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The Fragmentation of Gender Orders in Contemporary Wars

Mary Kaldor and Christine Chinkin

ABSTRACT

This article makes the argument that the character of gender order shapes and is shaped by war and that different types of contemporary warfare construct different patterns of gender order. It contends that the conjunction of different types of war, especially ‘new wars’, in the contemporary period has led to a fragmentation of gender orders. It develops this argument through four dimensions of war – narratives, roles, harms, and political economy – and applies the framework to the war in Ukraine for illustration. It concludes that the UN Security Council’s Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda fails to take fragmentation into account.

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Introduction

Conflict, like all other forms of human activity, is gendered, both in the ways women and men experience conflict and in the ideological gendered construction of conflict (Connell 1995). Gender is a relational concept that seeks to explain how patriarchal societies are ordered through dominant ideas, norms, customs, and practices that produce hierarchies among different categories of people symbolically associated with social constructions of masculinity and femininity. Adopting a gender perspective deconstructs the patterns of power that are normalized to perpetuate structural and systemic inequalities, oppression, and discrimination. As a system of power, gender is both constituted by and integral to the manufacture of other vectors of power such as race, class, colonialism, militarism, nationalism, the political economy, and law. In this article, we use the term gender order to refer to ‘a historically constructed pattern of power relations between men and women’ (Connell 1987, 98); it is a specific set of relationships expressed in cultural understandings of masculinities and femininities that structure the substance of patriarchy.

The unequal gender relations produced and sustained by patriarchy (hooks 2004) configure and are reconfigured by conflict, creating a continuum of different forms of violence and oppression as violence and conflict evolve. Gender infuses the way the conflict is framed. It determines the roles played by women and men in conflict, the roles they are presumed to play and the roles assigned to them through propaganda and profiling. It significantly impacts upon the harms they experience, those deliberately inflicted because of their gender (CEDAW Committee 1992) and those incurred as a result of

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their social positioning. And it shapes the way men and women are affected by changing economic conditions. In all these ways, gender has constructed conflict throughout history and in turn conflict has moulded the ways societies have understood gender and gender relations.

Neither the forms and modalities of political violence nor gender norms are static; both evolve and are fluid. Different societies and types of war produce different constructions of masculinity and femininity depending on such factors as forms of participation, social narratives, tactics, and the political economy of war. Our argument, in this article, is first that gender order is constructed through war and violence and vice versa, and second, that different forms of gender order are the outcome of different types of war. At present, the world is experiencing a concatenation of different types of warfare, including what seems like classical inter-state war, revolutionary or insurgency war, new wars, and the war on terror. In addition, UN and regional peacekeepers are engaged in operations in various theatres of conflict. Variations in the forms, scope, space (where the conflict is fought), and methods of warfare explain the fragmentation of gender orders, the disruption to how societal gender relations – gender roles, gender narratives – are constructed across time and space. In particular, the article focuses on the ideology and trajectory of ‘new wars’ (Chinkin and Kaldor 2017). The story of change is neither coherent nor linear; the prolonged engagement of new wars through their ‘persistence and spread’ (Chinkin and Kaldor 2017, 7) makes more complex the analysis of gender relations that also shift over time.

The article sets out an argument that draws on conversations across disciplines and our own past research on international law (Chinkin and Kaldor 2017), feminist approaches to law, especially international law (Charlesworth and Chinkin 2000), new wars (Kaldor 2012) and the UN Security Council’s (SC) agenda on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) (S/RES 1325 (2000) (31 October 2000)) Through resolution 1325 and nine subsequent resolutions the Council has recognized the differential impact of war on women and men and the need for a gender perspective while apparently assuming an unfragmented and static understanding of both conflict (inter-state warfare) and gender (women as victims and males as protectors) (Chinkin 2022). Most literature on gender and war centres on the proposition that gender is constructed through war, with which we of course agree (for example, Cockburn 2013; Enloe 2014). But the existing literature overlooks the diverse and evolving forms of contemporary violence and what such varied forms might mean for understandings of gender. This is our focus: the different configurations of gender that are associated with different types of war, as well as counter-trends that emerge from civil society in wartime. In developing the argument, we have relied on secondary literature and primary documents, especially legal sources. We also undertook structured interviews with individual Ukrainian women and focused group discussions with representatives of Ukrainian women’s organizations who had been displaced by the war and were currently living in Kraków, Poland. The aim of the article is to stimulate further research and thinking on these issues.

