, human rights officers and humanitarians, political and public information specialists and the likes. Their duties are in line with serving people and rebuilding the affected areas with the responsibilities of assisting to implement peace agreements of protecting as well as delivering humanitarian assistance. This sometimes extends to assisting with the demobilization of arms from former fighters as evidenced in what happened in Rwanda after the 1994 genocide. This would entail participation to normal return of daily civilian life, for example, supervising and conducting elections; training and restructuring of local police forces, human rights and investigating alleged violations (Rehn & Sirleaf, 2004). All these if done well with commitment and dedication thus will be advancement to women rights.

Assisting local police plus sectors to boost security, has a great impact on the society including women trusting the entire system including law implementers after the conflict or in process of recovering from conflict. In most cases during the conflict victims loose trust in the government and the state. The public servants and state agents are usually associated with the perpetrators of crimes. Most women who are abused refuse to seek help because they see the local police as having connections with the rebels. This is gathered in pronouncement such as: *They are all the same, only deference is that they have uniforms, do it hiding while the rebels just don't care.*" Thus, it is very difficult to reach out to the victims as those that commit the crimes against human rights or the abuse of women make everyone with good intention look bad. This is so especially when they belong to the same ethnic group of the rebels or even just on the opposite

side of the conflict. Thus, having neutral external forces boosting the numbers can make a huge difference mostly on the part of the victims (E/CN.4/Sub/2/1998/13, 22 June 1998).

With proper measures in place, it is easy to notice early that formal warning measures in the structures of society to monitor the potential crisis situations can be helpful to protect the security of women. This can also be beneficial with indicators, to determine future conflict outbreaks. Information collected properly has to be explained to the proper channels like policy makers in charge of implementation. Making sure they understand the suggestions made from the information given that has resulted from ground research can make a great difference in recovering from the conflict process. Usually, this information is a clear reflection of what is currently happening in terms of still existing tension that has not been dealt with on the grassroots level. The victims of women rights as human rights violations have first-hand information on how they are feeling and they even know the still existing gangs and people who are still collaborating with the rebel groups. Using factual information can be a way forward in providing meaningful protection for the victims. The victims claim that usually the international organisations concentrate on pushing the rebel groups away from the camps. The ill-feelings in this regard are expressed in statements such as: They are forgetting that in the peace camp where they take us for security is worse; they have mixed us with the ex-rebels, combats, murderers and even rapist who are two steps away from us. (Rehn & Sirleaf, 2004).

Accurate evidence collection from victims is very vital to their security as this can result to life threatening situations. In light of this, respecting the victims' confidentiality is important. How the information collected from testimonies is used can impact positively on the future security of women as this can be enlightening on many various aspects of the violent attacks that women experience during war. The methods used to attack, what facilitated the violent attacks, what enabled them to commit the crimes to women, even the entry points can all be evaluated to get a clear representation of what really happened on the scene and during the time of the attacks (Special Issue Gender & Peacebuilding Vol XX, 2, 2004). Bearing in mind what the victims have gone through is not easy to share and reiterating the trauma of what they went through is hard. Proper investigations of what women go through when they are in the hands of these rebel groups are tasks that should be handled with care and followed with caution. These precautionary measures can empower decision makers to calculate the risk women face and thus

minimise future violent attacks on women mostly during war. The facts will give proper guidance to risk management in conflict and thus contribute towards the protection of women and the culmination of efforts in the fight against women's rights violation will yield positive results in the future. In Northern Uganda women have been failed in the past but let the future show some sort of difference from what they have experienced.

Claims of violations committed in peace camps, In the Peace campus and the Refugee camps, security should be taken seriously as the violation of women's rights still continues to exist after the war or post conflict recovery . Taking several claims of violation made by women and young girls into consideration can make a huge difference towards protecting the peace that the process of recovering from conflict is trying to accomplish. This can be one of the measures of dealing with the remaining tension among the people. When the cases that are reported by women are taken seriously it means that a forum of free expression is created among the community. Victims of war and those that experience violence in the camps need a secure, non-judgmental police including the defence force working on their behalf. Ignoring the prioritization of women's protection when they give authentic information on the rebels can endanger them and this would impact negatively on the fight against woman rights abuse. Even though sometimes the forces of law may not intentionally chose to ignore women in the process of recovering from conflict, the availability of resources usually determines what sectors need to be focused on. The provision of basic needs to the victims of war usually takes the immediate concern and this entails the provision of food, water and shelter. The implication of this then is that society as a whole does not handle all the aspects that lead to the conflict in the first place (UN Security Council Resolution 1325, 2006).

According to Elizabeth always context specific, other indicators that are often overlooked in early warning and information collection systems, the propaganda emphasizing hyper masculinity, media scapegoating of women accusing them of political or cultural betrayal, sex-specific refugee migrations. Engagement of women in shadow war economy sex specific unemployment as a way to earn some income, this can be a resistance to women's participation in peace processes and recovering from conflict. The negotiations also lack the presence of women in civil society organizations and the growth of fundamentalism is also a factor to consider. There is also an increase of single female-headed households that make it hard for the

women to feed the growing numbers of family members who have lost their care takers. The daily existence of victims in some cases can be an indicator of the potential of ongoing violations done to women in the Camps. The daily routines of what women do on a day to day in the camps can indicate various odd patterns of what ought to be the proper conduct Gender Expertise (Rehn and Sirleaf, 2004).

