

# Unfolding the Landscape of Conflict: UN Volunteer Organisations and Violence Against Women

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## Abstract

This study aims to examine the role of *the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM)* in upholding women's rights by helping victims of sexual violence in the Darfur region of Sudan. By extension, it explores whether the organisation provided an effective example of a feminist groups in the face of this issue. This research is descriptive, using qualitative methods. The data taken is based on relevant books, academic journals, and online material. The analytical tools used are the concepts of feminism and international cooperation. The results of this research show that, when attempting to solve the problem of sexual violence in Darfur, UNIFEM came to the aid of victims, collaborating with local institutions in the area. This resulted in positive outcomes for sexual violence victims in Darfur, though UNIFEM continues to face several challenges.

Key Words: *Feminism, Sexual Violence, Conflict, UNIFEM*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Those involved in war include participants in the violence (combatants) and those not involved (non-combatants). The principle of population differentiation in war, which provides protection for civilian non-combatants in wartime, was first regulated through the Hague Regulations in 1907 and refined again through the 1949 Geneva Convention and its Additional Protocol I in 1977.<sup>1</sup> Additional Protocol I to the

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1 Gilad Ben-Nun, "Treaty after trauma': protection for all'in the Fourth Geneva Convention" in *History and International Law* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2019); Christine Chinkin, "Rape and sexual abuse of women in international law" (1994) 5:3 *European journal of international law* 326-341; Theodor Meron, "The Geneva Conventions as customary law" (1987) 81:2 *American Journal of International Law* 348-370; Hague Regulations, "Convention (IV) Respecting the Laws and

Geneva Convention contained the refinement and development of the Geneva Convention, including the definition of disputes over war instruments, complete forms of protection for war victims, and the anticipation of the further development of war tools and strategies.<sup>2</sup>

Despite its development throughout the aforementioned protocols, the population differentiation principle requires a broader realisation for adequate protection of civilian population, including improved distinction between combatants and civilians, the concept of individual civilian protection, the prohibition of threats of violence or terror, and the assurance that only combatants (armed forces) have the right to attack or fight the enemy.<sup>3</sup> In the 1960s, the UN expanded its involvement in establishing the international humanitarian law system, while supporting Geneva Convention IV and Additional Protocol I through General Assembly Resolution 2444.<sup>4</sup> The Hague Convention, the Geneva Convention, and the United Nations have become the international backbone of the humanitarian movement, especially when protecting civilian victims of war. Through the declaration on the protection of women and children in an emergency in 1974, the United Nations General Assembly expressly declared all inhumane acts against women and children as war crimes.<sup>5</sup>

Almost all forms of violent conflict due to war are connected with the crime of sexual violence.<sup>6</sup> The disintegration of social structures during or after conflict often includes sexual violence against women, both in conflict areas and in refugee camps.<sup>7</sup> In August 2012, an International Rescue Committee (IRC) investigation at four locations within Lebanese refugee camps revealed the impacts of the Syrian conflict, providing a record of the sexual violence faced by women.<sup>8</sup> The IRC report showed

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Customs of War on Land and its Annex: Regulations Concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land” (1907) Geneva: International Committee of the Red Cross.

- 2 Putri Syafira Basalamah, “Perlindungan Relawan Kemanusiaan Suatu Tinjauan Hukum Humaniter Internasional” (2021) 9:3 LEX PRIVATUM; Gusti Pangeran Haryo S Haryomataram, *Sekehumit tentang hukum humaniter* (Sebelas Maret University Press, 1994); Juan Unsulangi, “Perlindungan Obyek Sipil Dan Bentuk Kewajiban Negara Dalam Konflik Bersenjata Menurut Hukum Humaniter Internasional” (2021) 9:4 LEX ADMINISTRATUM.
- 3 Bernard L Brown, “The Proportionality Principle in the Humanitarian Law of Warfare: Recent Efforts at Codification” (1976) 10 Cornell Int’l LJ 134.
- 4 Hans-Peter Gasser, *Remarks By Hans-Peter Gasser* (Cambridge University Press, 1987); Marcel A Naville, “Development of International Humanitarian Law” (1970) 10:110 International Review of the Red Cross (1961-1997) 265-268.
- 5 Isabel Cruz, “SAÚDE DA MULHER-By the way, what about the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict?” (2007) 6:1 Online Brazilian Journal of Nursing 131-133; Dietrich Schindler & Jiri Toman, “Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict” in *The Laws of Armed Conflicts* (Brill Nijhoff, 2004) 355.
- 6 Adinda Ayu Shabrina, Reni Windiani & Andi Akhmad Basith Dir, “Peran United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR) dalam Menangani Pengungsi Suriah Korban Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) di Lebanon” (2018) 1:1 Journal of International Relations 81-89.
- 7 Michelle Hynes & Barbara Lopes Cardozo, “Observations from the CDC: Sexual violence against refugee women” (2000) 9:8 Journal of women’s health & gender-based medicine 819-823.
- 8 Ghida Anani, “Dimensions of gender-based violence against Syrian refugees in Lebanon” (2013) 44 Forced Migration Review; Jane Freedman, “Sexual and gender-based violence against refugee women: a hidden aspect of the refugee crisis” (2016) 24:47 Reproductive health matters 18-26.

the forms of violence experienced by the victims: rape, early marriage, and survival sex. During the investigation, the IRC uncovered more detailed information from the victims. In one shocking example, some even admitted that they were shot in the leg to prevent them from running.<sup>9</sup> Elsewhere, during and after the 1998 Congo uprising, as many as 2000 female victims of sexual violence needed extreme medical care, with up to 10% of these women being pregnant.<sup>10</sup> In late 2016, human rights violations in Sudan caused about 65.6 million people to leave the country, of which 22.5% were permanently displaced, including many women who lost their husbands.<sup>11</sup> However, refugee camps do not necessarily provide women's security from sexual violence – one review of 187 documents and policies noted that refugees in Europe are at risk of becoming targets of sexual violence within these camps.<sup>12</sup>