In this Special Issue, the concept of fragmentation is primarily addressed in relation to the fragmentation of political authority. The fragmentation of gender hierarchies has much more to do with societal fragmentation and the contestation around ideas within the community space. As we point out in the article, the rise of identity-based polarization that is a major factor in the fragmentation of political authority is deeply

entangled with gender relations; hence the assembly and disassembly of gender orders is an inextricable element of the conflict context associated with the fragmentation of political authority.

In what follows, we start with an overview of how different types of gender order are associated with different types of war, focusing on the conceptual difference between gender orders attendant on ‘old’ and ‘new’ wars. We elaborate this argument by discussing four specific dimensions of gender relations (narratives, roles, harms, and political economy) and for illustration discuss the complex example of the war by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. We conclude by arguing that the UN’s WPS agenda needs to address the fundamental binaries through which masculinity and femininity are constructed in wars; it is not about making women more like men, turning women into protectors or perpetrators and men into victims or agents; rather it is about the very nature of conflict and gender order.

Types of war and gender order

What has been described as the modernist conception of gender was shaped by the imagined experience of the inter-state wars in Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Mosse 1996). These wars, at any rate in theory, were fought between men on the battlefield, according to the rules of war (international humanitarian law – IHL) that began to be codified in the late nineteenth century.¹ The rules were important because they were a way of distinguishing the legitimate soldier from a criminal or bandit. This conception of gender has been stylized by Jean Bethke Elshtain as heroic or just warriors (men) and beautiful souls (women) (Elshtain 1987); it was based on the gendered binary of the protector and the protected, which supposedly protects families at home and distinguishes between the home front and the front line.

Of course, wars were never exactly like this. As well as inter-state wars in Europe, there was more or less continuous violence in the colonies and against slaves and purportedly freed slaves, involving extreme brutality by men (and by women) against both men and women, constructing and entrenching the racial and imperial hierarchies that intersect with gender. Nor did the European wars quite fit the classic model. In both World War I and World War II, women participated massively in the war effort. In the West, women not only participated in support roles, such as nurses, ambulance drivers, spies, or administrators, but also in the labour force, producing the means through which the wars were fought. And World War II in the Soviet Union saw large numbers of women mobilized in the armed forces (Alexievich 2017), accounting for one fifth of Soviet military forces. Nor was the war fought only on the battlefield: some 60 per cent of the casualties were civilian, not only as a consequence of the holocaust, but also because of large-scale incendiary bombing both by Axis powers and the Western allies (including the use of the atomic bomb against Hiroshima and Nagasaki) and of food blockades, most notably the siege of Leningrad. After the war, women in the West were excluded again from the labour force to make way for returning military personnel and to reinforce the traditional view of women in the private sphere and men as the breadwinners. And in the Soviet Union, where civil and political equality was formally provided for, women, by and large, left the armed forces but remained in the labour force without a corresponding change in

their unpaid labour at home; this led to the notion of double or triple (if citizenship duties are included) exploitation and the idea of a ‘masculinized superwoman’.

Changes in the nature of war, especially after the end of the Cold War, have given rise to a fragmentation of conceptions of gender. Revolutionary wars of the Cold War era were classic civil wars between states (and their external partners) and rebels, who were often informed by a Marxist ideology that included the idea of women’s equality, even if the reality rarely lived up to the ideal. The ‘new wars’ that emerged from the end of the 1980s, especially those that erupted out of the collapse of the Soviet Union and former Yugoslavia, shaped a new or rediscovered more extremist form of masculinity (Chinkin and Kaldor 2013). In contrast to traditional ‘inter-state’ or revolutionary wars, these are wars fought by a combination of state and non-state actors (militias, police, parts of the regular armed forces, warlords, mercenaries, criminal gangs) in which battles are rare and most violence is directed against civilians. They are usually fought in the name of exclusive ethnic or religious identity and are financed through criminal predatory activities. The combatants are predominantly men; where there are women combatants (some voluntary, others coerced), male authority and control remain prominent. The victims are civilians – women, children – as well as men of military age. The violence is frequently extremely brutal, including sexual and reproductive violence, sometimes undertaken in a systematic way as a weapon of war. Dramatic declines in the formal economy combined with the collapse of public services tend to disproportionately affect women in terms of both paid and unpaid labour. The binary of protector/protected typical of the modernist conception of gender is supplanted by the binary of perpetrator/victim.