Gender concerns have moved onto peacekeeping agendas and the need for bringing gender perspective into peace operations has to also increase. The UN has engaged in this efforts by deploying gender specialists, the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the UN-Transitional Authority in East Timor (UNTAET) and in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) in 1999, and then in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) in 2000. These were positive steps in moving forward regarding women' rights violation fights and looking at benefits that have resulted from these consultations are really comforting. Gender Specialists offer support to women mostly when it comes to the preliminary ideas and suggestions to victims on how to restart their lives after having experienced the trauma. It is recommended that they be given different views on how to regain their confidence back so that they can actively participate in the society again, how to accomplish new achievements and how to face the obstacles in their future. However, it is notable that a lot still needs to be done and that a more thorough approach and analysis are needed to determine how these initiatives will include Gender specialists. It is also worth keeping in mind how the initiatives can also best serve women victims in conflict and peacekeeping environment (MONUC, 2000).

The presence of gender expertise and having consultations with women organisations in security information finding missions is important since they have professional experience on the various aspects of women' rights violation. This is accounted for by the fact that they deal with victims of this nature in their daily work. It is in light of this that they base all their information on what they have experienced while doing their work. The other reason for this is attributed to the fact that gender experts work hand in hand with missionary groups/leaders, humanitarian personnel, doctors and various religious groups who are in contact with victims of women rights violations. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and in Sierra Leone the involvement of humanitarian personnel significantly assisted women in dangerous areas. The efforts of Peace

Keepers with gender experts, their dedication to work with inspired and dedicated mission leaders and force commanders who made the protection of women a priority made the women feel safe (Rehn and Sirleaf, 2004:61). The team spirit and effort made the women feel they understood what they were going through emotionally and were cared for. It was clear to the victims that being protected them from violence was part of the main agenda which the Peace Keepers wanted to accomplish. This unit as well as the involvement of all the stake holders and sectors that deal with victims strengthen the security monitoring process thus making the documentation of abuses against women's human rights a successful venture.

Gender mainstreaming is a concept that has been defined by the United Nations as "... the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally and thus prevent inequality from being perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality." (Rehn and Sirleaf, 2004). Thus, if this is also implemented in Northern Uganda in all aspects of the war and its implications to the women, then it will really be work well done.

In the process of recovering from conflict, the benefits of this concept can be evident and also seen in political statements of good will, training and the appointment of a few women to senior positions. When it comes to the concrete strategies and procedures, from planning and assessment women are not seen and this is the case all the way to the withdrawal phase. Gender mainstreaming necessitates specialized expertise and training in all aspects of mission operation for effective outcomes to show in the peace building process. Sirleaf *et al* (2004) argue that it requires programmatic integration of gender into all elements of activity, throughout the various 'pillars' of governance and humanitarian efforts. They further argue that these missions require regular monitoring, reporting and evaluation of progress made and obstacles encountered as well as systems for holding the operation accountable to achieving its goals. Finally, it requires resources to put all of these measures in place (ECOSOC Resolution 2007/33).

It also important to note that Gender perspective and expertise consultation must start from the primary stages of the mission to ensure that the structures and programmes are designed to address the actual different needs of the victims. This is to ensure their protection, assistance, justice and reconstruction. It is fair to acknowledge the fact that in previous missions around Africa, gender expertise has not been utilized during the assessment of missions or technical surveys that are conducted prior to the design or establishment of UN peacekeeping operations and more so in the outline of the final proposal of action, the concept of operation or even budget. The initial planning phases are the most appropriate times to start monitoring the peace keeping mission and report on the progress made in mainstreaming gender issues throughout the peace operation. According to ECOSOC Resolution 2007/33 Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system doing so is how the Secretary-General can respond more effectively to the Security Council's call to include "information about gender mainstreaming throughout peacekeeping missions and all other aspects relating to women." Despite the importance of these strategies, procedures and resources, most of the infancies is focused on other matters like increasing the number of women leading and serving in peace operations, often referred to as 'gender balance' and by so doing dedicate gender experts within peace operations to focus exclusively on gender and gender training (Special Issue Gender & Peacebuilding Vol XX, 2, 2004).

6.2 Addressing gender inequality

Limited opportunities to promote Gender equality and empowerment during Peace Operation also hinder the progress of recovering from conflict on the part of the victims, starting from the inaction and the lack of intention to engage women in the community when making decisions that affect them directly. Women get frustrated when they are not consulted at the local level and more so when they do not employ them at a professional level but only consider those that have qualifications. They feel left out when all professional positions are outsourced and they get excluded from the selection process.

When dealing with extreme cases of women rights violations like rape, and the likes the necessity of women handling this cases is important for, it can make a difference on how the

victims react to the help offered. The women's equal participation in peace processes is then asserted repeatedly both directly and indirectly, in the UN Charter, the Beijing Platform for Action, by ECOSOC, the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Hague Agenda for Peace and the Namibia Plan of Action, among others. This is due to the fact that women's participation in peace processes, recovering from conflict and in peace building in particular, has been anything but equal or fair. Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in their report on Women War and Peace state that in the 32 years between 1957 and 1989, only 0.1 per cent of the field-based military personnel in UN peacekeeping missions were female (Rehn E and Sirleaf, 2004). Despite the fact that in 1996 the Secretary-General recommended that by the year 2000 women constitute 50 per cent of staff in the UN system, including field missions, women made up only 4 percent of police and 3 per cent of military in UN operations in 2000. At the UN Headquarters between 1994 and 2000, women represented only 18 per cent of those employed at the director level and none at the senior director level. The UN Charter itself promises to place no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs." Looking at the numbers above till 2000 when Resolution 1325 was passed, only four women have ever served as Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSG).