Darfur is the western part of Sudan. The majority of the population is Arabic, whilst most of the remaining population are ethnically African. The Arab population in Darfur is predominantly an immigrant population, however it remains the dominant group when compared to the ethnically African Sudanese.<sup>13</sup> The Arab population in Darfur is Muslim. The roots of polarisation between Islamic Arab immigrants and the non-Arabic population began in the 1980s and has continued.<sup>14</sup> The conflict spread largely because of the "Arab and Islamic Union," which was formed under Sadiq Al-Mahadi's leadership (as Sudan's prime minister in 1986).<sup>15</sup> R. Collins reveals explicitly that the bloody conflict in 2003 was the tip of the iceberg in a series of problems that began at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>16</sup> The absence of conflict resolution relating to ongoing racism and differing religious sentiments resulted in inequality between the Baqqara people (the Arabs of Darfur) and Algharib people (local people from central Sudan). This inequality had long history of conflict until it rapidly increased in the twenty-first century.<sup>17</sup>

The Darfur conflict began with injustice in the distribution of natural resources, economic problems, and political problems, resulting in an insurgency that attacked the Sudanese government. There were two rebel groups, namely the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). The conflict started in 2003 and continued until 2004, with the civilian population being the

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9 Shabrina, Windiani & Dir, *supra* note 6.

10 Jeanne Ward & Mendy Marsh, *Sexual violence against women and girls in war and its aftermath: Realities, responses and required resources* (2006).

11 UNHC Refugees, "Global Trends Forced Displacement in 2016" (2016) UNHRC, Editor.

12 Ines Keygnaert & Aurore Guieu, "What the eye does not see: a critical interpretive synthesis of European Union policies addressing sexual violence in vulnerable migrants" (2015) 23:46 *Reproductive health matters* 45-55.

13 Robert O Collins, *Civil wars and revolution in the Sudan: Essays on the Sudan, Southern Sudan and Darfur, 1962-2004* (Tsehah Publishers, 2005).

14 Alexander De Waal, *Darfur: A Short History of a Long War. African Arguments* (Zed Books, 2005).

15 John Hagan, Wenona Rymond-Richmond & Alberto Palloni, "Racial targeting of sexual violence in Darfur" (2009) 99:8 *American journal of public health* 1386-1392; Gerard Prunier, *Darfur: The ambiguous genocide* (Cornell University Press, 2011).

16 Robert Collins, "The Disaster in Darfur in Historical Perspective" (2006) 26:2 *Journal of Conflict Studies* 25-43.

17 *Ibid.*

primary victims. In 2003, the number of victims was recorded at 50,000 people, increasing to 71,000 in October of 2004. The UN Security Council estimates that during the 18 months of conflict, the death toll reached 180,000 people, with more than 1.8 million people losing their homes. Over 33 months from 2003 to 2005, the estimated death toll in Darfur exceeded 200,000.<sup>18</sup>

This article focuses on the practice of sexual violence against women in war zones and refugee camps. It highlights the role of UNIFEM in the Darfur conflict, Sudan. The Darfur conflict entered the international spotlight because the number of victims in the war reached hundreds of thousands. It was clearly a gross violation of human rights. The resolution of the war involved an array of international agencies, both NGOs and those with a UN mandate (Adnan, 2006). The conflict included large-scale violence against women; both women and children were victims of sexual violence perpetrated by the militia. The conflict in Darfur involved not only physical weapons to commit the crime of genocide, but also rape as a tool of destruction.

The Janjaweed troops (a Sudanese militia that are touted as the main actors of the Darfur conflict) were known to use rape for three purposes.<sup>19</sup> First, to impregnate women and children from non-African ethnicities. Second, to isolate women who had not yet been able to have a family. Third, to destroy women's bodies to prevent them from having children. The Janjaweed troops did this to cleanse non-African ethnicities. Sexual violence is therefore related to ethnic genocide and political motives.

In West Darfur, Medicines Science Frontières, according to their own report in 2005, helped 297 rape victims, of which 99% were women between the ages of 12 and 45, with an average age of 27.<sup>20</sup> Of those, 90% said that the rapes took place outside their villages, mostly when they were doing their daily activities. Few assaults were committed during the conflict, and 28% of victims said they were raped more than once, whether done by one person or in a group. Rape was also carried out using a stick, and many of the victims suffered from fractured backs.

The UN sent the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to Darfur to help protect women from these violent practices. UNIFEM is an agency established under the United Nations after the issuance of a resolution in 1976.<sup>21</sup> Its

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18 Abdul Hadi Adnan, "Penyelesaian Masalah Sudan Selatan dan Krisis di Darfur" (2006) Jurnal UNPAS; John Hagan & Alberto Palloni, *Death in Darfur* (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 2006).

19 Rape is considered as one of the tools of war used to carry out genocide of non-African ethnicities. These rapes were not concentrated in a single point or area of war or in villages. Moreover, rape also occurred in the camps. The rape was also followed by a series of tortures such as nail removal, and leg bones being broken. The full text available online at <http://www.ncdsv.org/images/darfurgenderedviolencerapeweapon.pdf>, Accessed on 02 Februari 2022.

20 The Crushing Burden of Rape Sexual Violence in Darfur. Available online at <https://www.msf.org/sites/msf.org/files/2018-08/the-crushing-burden-of-rape%20.pdf>. Accessed on 02 February 2022.

21 UNIFEM. Overview Women Peace Security Compendium. Available online at <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Media/Publications/UNIFEM/0101OverviewWomenPeaceSecurityCompendium.pdf>. Accessed on 02 February 2022.

purpose is to protect women from acts of violence and discrimination by providing technical and financial assistance through its programs, with the primary objective being fighting for women's rights.<sup>22</sup> UNIFEM's involvement in the Darfur conflict was an act of humanitarian intervention, a policy applied to certain conflict conditions or as a reaction to gross human rights violations and with the state's consent.<sup>23</sup>

By using this background, this article will describe the role UNIFEM, as an agency that stands under the auspices of the United Nations, and how it deals with victims of sexual violence in war, using the conflict in Darfur as its primary example. The author will use a feminist perspective and the concept of international cooperation. The feminist perspective assumes that women must be free from all forms of torture and discrimination. Those who adhere to a feminist perspective strongly oppose the unequal treatment of women, especially when it comes to sexual assault, which is one of the biggest terror threats in women's lives.