New wars are not as totalizing as the European wars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; combatant participation, as a share of the population, is much lower than in classic ‘old wars’. In all new wars, civic actors play a critical role in helping society to survive. Their activities include: being first responders in humanitarian crises; trying to keep basic education operational, infrastructure and healthcare functioning; promoting peace and human rights through bringing people together, supporting mediation efforts at local levels, or documenting war crimes. In these undertakings, women regularly play a dominant role, becoming active in public spaces, thereby often challenging traditional gender roles and nurturing alternative (often feminist) ideas about gender relations.

New wars are not the only form of organized political violence in the contemporary period. Peacekeeping has developed as a response to ‘new wars’. And the so-called War on Terror involves the use of drones in a campaign of long-distance (and across international borders) assassination of those designated as terrorists. The term ‘drone’ refers to male bees. The drone operators do not see their victims, except virtually. This gives rise to an emasculated conception of perpetrators, often the ‘martyrdom’ of the male targets and the invisibility of civilians (female and male, including children) caught in the attack as ‘collateral damage’. One example is the sparse mention given to the deaths of five civilians – three women and two children – who died in the 2024 aerial attack against top Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukr in Beirut.

The physical appearance of various fighters in different types of war illustrates the argument about different understandings of gender, especially in relation to conceptions of masculinity. IHL required the regular soldiers of the ‘old wars’ to wear uniforms and

carry their weapons openly so they could be clearly distinguished from (protected) civilians (Protocol 1, articles 43 and 44). The combatants in new wars often organize themselves in militias or gangs with militant masculinist names like ‘tigers’ or ‘wolves’, as in Bosnia in the 1990s. They sport brand names, like Adidas running shoes or Ray-Ban sunglasses, as is typical of male gangs. They often wear distinctive symbols aimed at signifying their religious or national affiliations, such as crosses or Koranic texts. In many incidents, they wear dark glasses, goggles, masks, or balaclavas, whether to disguise their extremist behaviour or to create a sense of invincibility. In some cases, they dress as women, as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda. In contrast to the militia on the ground, drone operators, at least in the US, wear safety equipment, a high-visibility safety vest to enhance their visibility to the public and law enforcement, a hard hat to protect them from falling drones, and eye protection against falling propellers, reinforcing the impression of their ‘cowardly’ or ‘unmanly’ behaviour (Clark 2019).

Four dimensions of gender relations in conflict

The conception of fragmented gender orders can be elaborated through different dimensions of the wartime experience. In this article, we focus on four dimensions: narratives, roles, harms and political economy. These are by no means comprehensive; a fuller effort to disentangle the types of relationships that lay the basis for a specific form of gender order might include additional dimensions such as tactics, rules, norms, or a more comprehensive breakdown of political economy. Rather, they are examples of how a more in-depth analysis might be organized. They are intended to show how different components contribute to the construction of gender order. Table 1 provides a stylized depiction of how different dimensions combine to shape gender order.

Gendered narratives of conflict

‘Old Wars’ were about both nationalism and ideology. Much has been written about the role of gender in the construction of a national entity to be protected through violence (for example, Bloom, Hagemann, and Hall 2000; Ramet 1999). Such national identity draws on symbols and cultural myths from the nation’s real or imagined past. Masculinity and femininity are constructed through men and women’s designated roles in sustaining the nation. Although women’s support for the nationalist cause² may be strengthened as consummate with or promoting their own emancipation from restrictive gender roles, nationalist viewpoints tend to consign women to the status of bearers of the nation’s cultural heritage and as the repository of the national identity while men are its designated protectors. This understanding of masculinity often legitimates violence. Hence men are the ‘natural’ protectors of women, which in turn normalizes and legitimates the gender hierarchy and men’s exercise of power over women. This is both reinforced by and reinforces women’s location in the private sphere – the home and the hearth – and men’s failure to preserve their sanctity engenders humiliation and shame.

In most major inter-state wars, nationalism was associated with ideology. In the Napoleonic wars, the idea of the nation was intrinsically linked to the Rights of Man (not women) and the ideals of the French Revolution. In the mid-nineteenth century wars including the American civil war, key ideas included the abolition of slavery (or

Table 1. A stylized depiction of the fragmentation of war and gender order.