6.3 Reducing and eradicating sexual exploitation

Violence against women is a global problem that affects women all over the world, through different perspectives and experiences. Gender-based violence includes the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of women, marital rape, sexual assault, forced prostitution, and trafficking in women and young girls. Women's social standing has also been persistently disadvantaged due to entrenched patriarchal cultural values. These values, in turn, dictate roles and behaviours that can result in negative health outcomes. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) outlines basic and fundamental human rights regarding gender discrimination and "security of the person," which have been interpreted, barely in terms of sexual behaviour, yet that is the most essential point that actually extends to a more wide range of discrimination patterns that

affect women. Internally displaced women and girls in Northern Uganda are surrounded by elements that did cause them harm, still do harm to the women and these elements may still potentially do worse damage. The LRA continue to disregard the law by acting as they please with little response from the side of the law, even though the foundation has been laid in terms of what the code of conduct ought to be. The rebel's attacks and abduction of the women then forces the women to bear children, and discards them if they fall sick or are no longer useful. The army, on the other hand, is charged with protecting all civilians against LRA atrocities commit but egregious acts of gender-based violence (Women UN Report, 2004).

The relationships between sex as a form of violence and women's rights in conflict have not been just addressed. Sexual offences and violence towards women involve more than merely understanding the problem and the consequences and implications of dictated roles and stereotypes. On the contrary, it entails more than making women's empowerment central to the development process and ensuring the involvement of women at each stage of fighting against the violation of women rights. Women's NGOs employ a bottom-up approach in their power structures, operating from a place of internal power namely, self-esteem and awareness raising, rather than external power, which seeks to dominate the root course of the problem. NGOs working in conflict regions have made significant advances in developing affected women and in furthering capacity building. As much working with governmental approaches to regional development has been seriously hampered by war, the affected women themselves cannot deal with the situation if the society remains the same (Kilimani, 2009).

The most ironic of all is the disturbing association of sexual exploitation and the Peace keeping personal and the military groups in Northern Uganda. The vast majority of peacekeeping environments are usually the hot spots where to get prostitutes and other forms of sexual exploitation like sexual harassment and even rape in some cases by soldiers. The arrival of peacekeeping personnel in the community is related to8 increased prostitution, sexual exploitation and HIV/AIDS infection. It is fair to a certain extent to shift the blame to the UN peacekeepers as they contribute to the creation of the conditions for sexual exploitation and increased prostitution. Other factors which are also major contributors are the collapse of a normal economy due to conflict, accompanied by the collapse of law and order which contributes as much to this environment of exploitation. It is thus argued that anyone can be an

exploiter and that this would include, among others, members of the armed groups, the government, regional organizations and the private sector. Notably, these are criminal offences irrespective of who is committing or perpetrating the crime. Thus, when these incidences involve peace keepers too this may be used to undermine the UN peace keeping missions that do not necessarily intend to yield these negative outcomes as the missions work had to investigate and correct women abuses.

“In proposing new ways to strengthen the gender responsiveness of peace operations, we are joining these efforts, mindful of the challenge issued by Lakhdar Brahimi, former Chairman of the Panel on UN Peace Operations, to tell the Security Council and the United Nations Secretariat what they need to know, not simply what they want to hear. The intention thereof was to strengthen the organization’s ability to fulfil its mission which we describe both as negative and positive experiences of women (Rehn and Sirleaf , 2004).

They described what happened in the war, and the men attacked them , when they had taken refuge in the church and nearby schools they still found us, we believe believing it was a safe haven in camps but we still got raped there too, the rebels found us . They slaughtered the men and raped us the women. “One woman told us that she knew the killer of her husband who was hiding in a camp in Kitugum. He was from one of the ‘specialized units’ of the Koni’s army, some specialized in rape, others in murder or burning villages or disposing of the dead” (Rehn and Sirleaf, 2004). After the rebels have, done this damage to us explains the women we never find out or learned about what happened to the bodies of our husbands who got killed in the church. The stories in post conflict recovery are shockingly familiar: rape, pillage, mutilation, torture and death. The women show no agitation when they speak of the horror and violence they have endured. The other side of the coin is also the same because women also don’t get feedback on the information and investigations that are conducted. Sometimes all they want to know is what happened to those who are responsible for what happened to them. All this gets lost in bureaucratic paper work and propaganda. Helping women understand what happened to their loved ones is the starting point to healing.

6.4 Empowerment of women

Victims of violations in conflict regions have found confidence in each other. Even in the midst of the pain they are going through they show no anger. They do not want what happened to define them. Instead, they look into the future and want an opportunity to get to do that. They join forces together in a conscious and determined to act as survivors. In Northern Uganda, women returned to their villages several months after the rebel had been forced to Sudan and Congo and upon arrival in their villages these women formed forged cooperative forces. Together they built the small communal houses, where they would meet and used the regular meetings as a forum and among other things to organize community events, to make handicrafts and to sell produce. Together they shared the workload and the profits, provided each other with social support and helped those that needed basic needs to get by. On their own they had succeeded in forming a tight unit that meets their immediate survival needs and provides social support. The women accomplished all this without outside support, resources or training. They were able to help others who were emotionally damaged by the sexual violence that they experienced (Kunio, 2002).