## II. CONCEPT OF FEMINISM

Feminism is a movement based on the criticism of the imbalance of gender roles between men and women.<sup>24</sup> The basic assumptions of feminist thinking are divided into three parts:

1. *First*, the view that the world tends to be very masculine.<sup>25</sup>
2. *Second*, the theory and habit in which men tend to be more involved in the physical and social environment around them, thus creating the view that men are the dominant figures over women.<sup>26</sup>
3. *Third*, gender marginalisation in social groups.<sup>27</sup> Gender marginalisation is related to the unequal division of roles between men and women in domestic and political realities, where women tend to be considered inferior or employed in subordinate positions.

The idea that the world tends to be very masculine aligns with, among others, ideas conveyed by Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, a world that tends to be masculine will cause the differences between men and women to widen. This

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22 CEDAW, \_\_\_\_, 'Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.' Available online at <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cedaw.pdf>. Accessed on 02 February 2022.

23 Simon Duke, "The State and Human Rights: Sovereignty versus Humanitarian Intervention" (1994) 12:2 *International Relations* 25-48.

24 Zillah Eisenstein, "Constructing a theory of capitalist patriarchy and socialist feminism" (1977) 7:3 *Insurgent sociologist* 3-17.

25 José Medina, *The epistemology of resistance: Gender and racial oppression, epistemic injustice, and resistant imaginations* (Oxford University Press, 2012).

26 Rivi Handayani, "Male Gaze dalam Fotografi Model: Objektifikasi dan Komersialisasi Tubuh Perempuan" (2017) 3:1 *Jurnalisa* 91-105.

27 World Bank, "Gender differences in employment and why they matter" in (2011).

28 Niccolò Machiavelli, *Machiavelli: The Chief Works and Others, Vol. III* (Duke University Press, 1989); Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan: with selected variants from the Latin edition of 1668* (Hackett Publishing, 1994).

inequality can be traced to political history favouring the role of men in decision-making.<sup>29</sup>

However, feminism is not a universal movement with a homogeneous concept representing all women, but is comprehensive and diverse.<sup>30</sup> Feminism is an umbrella word for various approaches, views, and frameworks of thought used to describe the oppression of women, as well as the solutions used to overthrow this oppression.<sup>31</sup>

Gamble describes the periods of the feminist movement as follows: the early feminist movement, the second-wave movement, and third-wave feminism, commonly called post-feminism.<sup>32</sup> In this article, we focus on the history of the feminist movement in the early and second-wave movements.<sup>33</sup> In its early stages, it was ordained that the role of women, especially educated women, necessitated a change in perspective regarding their treatment and standing in society. This material was essential for opening the landscape of feminist discourse, which was expanded upon in the second-wave, becoming a widely adopted ideology.

In its early movement, feminism focused on the struggle against patriarchal culture in the British industrial revolution, emerging gradually between the 1500s and 1700s.<sup>34</sup> With an ideological mission, this movement coincided with the *Aufklärung* or ‘era of enlightenment’, demanding a change in the stereotypical role of women in subordinate social systems.<sup>35</sup> This movement was partly spearheaded by female scholars such as Lady Mary Chudleigh and Mary Astell. They wrote various works and had assertive skills and a communicative approach, carrying a vision of moral renewal, social justice, and sound theological understanding.<sup>36</sup> The emergence of this movement encouraged the idea that women have an essential contribution to make for the development of life in their society. Female scholars began to prioritise changes to aspects of religious educational institutions, especially writings that discredited women.<sup>37</sup> Meanwhile, the early practice of feminism was carried out in

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29 Ellen Morris, “Machiavellian Masculinities: Historicizing and Contextualizing the ‘Civilizing Process’ in Ancient Egypt” (2021) 13:1-2 *Journal of Egyptian History* 127-168.

30 Rosemarie Tong, *Feminist thought: A more comprehensive introduction* (Westview Press, 2009).

31 Rosemarie Tong & Tina Fernandes Botts, *Feminist thought: A more comprehensive introduction* (Routledge, 2018).

32 Sarah Gamble, *The Routledge companion to feminism and postfeminism* (Routledge, 2004).

33 Lea Yaron. USAID BERSAMA Project: Examining Gender-Based Violence Prevention in Eastern Indonesia (Case Study: Sentani District, Papua). (2021): 44-55. *Papua Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations* 1, no. 1

34 Stephanie Hodgson-Wright, *Early feminism* (Routledge, 2004).

35 Sarah Knott & Barbara Taylor, *Women, gender and enlightenment* (Springer, 2005); Karen O’Brien, Karen Elisabeth O’Brien & Karen L O’Brien, *Women and enlightenment in eighteenth-century Britain* (Cambridge university press, 2009); John Robertson, “Women and Enlightenment: a historiographical conclusion” in *Women, Gender and Enlightenment* (Springer, 2005) 692.

36 Sarah Apetrei & Sarah Louise Trethewey Apetrei, *Women, feminism and religion in early enlightenment England* (Cambridge University Press, 2010). Muttaqin, M Zaenul, “‘Stop Raping Us’ a Body Political Prefix” (2022) 9:3 *Violence Gend* 103-104.

37 Hodgson-Wright, *supra* note 35.



the context of domestic life and women's specific education, which when advanced, led the movement to studies of political education.<sup>38</sup>

In the family sphere, the early feminist movement focused on women's rights in marriage and the issue of child custody decisions.<sup>39</sup> In education, it focused on advocating for equal rights to attend formal institutions.<sup>40</sup> Catharine Macaulay and Mary Wollstonecraft were two of the critical figures who developed the idea of female education inequality, which in the future could not be separated from the formation of constructivist social theory. Macaulay was an intellectual who has a philosophical affinity with Thomas Hobbes, while Wollstonecraft, heavily influenced by the thoughts of John Locke and Rousseau, inspired a feminist approach towards the shifting dynamics of education.<sup>41</sup>

The concept of gender equality in politics in the 1890s became the substance of development in other fields. In this era, the feminist movement struggled to achieve equal access to work and the right to vote in elections.<sup>42</sup>

The second wave of the feminist movement developed in the 1960s. This period marked a broader examination of women's issues which relied on knowledge produced in the initial period.<sup>43</sup> In this phase were formed the first women's organisations aimed at expanding women's issues into fields outside the domestic sphere and producing writings on feminism.<sup>44</sup> Second wave of feminism was more critical than the first period of feminism, focusing on several important points regarding universal women's inequality, such as sexual and reproductive violence.<sup>45</sup> Unlike the initial period of the movement, the second wave reflected more than just

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38 Sarah Gwyneth Ross, *The Birth of Feminism: woman as intellect in Renaissance Italy and England* (Harvard University Press, 2010); Hannah Chapelle Wojciehowski, *The Birth of Feminism: Woman as Intellect in Renaissance Italy and England* (JSTOR, 2013).