Empowering women in post conflict recovery is not easy but necessary as women are struggling to claim their fair share of the resources being channelled for post-conflict reconstruction. They are also faced with other burdens of society like rebuilding the family structure. Women have grown in wartime because they carried the burden while the men were away fighting. They were left behind and need to pull their socks therefore they cannot settle for less after the war. The reality of the matter at hand is that women in countries emerging from conflict such as Uganda are not given equal opportunities to work or take part in community and political life. Instead, women mostly are the affected victims and are marginalized, left to scrape together small earnings from cottage industries and to sell handmade items, the products of their domestic life. These conditions drive women, victims of violations into the black market where they are exploited. The families that lived in a small village, benefit economically from peace agreement, in the form of aid but the women in these villages are being ignored while many of the policies are implemented that had been implemented. Some of these policies are detrimental to the

women. Women want to contribute to the peace and the country should be rebuilt with their sweat too and not only men (UN Report, 2004).

The additional role which involves domestic work carried by women makes them understand the effects of war deeper and during conflict this unpaid labour becomes even more complex and demanding. Water, health care, transportation and other public services are hit first and hardest by war. Without these services, women are left to fend for themselves. They may spend hours hunting for firewood and carrying water. This is the time they could be spending in activities contributing to change they want to see in post conflict, very often the additional roles they take and responsibilities limit them to even expand on their economic options. Women rebuild the destroyed schools, teach their children at home, care for the sick and the wounded, they provide health care for victims and set up home-based work to support their families.

The collapse of governments and social fragmentation leave women exposed to physical attack and exploitation for a long time. Sometimes even after peace is declared, women are threatened by militarization and the culture of violence that persists in post-conflict situations (Kunio, 2002). In Northern Uganda the conflict situations have enabled the warlords and profiteers to create separate economies that thrive on the breakdown of the social and economic order. Prices of food and other necessities are inflated, arms sold and land is seized and they also steal humanitarian aid. They create market, timber, gold and other natural resources, and illegal drugs. In Guru they also traffic girls and women which is unjust to women. Despite this devastation that conflict brings women still manage to hold their heads high hoping their efforts will make a small difference in post conflict environments.

Many benefit the least while many are profiting from the chaos and lack of accountability the rebels generate since they have little or no interest in stopping the conflict as they have interest in prolonging it. Women still find ways to cope in war and the economic skills and capacities which they have are usually almost totally neglected. Honestly, women are the greatest untapped resources for stabilizing and rebuilding community life. Even the victims who are usually looked at as sufferers and those that need help and aid could be very valuable in this process of rebuilding the community even in ensuring that peace is maintained.in Rwanda (OAU, 2000)

After the genocide, the widows decided to get together. There were 310 of us ... At the first gathering it was mostly crying and some talking. We told each other what happened to us. Little by little we got accustomed to the situation crying wasn't the solution. We thought of activities to do. We thought about getting lodging and getting houses. A group of four or five would build for one, and then go to another to build a shelter for her. If it was too difficult we would go to the local authorities and ask them to help build the house. In Rwanda women are not allowed to go on the roof. That is the man's job. At first we'd go out at night to repair our houses, so no one would see us. But then someone found out and gave us pants to wear. Then we decided it did not matter if anyone laughed. We went out during the day." (Rehn and Sirleaf ,2004 pg123).

Women get the opportunity to be employed in support positions for the mission, as secretaries, language assistants, and very rarely do they get hired locally as professionals and thus they settle for what is available. Peace keeping missions bring along large influx of well-paid international peacekeeping staff military and non-military and this unavoidably has economic, social and cultural impact on the local population. This impact extends to the women affected by the conflict, young women, mothers and school girls usually get tangled in what is called Peacekeeping Economics, and this includes the industry and the services. The boom of Peacekeeping economies involves the entertainment introduction like bars, hotels due to the high demand of these services that arise with the arrival of large foreign comparatively well paid peacekeeping personnel (Special Issue Gender & Peacebuilding Vol XX, 2004).

Victims of women right violations and women in general are excluded from reconstruction funds and programmes and they rarely benefit from business opportunities generated by those funds. International and regional businesses do profit from large-scale contracts and women, on the other hand, are more likely to benefit from the smallest size of the pie as they are offered micro-credit. This is usually a small loan for start-up businesses which will be in most cases hailed as a way to overcome the feminization of poverty. Micro-credit has helped women to a certain degree, especially when it has been designed with very careful understanding of the local context. For example, in Rwanda microcredit programmes for displaced and widowed women were among the first kinds of assistance made available during reconstruction. The loans helped

support activities such as agriculture, animal farming and home-based enterprises. They strengthened business networks among women and increased their self-esteem. Micro-finance has also been linked with education in innovative ways. 'Credit with Education' programmes combine lending with training in public health or vocational and business skills. These programmes include everything from family planning to HIV/AIDS prevention to literacy and nutrition. Many Rwandan women expressed that these programmes had literally saved their lives. In Uganda the Foundation for Credit and Community Assistance offers village banking along with micro-credit and education (Rehn and Sirleaf, 2004).

However, in Northern Uganda micro-credit is no cure to what victims are going through and the training officer of a local nongovernmental organization (NGO) in Northern Uganda does not think much of traditional microcredit programmes. These programmes sometimes do not take into account what is happening on the ground:

We have been visited by a number of international groups who say they want to help us and it seems as if they all have the same Bible – micro-credit! They come and say that they can provide a little money to get materials for women to make baskets and sell them. I always ask who do you think will buy these baskets? No one here has any money. Some people haven't seen a bank note in two years! And it isn't as if we are getting a planeload of tourists every day. If we lend woman money, how will she pay it back? I know that micro-credit can work in places like Bangladesh, but they have an economy there. People have jobs can buy things. We would love to be like Bangladesh. But we are more like hell, I am sorry to say. Some of these agencies can't see the difference (Rehn and Sirleaf, 2004).

Although it is not debatable that the idea is good, it should nevertheless take into consideration the nature of the conflict that the community is recovering from otherwise the micro loans will not benefit the intended target. As the world advances women want more options with their lives mostly the young women, small loans limit them to small purchases, such as a sewing machine or one or two farm animals. This is not necessary and is a terrible idea in a country like Uganda. Notably, as education gets more advanced and they would love to also compete equally in order

to contribute to the economy of their country. Thus, these purchases can generate immediate income but, without larger loans, the businesses cannot grow. Additionally, the persistent cultural bias that promotes the notion that perceives women as supplementary wage-earners, rather than as entrepreneurs, often keeps them stalled at the level of household and cottage industries (Special Issue Gender & Peacebuilding Vol XX, 2, 2004).

The micro-credit programmes should address the root causes of women's poverty and mostly those affected by the war at a severe range. Instead of breaking the cycle of poverty that locks women into the domestic sector and out of the larger financial markets, micro-credit can actually reinforce women's marginalization. Women should be better equipped to operate within the broader economy. For this to materialize and be able to take advantage of larger opportunities, they need to learn and also be encouraged to take the direction of non-traditional skills and new technologies.

6.5 Facilitating access to basic needs

When in conflict and in emergencies, women also provide health care at home. During this time public health services are not available and the only option is for the mothers to nurse the sick and injured. This is not a simple task as it can put an enormous strain on women. In other cases, women can take on average 10 hours per day to dedicate to the caring for injured family members. In many countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, women are at the centre of the growing HIV/AIDS crisis and have become virtual slaves in a care economy that deprives them of their mobility, and their right to work and go to school. HIV/ and AIDS infection is one of the products of conflict in Northern Uganda. This impact of HIV/AIDS is compounded by poverty and the destruction of social and health systems during armed conflict. And thus the lack of access to medical and health facilities can be a serious hindrance to women recovering from conflict mostly the victims of sexual violence and exploitation (BRIDGE, 2003).

Recovering from conflict and in war-torn area as in the case of Northern Uganda region, is even more desperate, and thus the high demand of basic needs is constantly increasing. When donors and the international assistance community look at these conditions of women in Northern

Uganda they suggest ‘sustainability’, ‘cost recovery’ and ‘breaking dependence’ which means that they underestimate the extent of the damage done by the conflict. It is impossible for such a destitute population to pay for basic needs and services, as the services are not sustainable given the fact that there is no infrastructure and the economy is in shambles. As much as sustainability is an excellent goal, but this is still not a reality in the near future in a place like Northern Uganda. Peace and the lives of the people have to normalise again subsequent to which advanced measures can be implemented. It is also notable that cheap public transportation could help the women tremendously. If women could get one meal a day for their children and themselves, they could avoid the dangerous sexual interactions they have each evening. Interests should point at supporting basic services such as health, sanitation, clean blood supply and education. If the donor community realizes that if women do not get some basic needs met this peace and the attempt to rebuild will not hold. Development could have prevented the conflict in the first place thus only development can ensure the peace (Inter-Agency Task Force on Women, Peace and Security, 2006).

With proper infrastructure, basic health facilities, restoring public services, the burden on women will be lessened. Recovering from conflict in past decades have concentrated on economy mostly and less on the essential task. Reconstruction aid has stuck to a rigid framework of requiring the public sector to downsizing; reduce government and the expansion of a free-market economy. According to ...this has had negative effects on women and the entire peace process. These policies have made international lenders to demand a reduction in state agricultural assistance, which severely limited opportunities for women to advance from subsistence to larger-scale farming, and accelerated the trend from national self-sufficiency to dependence on agricultural imports (OAU, 2009).

6.6 Improving the legal system

Uganda’s ratification of CEDAW has existed for more than two decades now, yet the overall legal environment in the country is still not fully protective of women and girls, nor does it facilitate justice for victims of sexual or gender-based violence. The Ugandan law and the legal system have not clearly defined the interpretation of what is actually considered as a criminal act

and what is not in terms of women rights violation. In other words, the lines are not clearly drawn. Sexual contact outside of marriage with girls under the age of 18 for instance is known in terms of the law in Uganda as "defilement," not rape. Though the official punishment for defilement is meant to be death, in practice, according to a variety of human rights NGOs in Uganda, "defilers" are rarely subject to any form of punishment stronger than a slap on the wrist. All this is due to the diverse understandings of defilement that the law does not necessarily consider or that the law excludes, culture being one of them. Especially in, but not limited to, Northern Uganda, families will often forgive the perpetrator and not press charges if he agrees to either marry the girl, pay a fine for his actions, or, preferably, as it is not necessary wrong in the provisions of culture (Inter-Agency Task Force on Women, Peace and Security, 2006).

6.7 Access to land

Africans are very sentimental to land and as such access to land means a lot for many women in countries emerging from conflict. Firstly, this is so because agriculture is their primary source of income and food. This access to land also provides access to critical resources such as water, forest products and property to graze livestock. Most important to all Africans is the fact that having access to land means having a place to call home which is dear to every African. Before the conflict started, women had access to land but the disruptions of the conflict and displacements removed them from their homes which were also a source of income. The destruction of community structures and land seizure by warlords, combatants or local merchants has left the women homeless and impoverished. This has serious economic implications on the lives of women. Thus before any healing can start on the victims of women rights violations they need to address the issue of land loss and getting their homes back from the warlords (OAU, 2000). Using the example of Rwanda the government had to deal with the staggering number of landless female heads of households after the genocide. It is in light of this that they resorted to the establishment of a gender desk. Parliament supported by UNIFEM in collaboration with the Forum of Women Parliamentarians joined efforts to review laws that discriminated against women. The desk successfully argued that women should be given the right to inherit property from their parents or husbands. It also allowed widows to reclaim property from male relatives of their deceased husbands. The amendment of the law provided room for the process to

successfully institutionalize the support for women's rights although it has been fruitless at the ground level.