39 Deda, V., Buiney, M. E., & Suryanti, M. S. D. Assessing efforts of the Government of India and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Tackling Bride Trafficking. (2022): 1-15. *Papua Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations* 2, no 1.

40 Mary Wollstonecraft, "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman. 1792" (1992) 5 *The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft* 217; Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (Yale University Press, 2014).

41 Elizabeth Frazer, "Mary Wollstonecraft and Catharine Macaulay on Education" (2011) 37:5 *Oxford Review of Education* 603-617.

42 Marilyn J Boxer, *First wave feminism in nineteenth-century France: Class, family and religion* (Elsevier, 1982); Valerie Sanders, "First wave feminism" in *The Routledge companion to feminism and postfeminism* (Routledge, 2004) 26; Lisa B Sharlach, "First wave feminism" (2009) *The international encyclopedia of revolution and protest* 1-3.

43 Krista Cowman, "Carrying on a Long Tradition' Second-Wave Presentations of First-Wave Feminism in Spare Rib c. 1972-80" (2010) 17:3 *European Journal of Women's Studies* 193-210.

44 Betty Friedan, *The feminine mystique* (WW Norton & Company, 2010); Becky Thompson, "Multiracial feminism: Recasting the chronology of second wave feminism" (2002) 28:2 *Feminist studies* 337-360.

45 Judith Evans, *Feminist theory today: An introduction to second-wave feminism* (Sage, 1995); Rosalind Gill & Christina Scharff, *New femininities: Postfeminism, neoliberalism and subjectivity* (Springer, 2013); Sue Thornham, "Second wave feminism" in *The Routledge companion to feminism and postfeminism* (Routledge, 2004) 36.

the ideologies of middle-class women who achieved notoriety through political lobbying.

This wave had more real bargaining power, predominantly thorough working-class strikes and wage demands.<sup>46</sup> In addition, it showed mass awareness of women's groups, calling upon them to join and focus on a common mission. In 1970, a large conference was held in England called the British Women's Liberation Movement (WLM). This annual conference bridged critical debates between feminist movements until, in 1978, the issue of violence and sexuality became the main topic.<sup>47</sup>

In the contemporary world, feminists come with various perspectives, including what is known as 'radical' feminists. Radical feminists, like those in the mainstream, support the elimination of exploitative actions against women and provide a complete approach to sexual violence based on human rights.<sup>48</sup> What makes them 'radical', as opposed to mainstream feminists, is their staunch and unwavering belief that the rights of women should be enforced as a matter of priority, sometimes even through acts of social unrest. In the study of international relations, the theoretical approach and concept of feminism becomes essential when highlighting the structural landscape, the framework of civil society, and more specifically, the position of gender in the arena of war.<sup>49</sup> It is at this point that feminist theory cannot be ignored. Attention for women's rights and support for gender equality in the UN corridor is contained in Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Index, which prioritises the involvement of women in the governance of peaceful resolutions. The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 outlines the functions of international law for women's protection and ordains special courts against perpetrators of sexual violence in armed conflict.<sup>50</sup> UNIFEM itself was established in 1976 to provide financial and technical assistance to innovative programs and strategies for fostering the empowerment of women and gender equality.<sup>51</sup>

This article examines the kind of help UNIFEM provided to women in Darfur and its ability to guard women against being victimised. It seeks to prioritize discussion of women's rights over men's exploitative actions against them. The humanitarian program represented by UNIFEM is in line with the mission of the feminist movements, and seeks to stand for women, especially in Darfur.

### III. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

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46 Thornham, *supra* note 48.

47 Jeska Rees, "A look back at anger: the Women's Liberation Movement in 1978" (2010) 19:3 *Women's history review* 337-356.

48 Chris Atmore, "Victims, backlash, and radical feminist theory" (1999) *New versions of victims: Feminists struggle with the concept* 183.

49 Laura Sjoberg, *Gender, justice, and the wars in Iraq: A feminist reformulation of just war theory* (Lexington Books, 2006).

50 Paul Kirby & Laura J Shepherd, "Reintroducing women, peace and security" (2016) 92:2 *International Affairs* 249-254.

51 Refworld, *UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)* (2022) <https://www.refworld.org/publisher/UNIFEM.html>. Accessed October 20, 2022



A description of the political roles of international organisations and an understanding of international law helps explain the concept of international cooperation. International organisations are a different form of agreement between member countries that help fulfil the domestic interests of each country.<sup>52</sup> The formation of international organisations cannot be separated from the participation of member countries.<sup>53</sup> From a political perspective, international organisations have an important role in supporting programs in their member countries, including economic and military development.<sup>54</sup> Meanwhile, from the point of view of international law, international organisations and state sovereignties are legal subjects that are equally recognised and regarded. The existence of international organisations as legal subjects is significant for members' compliance with the international legal system.<sup>55</sup> International organisations play a cooperative role in several ways:

1. *First*, as an instrument of political articulation and aggregation of the state and institutional contacts between members through discussion and negotiation forums.
2. *Second*, as actors that contribute to legal protection and the agenda of the international political system.
3. *Third*, as an agent of transmitting values to member countries, such as socialising and collaborating with member countries to resolve certain issues.<sup>56</sup>

The concept of international cooperation is present in liberalism, which supports the idea that one way to achieve peace is to build cooperation between countries.<sup>57</sup> Cooperation is an alternative to peace; the state is seen as a rational actor who considers the advantages and disadvantages. For state actors, conflict is very costly compared to cooperation. Therefore, cooperation for liberals is an effective alternative to maximize the interests of a country. Until now, the concept of international cooperation has been used by countries to achieve their national interests. The World Trade Organisation, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, bilateral cooperation carried out by two countries and multilateral cooperation carried out by more than one country are all products of international cooperation. Cooperation also occurs between countries and certain international institutions, such as Indonesia and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which deals with refugee issues.