6.8 Peace talks

As the peace talks take their pace, international observers, international bodies and the government sometimes take no notice of the victims and the damaged done to them is taken lightly. Through -out the peace deal and just before some sort of agreement was about to materialise in October 2006 the terms and conditions changed several times. LRA leaders excluding Konyi met with GOU negotiators in the town of Juba in Southern Sudan. However, the talks broke down relatively quickly as both sides violated their predetermined conditions of the negotiation. LRA forces moved from their designated area along the Sudanese-Ugandan border and GOU forces assembled in unauthorized portions of Northern Uganda. The talks were also at an impasse. The main discussion was about the charges brought on Kony and 4 LRA leaders by the ICC. The LRA claimed they would sign a peace deal after the charges were dropped, while GOU negotiators demanded that a peace deal be in place before they discussed dropping the charges (OAU, 2000). Where is the voice of the damaged victims of the conflict in the process of peace talks.

Peace talks with the LRA throughout 2007 had failed due to the refusal of Kony to appear to sign the agreements. Kony had argued that until all ICC charges were dropped, there would be no peace agreement. The LRA then continued to increase attacks in 2008 mainly in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). This prompted a reaction by the Ugandan forces and DRC forces to perform a joint military operation in December 2008 called Operation Lightning Thunder. This military strike effectively destroyed Kony's main base in the DRC and pushed the LRA into the Central African Republic (CAR).” Whether this is a positive or negative the main recognition the paper seeks to address is the innocent victims.

Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army started abductions in 1988 as a way of swelling the numbers of the rebels and in order to intimidate the local population into supporting the rebellion. The abducted people would also be used as a human shield against government attacks. According to various NGO's it is not easy to establish the exact number of people abducted by the rebels since the war began. The fact is that very many of them were

subsequently killed or injured and left to die. An estimated 10,000 or more children are said to have been abducted from 1988 to the time of 2001 and among these more than 8,000 have not yet returned home to date (OA 2009). According to the report by an alliance of over 50 leading non-governmental organizations, Civil Society Organizations for Peace in Northern Uganda (CSOPNU) new facts and figures have been showing the brutal impact of the conflict on the civilian population between the Government of Uganda and the rebel Lord's Resistance Army. This coalition also includes Oxfam International, Care International, Norwegian Refugee Council, Save the Children, and International Rescue Committee as well as national and community based organizations. Almost two million people have been displaced by the conflict. A staggering 25,000 children have been abducted during the 20 years of war. One quarter of the children in northern Uganda over ten years old have lost one or both parents (NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security 2005). Documenting these numbers plus acknowledging the damage alone is not enough; peace talks have to be mindful of victims like those of women right violation.

Recovering from conflict and reconstruction

Transition from war to peace is complicated in every angle you look at it and this is mostly in relation to resources which matter a lot. Reconstruction should provide a rare opportunity for women not only to help shape emerging political, economic and social structures, but to benefit from the large amount of funds pooled by bilateral and multilateral donors. It is fair to note that how these resources are allocated, distributed and awarded affect women's lives. This may also depend on other various factors, like the volume of aid, the channels for its distribution, the timing, its intended purpose and the conditions attached to the provision of these resources.

Evidence has shown that women do benefit broadly from the positive forces of reconstruction and there is no doubt about that. However, the fact cannot be denied that the vast majority of aid for reconstruction and peace-building is not directed to women (NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security 2005). Women and Victims of women right violations certainly do not receive their fair share without deliberate planning and there is little evidence that this planning is taking place for the women in Northern Uganda. Women are not invited to contribute

to the donor discussions and decisions on reconstruction projects. How do you then expect them to organize themselves and be expected to participate in reconstruction and decision-making, when they do not have any support? It is central to note that, for women victims of war to benefit equitably from transitional aid, specific policy and programme strategies are needed in place. Data must consider the ratio of women to men and this should be broken out by gender so that those developing a transitional assistance plan can understand how it will affect women. This cannot be the only indicator to measure how reconstruction benefits women; because it is true that women do benefit from funds and programmes in other sectors. Notably, gender/women rights violations and the fight against women rights still remains one of the least funded sectors in conflict recovery or peace building. Again, women's subjection to inequality is so central to the conflict and is wholly unacceptable.

Planning for the future of the community, the real involvement in the planning for the future peace and avoiding the conflict the discussion of how to avoid the particular violence the women have face are usually very minimal. The victims in Northern Uganda claim that this discussion of women right violation is ignored because there are very few women in the first place.

Our men tell the foreign men to ignore our ideas. And they are happy to do so under the notion of 'cultural sensitivity.' Why is it politically incorrect to ignore the concerns of Serbs or other minorities, but 'culturally sensitive' to ignore the concerns of women? I wish someone would explain this to me! (Rehn and Sirleaf, 2004).

Thus, women fail to contribute and miss out even before the spoils of peace are divided. The aid that is intended for reconstruction that has been scrutinized through humanitarian or emergency channels rarely takes account of women. Although the UN called for a gender perspective to be mainstreamed in humanitarian activities and policies by the year 2000, only 1.4 per cent of humanitarian funds raised for 2001 were specifically directed to women or gender-related concerns. Thus the paper highlights this, recommending the more numbers and the involvement of women in all aspects of recovering from conflict.