According to Kalevi Jaakko Holsti & Sudarsono, international cooperation is a simple process between connected countries that approaches the problems at hand.<sup>58</sup>

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52 Clive Archer, *International organizations* (Routledge, 2014).

53 J Barkin, *International organization: theories and institutions* (Springer, 2015).

54 Volker Rittberger et al, *International organization* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019).

55 Mochtar Kusumaatmadja & Ety R Agoes, *Pengantar hukum internasional* (Penerbit Alumni, 2021); Achmad Romsan et al, *Pengantar Hukum Pengungsi Internasional: Hukum Internasional dan Prinsip-Prinsip Perlindungan Internasional* (Sabic Offset, 2003).

56 Archer, *supra* note 55; Rittberger et al, *supra* note 57.

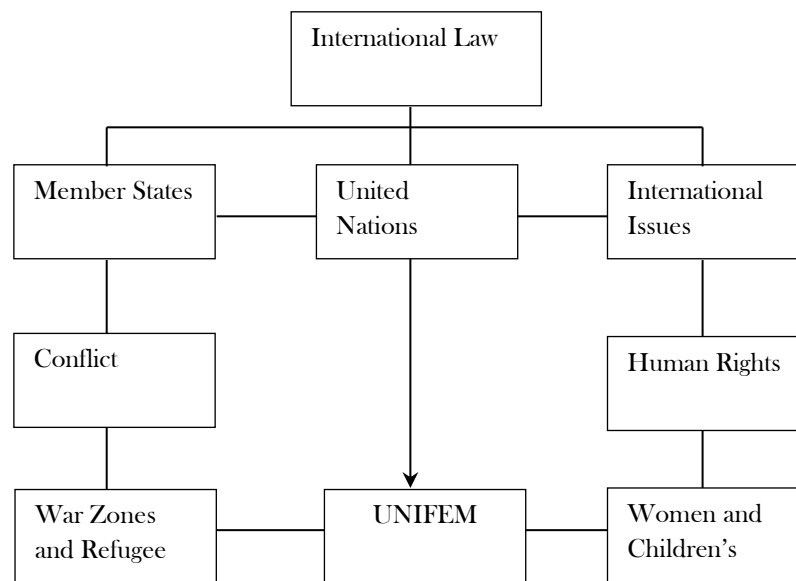
57 Kalevi J Holsti & M Tahir Azhary, "Politik Internasional: Kerangka untuk Analisis, Jilid 2" (1988).

58 Kalevi Jaakko Holsti & Juwono Sudarsono, *Politik Internasional: Kerangka Analisa* (Pedoman Ilmu Jaya, 1987).

In international cooperation, there will be interactions in communication, negotiation, discussion of problems, and looking for solutions so that mutual agreements are obtained or agreed upon. The objectives of international cooperation are to increase economic prosperity, increase efficiency related to cost reduction, overcome problems that can threaten security, prevent conflicts, and to achieve peace. This concept could explain why the Darfur government engaged in international cooperation with UNFEM to help the women and children who were victims of sexual violence.

**Figure 1.**

*Mapping the Flow of Handling and Preventing Gender-Based Violence*



#### IV. FEMINISM CORRELATING WITH INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN RESOLVING VIOLENCE CASES

Feminism helps us to understand the correlation of armed conflict with sexual violence that objectifies women. Sexual violence during and after the war does not have a single purpose (Leiby, 2009). The practice of sexual violence against non-combatant civilians has political overtones and motives that directly lead to genocide.<sup>59</sup> The motives behind sexual violence, within a feminist context, extend beyond violence as a means of sexual relations, criticising the practice as an abuse of power and a method of political violence.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Beverly Allen, *Rape warfare: The hidden genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia* (U of Minnesota Press, 1996); Alesandra Stiglmyer, "Mass Rape: The War Against Women in Bosnia-Herzegovina" (1994) 7:3 *Minerva's Bulletin* Board 14.

<sup>60</sup> Beverly A McPhail, "Feminist framework plus: Knitting feminist theories of rape etiology into a comprehensive model" (2016) 17:3 *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 314-329.

The idea the ‘male monopoly’ world was recognised by Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes. They discussed how our masculine-inclined world causes a widening of the differences between men and women. This can be seen in the position of women during wars. In general, wars intensify economic disparities between men and women and often place women in unpaid work, such as caring for wounded soldiers or engaging in sex trafficking for war soldiers, leading to them often being victims of sexual violence by soldiers or perpetrators of the conflict or war.<sup>61</sup> Machiavelli and Hobbes also discussed the topic of security. Feminist security studies look at domestic violence, rape, poverty, gender subordination, economy, and environmental damage.<sup>62</sup> If viewed using a feminist perspective, security has a broad meaning than just the state, also including personal security.

This essential nature of gender inequality in the conflict in Darfur shows that women were treated as worthless tools who were raped by the perpetrators of the conflict, in this case, the Janjaweed. Many women who were in shelters were first kidnapped and then raped. The number of rape victims in Chad between 2003 and 2004 totalled 250, with the other victims being held in militia shelters.<sup>63</sup>

The pattern of violence against female victims, both in peace and conflict situations, can be traced to two types of violence.<sup>64</sup> Interpersonal violence refers to exploiting economic, sexual, psychological, physical, or other forms of violence between two individuals. Structural or institutional violence refers to a structural inequality that preserves individuals or groups in inferior positions. This structure can come from certain entrenched ideologies, passed around by other people, families, and communities.<sup>65</sup> Sexual violence against women is not something new in armed conflict. Sexual violence with female victims was easily detected in the study of past wars. In addition, the stigma of inferiority and the objectification of fertile women in conflict situations causes sexual violence.<sup>66</sup>

The research of Tønnessen & Al-Nagar shows that violence against women, when viewed contextually alongside Sudan's domestic law, cannot be separated from

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61 A. Buskie, ‘How Significant is Feminism’s Contribution to IR?’, E-International Relations Students’, 17 Maret 2013. Available online at <http://www.e-ir.info/2013/03/17/how-significant-is-the-contribution-of-feminism-to-ir/>, Accessed on 05 February 2022.

62 Anie Soetjipto & Pande Trimayuni, “Gender dan Hubungan Internasional” (2013) Yogyakarta: Jalasutra.

63 R. Yulia, ‘Pengaruh Perspektif Feminisme dalam Program UNIFEM Pada konflik Sipil di Darfur’, 2013, Available online at <http://repository.unri.ac.id/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/2131/PENGARUH%20PERSPEKTIF%20FEMINIS%20DALAM%20PROGRAM%20UNIFEM%20PADA%20KONFLIK%20SIPIL%20DARFUR%202006%20JURNAL.pdf?sequence=1>, Accessed on 20 Desember 2021.

64 Siân Herbert, “Links between gender-based violence and outbreaks of violent conflict” (2014) University of Birmingham Birmingham, UK.

65 Rashida Manjoo & Calleigh McRaith, “Gender-based violence and justice in conflict and post-conflict areas” (2011) 44 Cornell Int’l LJ 11; Rashida Manjoo & Daniela Nadj, “‘Bridging the Divide’: An Interview with Professor Rashida Manjoo, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women” in *Global Responses to Domestic Violence* (Springer, 2017) 21.

66 Nita Triana, “Perlindungan Perempuan dan Anak Ketika Perang dalam Hukum Humaniter Internasional” (2009) 4:2 Yinyang: Jurnal Studi Islam Gender dan Anak 320–334.

multi-stakeholder associations, including feminist activists.<sup>67</sup> Tønnessen & Al-Nagar emphasised the critical role of the grassroots movement of Sudanese Islamic feminist activists, who contributed to pressuring the government to reform the criminal constitution to penalise perpetrators of sexual violence during the conflict.<sup>68</sup>

Within the body of the Sudanese feminist movement some groups saw the intervention of international institutions as a transmission of western politics from the United States, considered different from Sudan's Islamic civilization. Sporadic discourses of protection and compassion have been described as political wars between the United States and Sudan.<sup>69</sup> Lamoureaux's research clearly illustrates how the realisation of international humanitarian law and reports of sexual violence against women need to be analysed using a post-colonial feminist approach and a political microscope of national and transnational organisations.<sup>70</sup> Inevitably, the United Nations, as well as various international NGO's and feminist groups, succeeded in pressing for constitutional reform of Sudan's domestic law.

### 1. UNIFEM's Contribution in Fighting for the Rights of Women Victims of Violence

Equality between men and women is a principle that appeared in a United Nations charter for the first time in 1945. These principles were later included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Starting from there, many activities were undertaken by international women's organisations to improve the status of women. In 1975, the UN General Assembly established the International Women's Year, with the goals of equality, development, and peace. The United Nations then drafted a voluntary fund proposal aimed at the welfare of women. From there, UNIFEM began to take shape. Financial support came from internal UN agencies, as well as the governments of Sweden and Norway.

UNIFEM entered the Darfur region to restore the position of oppressed women in 2006. UNIFEM's mandate was to:<sup>71</sup>

1. Support innovative and experimental activities that are beneficial to women according to national and local priorities, and
2. Ensure proper engagement of women in crucial development activities.

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67 Liv Tønnessen & Samia al-Nagar, "Women and girls caught between rape and adultery in Sudan: Criminal law reform, 2005-2015" (2015) CMI Report.

68 Liv Tønnessen & Samia Al-Nagar, "Legal Mobilization to Protect Women against Rape in Islamist Sudan" (2021) 2 Cahiers d'études africaines 355-376.

69 Amal Hassan Fadlalla, "The neoliberalization of compassion: Darfur and the mediation of American faith, fear, and terror" (2008) *New Landscapes of Inequality: Neoliberalism and the Erosion of Democracy in America* 209-228.

70 Siri Lamoureaux, "Curating consent: sexual violence, moral politics and gendered agency in Sudan" (2021) 4:1 *Tapuya: Latin American Science, Technology and Society* 1989859.

71 UNIFEM Annual Report 2008 - 2009. Available online at [https://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/UNReports/unifem\\_annualreport\\_2008-2009.pdf](https://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/UNReports/unifem_annualreport_2008-2009.pdf). Accessed on 12 February 2022.

In order to support and campaign for the human rights of women and children, UNIFEM entered East Africa in 1994, focusing on conflict areas. In 2005, UNIFEM collaborated with the World Bank through the Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) program at a conference held in Oslo, Norway. JAM aimed to investigate, directly, the violence experienced by women during conflict. UNIFEM's investigative scheme was carried out by directly meeting with female and child victims. In turn, UNIFEM's conferences and missions produced several crucial outputs: social services, improved economy, greater capacity building of groups, and most importantly, the protection of women's human rights. UNIFEM helped Sudan solve problems by participating in the dialogue between the North and South Sudanese parties, especially when the civil war broke out in Darfur. In April 2005, UNIFEM participated in a conference in Oslo to discuss donor countries for Sudan. During the conference, UNIFEM also urged the government to act for Sudanese women in five areas: governance and law, capacity building and institutional development, economic policy and management, livelihoods and productive sectors, and social services.

The Oslo conference results formed two work programs plans: Protecting and Promoting Women's Rights and Leadership in Sudan (2005 - 2006) and Gender Justice in Sudan (2005 - 2008). Subsequently, in 2008 - 2010, those programs were remade, entitled Defending and Securing the Human Rights of Women and Girls in the Humanitarian Crisis in Darfur.

The program 'Protecting and Promoting Women's Rights and Leadership in Sudan' focused on advocacy and empowerment, including human rights, protection, leadership, and capacity building of women's groups.<sup>72</sup> Then the second program, 'Gender Justice in Sudan', had the goals of empowerment, violence prevention, and enforcement of human rights. This second program seemed to be more specific when addressing the violence against women during and after the conflict and promoting the accountability of various institutions in protecting women refugees.<sup>73</sup>

In addition, UNIFEM worked with the African Union (AU) to mediate gender-based peace. Negotiations with Darfur women followed this collaboration and the information collected later became important information for formulating human rights contained in the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA). The DPA includes land justice, inclusive action, physical protection, women's participation, and the establishment of a gender-responsive resilience commission.<sup>74</sup>

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72 Devanna De La Puente, "Women's leadership in camps for internally displaced people in Darfur, western Sudan" (2011) 46:3 Community Development Journal 365-377.