International donors have interestingly been more receptive to the idea of establishing the idea of ‘women’s machinery’. This, however, depends on the structure of the government which could mean a Ministry for Women’s Affairs, an office, or a bureau in the executive office. This is considered a strategic way to bring women’s machineries and a gender perspective into all aspects of government and processes of constitutional, legislative, policy and judicial reforms. However, there is a twist to this because as much as donors are willing to help these offices get up and running, donors are also often reluctant to take on the recurring costs. Donor support is critical for a women’s machinery to function, but they are afraid that it can also create a dependence on external funding. The donors prefer to support women’s ministry and this is often less likely to be given priority in the national budget (OAU, 2009).

Contemporary fight against women right violation in war zone areas requires more skills that can lead a war-torn society through a process of nation building, economic development and reconstruction. This also includes the victims as they are the ones who have practical experience of what it means to have one’s rights violated as a human being. The idea of broadening the qualifications need when dealing with victims will broaden the pool of candidates. This will involve taking note that discrimination of women in the process of recovering from conflict limits women’s participation in what ought to be a solution towards the observance of their rights. It needs to be reiterated that working with more transparency and accountability is vital and the call for the establishment of an advisory group to facilitate the search and appointment of senior staff and other staff are necessary. This also extends to the local community. The United Nations can request female peacekeeping personnel and the onus is on the contributing countries to recruit, train and deploy more women as military, civilian and police personnel. In other words they must be encouraged and provided with incentives to do so (NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, 2005) .

Discrimination against women in war conflict extends to the host community as well since help usually comes from other countries. In most cases, when this help is given to victims, the mission personnel do not take the local cultures and way of doing things into consideration. The operation put in place to help victims rarely takes affirmative measures to create and fill ‘national official methods that they are used to, like local official channels to air out their

frustrations like unemployment and the likes. Working hand in hand with victims can help in understanding their problems and can empower them and thus they will feel the benefits of the missions were meant to support them.

It is time for the Security Council to recognize that its slow progress in addressing this crisis is a scar on its record and undermines its credibility. The UN must act by passing a resolution urging the Government of Uganda to protect its own people particularly the women rights violation." Benchmarks must be established to enable the Government of Uganda to show clear progress in monitoring peace, protecting the civilian population, and addressing the humanitarian crisis. Critically addressing the victims of women rights violation and finding some sort of remedy to the misdeeds the rebels subjected them to, is needed. England's last visit to Uganda raises hope for concrete action to address this devastating crisis a step to a promising direction (OAU, 2009). Kevin Fitzcharles, Director, and Care International said: "UN Under-Secretary General England is clearly pushing the Security Council to act, yet none of his recommendations.

Despite the scale of the crisis and its huge impact on the region, the Secretary General has not yet been publicly engaged. A recent Meeting in Geneva offered hope for a comprehensive plan of action on the conflict but urgent action to make this plan a reality is needed. CSOPNU is also calling upon all parties involved to take up Jan England's challenge and to act decisively. The coalition is urging the UN Security Council to adopt England's recommendation to appoint a panel of experts to investigate the activities of the LRA. The appointment of a high level envoy to reinvigorate peace efforts, address all aspects of the crisis and report back to the UN Security Council on progress has also received widespread support though as yet no action has been taken.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

“Some women and I were destined for Lamin La Dera to purchase some cassava since it was cheaper there as compared to Atede where I used to live. Hardly had we walked for some distance when we entered an LRA (Lord’s Resistant Rebels) ambush. We tried to run for our dear lives but realized that, there was no escape route since we were trapped in the middle of the ambush. We were then put under gunpoint and ordered to remove our shoes and sandals. We had been tied together and marched into the bush and taken to the rebels. On reaching the camp, we realized that we were in great danger the rebel commanders were seated on low stools with machetes laid down in front of them. They were 4 in number and one of them who introduced himself as Commander “Gun Smoke” said ‘we welcome all of you to our camp’. He then ordered us to sit down and they started questioning us about the general condition in town to which we answered. They then told us that they were to deal with us. We only understood what they meant when about 6 Kadogos (child soldiers) were instructed to sharpen the machetes. We were called in turns one after the other until the last person. They skilfully cut off the lips, ear and nose of the one who was the first to be called and she was forced to eat the parts of her body while we all looked on breathlessly. The next turn was mine. The story was repeated until the last person. The notorious commander, “Gun Smoke” ordered the Kadogos to axe us to death but the other three disagreed with him and overturned the order. A bell was then rung and prayers were conducted for the Kadogos to cleanse them from sin. As soon as the prayers were over, we were told to disappear as fast as possible as they also disappeared in the opposite direction.”

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Appendix 2

A Tale of Torture and Genital Mutilation

Rebels of LRA crossed to Atiak in April. At 11.00 a.m. they found me asleep under a mango tree in our compound. One of them came to me and ordered me to get up, which I did. Another one asked me why I was sleeping at that time. I told him that I had been harvesting vegetables and felt tired so I decided to rest and then fell asleep. He then asked me whether I thought I was of any value to them. I told him I did not know. He then hit my head with the butt of his gun and a machete and I collapsed in front of the hut. Their commander immediately rushed and questioned the offender why he had hit me. He did not answer, he then ordered all the other captives to be brought where I was. I lay down pretended as if I had not heard anything. They then started hitting other captives' heads with machetes and the butts of their guns. They left many dead and others unconscious.