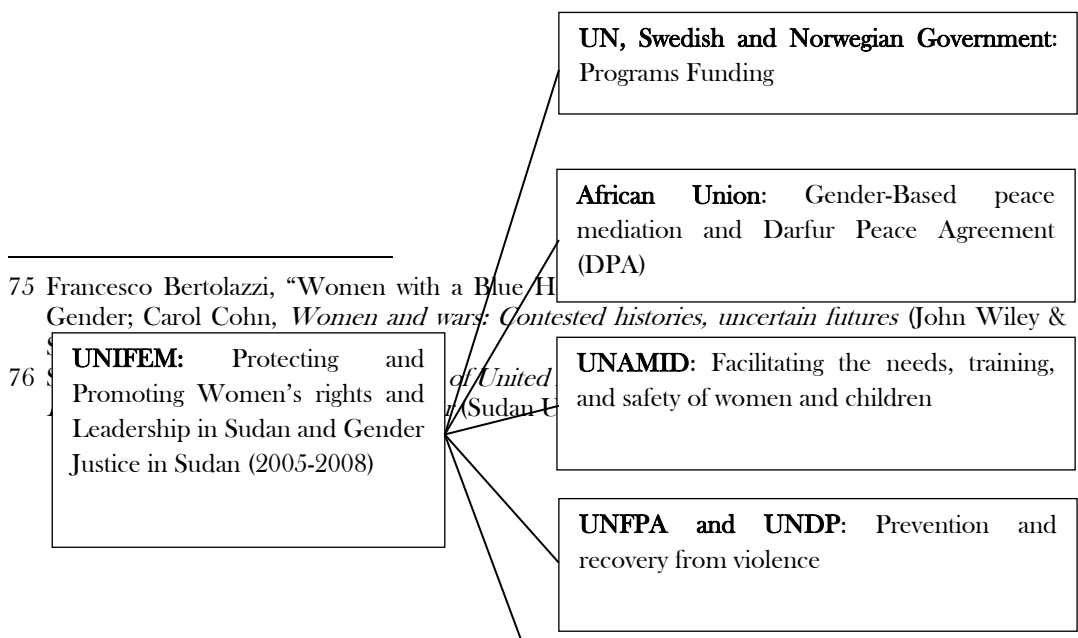
73 Kathleen A Doty et al, "Toward Peace with Justice in Darfur: A Framework for Accountability" (2011) 18 UC Davis J Int'l L & Pol'y 1; *End of Programme Evaluation of the UN Women and Unitarian Universalist Service Committee Funded Programme (Defending and Securing the Human Rights of Women and Girls in the Humanitarian Crisis South Darfur, Sudan)*, by Grace Okonji (Sudan, 2011).

74 Sidonia Angom, "Case Studies of Women in Peacemaking and Peacebuilding: Empirical Evidence" in *Women in Peacemaking and Peacebuilding in Northern Uganda* (Springer, 2018) 33; John Hagan & Wenona Rymond-Richmond, *Darfur and the Crime of Genocide* (Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Furthermore, UNIFEM also collaborated with local community leaders and the United Nations African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). This collaboration aimed to facilitate the needs, training, and safety of women and children.<sup>75</sup> They also collaborated with UNFPA and UNDP to prevent violent practices and to help with victim’s recovery from the effects of violence.<sup>76</sup> At the grassroots level, UNIFEM collaborated with Mutanawit, Babikar Bandri Scientific Association for Women Studies, and Darfur University Peace Centre for capacity building and reconciliation support. Finally, in the Defending and Securing the Human Rights of Women and Girls in the Humanitarian Crisis in Darfur program, UNIFEM focused on advocating for the human rights of women and children after the conflict, including handling the impact of sexual violence.

**Figure 2.**

*UNIFEM Collaborations on Protecting and Promoting Women’s rights and Leadership in Sudan and Gender Justice in Sudan 2005-2008*





UNIFEM received funding from the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) to support its program implementation.<sup>77</sup> One primary concern for UNIFEM was South Darfur, which had the highest number of refugees, totalling 1,185,012 people. UNIFEM cooperated with multi-stakeholders such as government officials, community groups, UNAMID police, and various local NGOs. In line with the pattern of the first-period program (in 2005-2008), UNIFEM went to the refugee camps to obtain first-hand information from women and child victims through group consultations and personal interviews. The results of these interviews and investigations were used as guidelines for designing the UNIFEM framework and resulted in several goals and collaborations.

First was the goal of increasing women's understanding of their human rights. As a part of this education, UNIFEM affiliated with UNAMID and local NGOs such as the Ehlam Charity Organisation, the El-Madina Center, the Nahda Women's and Children Development Organisation, the People's Organisation for Rehabilitation and Development, the University of Nyala, and the State Committee for Combating Violence against Women. Second was the goal of the construction of Women's Centres in all refugee camps, to provide a safe space for women and a means to facilitate a forum on gender violence, human rights, and women's economic justice.

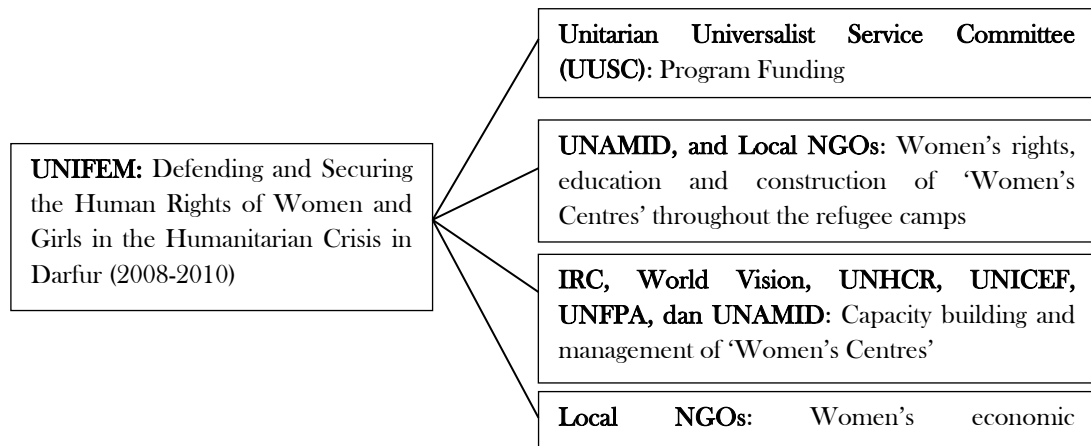
In managing the "Women's Centre," UNIFEM cooperated with IRC, World Vision, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNFPA, and UNAMID. Their third goal was to create economic empowerment and capacity building for women. In order to support this effort, UNIFEM collaborated with local NGOs such as the Ehlam Charity Organisation, Nahda Women's and Children Development Organisation, and the People's Organisation for Rehabilitation and Development.

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<sup>77</sup> Okonji, *supra* note 77.

**Figure 3.**

*Defending and Securing the Human Rights of Women and Girls in the Humanitarian Crisis in Darfur (2008-2010)*



The programs developed to reach the first two goals show UNIFEM's focus on reducing the vulnerability of women, optimising their human rights, strengthening the capacity of local institutions engaged in security, defence, and fulfilment of community rights, and promoting accountability of institutions that play a major role in the safety, security, and lives of female refugees in Darfur.

Various organisations and institutions funded all UNIFEM programs in Darfur. The following goals were included in the UNIFEM work program:

1. Improving the economy and creating safe jobs per the skills possessed by female refugees.
2. Marketing of handicrafts made by female refugees to improve the economy.
3. Hold conversations to increase knowledge and create a sense of cohesiveness and belonging among female refugees.
4. Gain the trust of UNIFEM as an effective organisation to protect women and help raise awareness of women's rights and the reporting of violence cases.
5. Provide understanding to women in refugee camps about the human rights they should enjoy and provide training in enforcing rights within the family and community.
6. Increase the capacity of community institutions that have been neglected so far.
7. Increase protection for female refugees who have been vulnerable to violence in meeting their daily needs.
8. Reducing the occurrence of GBV, which has been afflicting women in Darfur.

These inputs resulted in the following outcomes:

1. The anticipation of violence against women and the safety of women in Darfur while in refugee camps;
2. The involvement of women in the peace process in Darfur;
3. A reduction in the sexual violence experienced by women and children in Darfur.

It can be seen that the program was successful because of several factors. The first was support of partners such as the Al Madina Women and Development Centre, Nahda Women's and Children Development Organisation, the Elham Charity Organisation, and the People's Organisation for Rehabilitation and Development. The second was the support from internal parties, namely the Darfur women themselves. The women in Darfur as victims of violence are enthusiastic about what they get from UNIFEM, which they can use as a provision for the future.

The practice of the program was to provide training in areas such as weaving, animal husbandry, and sewing. The results achieved were that around 295 women in refugee camps managed to access finances required for survival. In addition, about 400 other women gained expertise in entrepreneurship. In the security sector, UNIFEM succeeded in providing training to women to become Sudanese Government Police, UNAMID Police, Volunteer Police, and Female Police Officers, totalling 1,518 security officers.

Constructivism epistemologically maps the construction and reproduction of understanding based on the interaction of the world and human thought.<sup>78</sup> This approach develops within constructivist feminist theory, which emphasises that the study of power dynamics and gender is an inherent element of social and cultural construction.<sup>79</sup> The activities carried out by UNIFEM through its programs aimed to empower women as victims of sexual violence during the conflict in Darfur. The existence of UNIFEM is in line with the constructivist feminist understanding that focuses on security during war. In war there is the weaponisation of women's bodies. Rape is intended to destroy the morale of individuals, families, and communities. It is carried out to impregnate women so that their ethnicity is no longer pure, and as a weapon of terror.

The main challenge in providing services to victims of sexual violence faced by UNIFEM was circumventing the support system from the victim's circle. A study by Freedman showed that the presence of services from international institutions might be significant.<sup>80</sup> However, support from the closest people, including family and community, is the key to efforts to resolve sexual violence. In a different study, Thompson et al. highlighted the weakness of UNIFEM in ignoring the role of camp guards and humanitarian staff when providing training that was sensitive to sexual

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78 Anne-Jorunn Berg & Merete Lie, "Feminism and constructivism: Do artifacts have gender?" (1995) 20:3 *Science, Technology, & Human Values* 332–351.

79 Emanuela Lombardo & Johanna Kantola, "Social constructivism" in *The Routledge Handbook of Gender and EU Politics* (Routledge, 2021) 43; Janet Catherina Wesselius, *Gender identity without gender prescriptions: dealing with essentialism and constructionism in feminist politics* (1998).

80 Jane Freedman, "Explaining sexual violence and gender inequalities in the DRC" (2011) 23:2 *Peace review: A journal of Social Justice* 170–175.

violence protection protocols.<sup>81</sup> Ray & Heller noted that the practice of sexual violence in refugee camps is difficult to resolve as long as there are no policies that provide certainty for refugees to earn a living amid uncertainty.<sup>82</sup>

## V. CONCLUSION

In this study, cases of violence within the Darfur conflict spread to a broader territory beyond the battle itself. The atrocities and gender-based violence that occurred in the camps demonstrated the practice of sexual violence as a specific ethnic genocide. The feminist approach and international cooperation are theoretical conjunctures that were useful when seeking an effective practice, here international institutions contributing to the aid of cases of violence against women. The conflict in Darfur perpetuated the subordination of women as a vulnerable group that have no power during the war.

UNIFEM's involvement opened up efforts to embrace multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary human rights enforcement. However, this study has several limitations. First, the theoretical construction relies too much on feminism and international cooperation. This opens the discussion to other approaches with different perspectives in subsequent studies. Second, the focus of the study on the role and cooperation of UNIFEM undermines a comprehensive review of peace organisations within the United Nations. Third, UNIFEM's main study was carried out during and after the war, so this research is limited, not exploring the historical series of conflicts in Darfur as a whole. Therefore, this research is expected to be an additional reference regarding the role of women's organisations in protecting women's rights. Human rights are not limited to the study of international relations and law. Further studies need to use analytical tools from other disciplines such as history and anthropology to investigate the roots of conflict holistically. In addition, further study of the roles of international women's organisations under the United Nations is recommended.

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81 M Thompson, M Okumu & E Atema, "Building a web of protection in Darfur" (2014) *2014:60 Humanitarian Exchange* 24-27.

82 Sam Ray & Lauren Heller, "Peril or protection: the link between livelihoods and gender-based violence in displacement settings" (2009) *New York (NY): Women's Refugee Commission*.

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