One of them then asked why they should leave me. Another replied that they were already tired of having sex with women. He said that they should do something else to me. He ordered that I should be dragged to an open space. I was then taken under a tree. One of them asked for a knife, which was handed to him. He ordered me to lie upside down, which I refused. He then said, since I was stubborn and was following them, they would teach me a lesson I would never forget. Two rebels spread my legs in opposite directions and tied them with ropes. They then started piercing my private part with a knife and cut it up to my anus. I tried to struggle for my freedom but was too weak to move. One of them said I should be killed and my head smashed but another said that what they had done to me was enough; I should just be beaten and left to die. They beat me and left me unconscious. After a short while there was heavy rain. I could not move anywhere and it rained on me for almost two hours. I regained consciousness in the morning and found bodies of other captives they had killed next to me. My son's wife came to check on me in the morning but when she saw dead bodies she ran away without asking me what had happened.

I was later taken to Lacor Hospital for treatment. I went without any money or food expecting that I would be given food at the hospital. The problems did not end. Rebels arrested my daughter two days after I had left Atiak, hit her head three times with an axe and chopped off her hand believing she was dead. She was fortunate in that some people found her and brought her to Lacor Hospital. Currently, I am very weak and cannot do much work. I sell paraffin and charcoal

for my survival as well as that of my daughter's children. Unfortunately, the little I had I used for my medical expenses and my business has virtually collapsed. I bleed frequently through the nose and ears. I have gone to hospital several times but it seems there is no way in which I can be helped. I should have gone for an operation but cannot, simply because I do not have the money. I cannot even control my bowels, which has forced me to stay at home. The worries, pain and helplessness I am going through is making life meaningless to me. If it was not for my daughter's children I would prefer to die and rest from all the problems I am facing.

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Appendix 3

“One night in 1994, rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) stormed our home and demanded for money. Three days previously my three brothers had sold their sugarcane in town. When they failed to produce the money, however, the rebels tied their hands the infamous “Kandooya or three piece” style and vowed to kill them. My two sisters, my aged mother and I would all be witnesses to their death. The “condemned” were then led a short distance from home to what would be their execution ground. It was not to be however, with typical mother's love for her children, the aged woman pleaded the rebels to kill her instead of her sons as she would not be able to raise up the remaining orphans. They (the rebels) consented and thus, surrounded by her weeping children, the old woman was kicked down and methodically trampled upon until she was dead and all her bones broken. We were all forcefully made to watch the gruesome murder. Fearful and thoroughly traumatized I fled home after the rebels had gone and only returned after some church members (Balokoles) had come and buried my m All through the pain and trauma of this loss, my husband never once set foot to say a word of condolence or give any material help to assist me. He has since remarried another woman. I am now left entirely on my own to look after the children and some other orphans. It's not easy. Though I sell petty goods at the market, the money raise is not enough to meet all my children's needs”.

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Appendix 4

“One day in July 1996 at 3.00a.m, I woke up and went out for a short call. As I was coming back, I saw a government soldier standing in front of my door. I was so frightened and tried to run away. He spoke to me in Swahili, but I could not understand what he meant. I managed to run into the hut and as I tried to lock the door, he forced it open. He followed me inside and tried to pull me outside but I resisted and held on to my child. However, he was too powerful for me and later managed to pull me outside. He then started talking to me in Swahili but I did not understand a thing of what he was saying. When I tried to scream, he covered my mouth with his hands thus preventing me from shouting. He did not want me to go back inside the house. So I thought of diverting him towards an LC I official's house, which was close by so I could receive help from there. He however, kept holding my hands and I could not move very far. I then asked him in Luo why he wanted to kill me and whether there was anything wrong with going for a short call at night. Fortunately, this time I was near the LC official's home and he heard me scream for help. The LC official wanted to come out but his wife stopped him. He then told his wife that he could not withstand someone being killed near his home without him going out to help. The LC official then came out and started talking to the soldier. In the meantime, I managed to find my way into the LC official's house. How the LC official managed to escape from the soldier, I cannot tell. The soldier then rushed inside the house where I was now hiding and got to me and raped me. After his action, the soldier fell asleep and I managed to take his gun and went with it to my brother-in-law's home. My brother-in-law then gathered other people who went and found the soldier still asleep. They tied him up and at dawn he was taken to his detach where a statement was written and everything ended there. It was so unfortunate that the rape resulted into a pregnancy. I was so upset but there was no way I could destroy the pregnancy. When time for my delivery came, I found myself with twins - both boys. One of the twins died when he was one year old. My grief grew when after being raped and the death of one

of the twins, my in laws accused me of prior sexual agreement with the rapist soldier. My in-laws and even my elder children do not like surviving twin.. I am struggling to pay school fees for all my children but it is too much for me. My work does not provide enough for the family”.

Life as a wife of a soldier

“Wives of soldiers are expected to remain within the barracks. They are virtually kept like prisoners. The soldiers are very arrogant to their wives the majority of whom are not formally married to them, and they don’t want to see relatives of the women in the barracks.” “When the ‘first wife’ comes from home, the ‘current wives’ are chased away even if one has a child or is pregnant, and no support is given to them.” “The women came to their present (soldier) husbands for various reasons. Some men (soldiers) were serious and wanted to take them on as house wives; some women ran away from their civilian husbands due to economic hardships or mistreatment; and some girls had nowhere else to stay after the parents were killed.” “Once in the barracks, some women would leave one soldier for another because they wanted those that can ably support them and the family.” “Soldiers’ wives follow their husband for children’s upkeep. Some women get tired of eating the same food without changing diet because they don’t have enough money to buy other foodstuffs.” “Children are left at home without parental care because they cannot be brought to the military detachments which are usually insecure.” “At times they have nothing to eat especially when salary delays. The civilian population are reluctant to assist the wives of soldiers even if they are in great needs because they don’t send money home.

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