	'Old war'	Revolutionary war	'New wars'	Peacekeeping	War on Terror
Narratives	Either nationalist, associated with modernist conception of patriarchy, or ideological (democracy and socialism) with more egalitarian conceptions of gender	Ideological, associated with socialism and more egalitarian attitudes to gender at least in theory	Exclusivist ethnic and religious identity associated with gender ideologies	Idea of liberal peace associated with women's equality	Globalist and polarizing, associated with gender ideologies on all sides
Roles	Mainly men as soldiers; women at home; women as nurses, prostitutes, and spies	Men and women as combatants; women as nurses, cooks, and spies	Men as combatants, sometimes women	Women as peacekeepers but still predominantly men; women as humanitarian workers, police, and aid specialists	Some women as drone operators but mainly men
Harms	Mainly men as victims, killed in battle; sexual violence widespread but under-reported and not recognized in war crimes trials		Both men and women as direct victims of attacks on civilians; more women as displaced people; sexual violence as a weapon of war, mainly women as victims but also men and those rejecting the gender binary	Few direct harms, but in some cases sexual exploitation and abuse against those that they are sent to protect	Men mainly targeted but women as part of 'collateral' damage
Political economy	Centralized industrial production; women mobilized but gender hierarchy sustained		Men involved in criminal activities; unemployment of both men and women and heavier burden of unpaid labour for women		
Gender order	Men as protector; women as protected, at least in theory	Men as protector; women as supporter	Men as perpetrator; men and women as victims	Men and women as protectors but primarily men	Men as perpetrators

serfdom) as well as universal male suffrage. In World War II, the allies were fighting for democracy or socialism against fascism. Whereas fascism incorporated an extreme racialized conception of gender, ideas of gender equality necessarily infused ideas of democracy and socialism as a counter to fascism, even though these ideas were always partial.

The contemporary exclusivist nationalist and religious identities associated with new wars tend to be bolstered by gender ideologies that emphasize heterosexual, misogynist 'family values', the role of women in preserving and reproducing the nation (often termed the 'motherland') and rejecting non-binary sexual and gender identities. The Colombian truth commission found that 'all groups, armed and civilian, participating in the conflict in Colombia reproduced a model of violent patriarchal masculinity, in many cases misogynistic and discriminatory, which determined their actions'. It concluded

that ‘one of the fundamental ways to de-escalate the conflict and build peace is to question these masculinities and propose their demilitarization’ (cited and translated by Kravetz 2025, 107).

A subset of new wars espouses an even more extreme form of masculinity, often sustained by religious fundamentalism, where the very aim of the war is to establish a new gender order, in which women’s rights are curtailed including their freedom of movement and access to education and other public spaces (Human Rights Watch 2004). Many women are sexually enslaved, trafficked, and forcibly married to combatants (often serially), and men are permitted to have several wives, often taken from the enslaved and trafficked women. Examples include the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda (Porter 2017), the Taliban in Afghanistan, Boko Haram in Nigeria, or the ISIS attacks on Yazidis (Kaya 2019). In the case of religious ideologies, the downgrading of the role of women is often explicit and an end in itself.

Peacekeeping has to be understood in the context of the concept of liberal peace that also potentially encompasses egalitarian ideas, while US drone operators and the very notion of a war on terror is identified with right-wing nostalgia for the Cold War and associated with more conservative ideas about gender.

Gendered roles in conflict

The essentialist construction of women as victims of conflict, silenced, passive, and peace-loving, tends to persist despite being frequently debunked. Women participate actively – as they always have – through multiple and varied roles that shift through the duration of conflict and its aftermath: ‘Women are not passive bystanders or only victims or targets. They have historically and continue to have a role as combatants, as part of organized civil society, as human rights defenders, members of resistance movements and as active agents in both formal and informal peacebuilding and recovery processes’ (CEDAW Committee 2013, para. 6).

There are famous historical examples of female participation in combat, including the Amazons, the Dahomey army between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, and the Soviet army in World War II. In the case of contemporary wars, women have played a major role in combat in revolutionary wars, for instance the Kurdish Peshmerga, Nepalese Peoples Liberation Army (International Crisis Group 2005), Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Mesa 2023), and the Tamil Tigers (Dissanayake 2017). According to Bigio and Vogelstein (2019), women ‘have been active participants in 60 per cent of armed rebel groups over the past several decades (3)’.

Women also participate as combatants in new wars, although this is less widespread if only because overall participation is low (e.g. *Situation in Uganda* 2021, para. 894). The WPS agenda demands women’s equal participation in peacekeeping operations, which in turn requires greater inclusion of women in state military and security forces from which peacekeepers are drawn. Despite the increased involvement of women in peacekeeping operations and even the creation of all-female peacekeeping forces, their participation remains low (Report of the Secretary-General 2024, paras. 32–37) and their gendered responsibilities contested both by themselves and by others: for some, they represent a feminine counter to the masculine, militaristic representation of peacekeepers

thereby enhancing the legitimacy of the operation for the ‘peacekept’, while for others they simply replicate the male role and further entrench inequalities (Henry 2019).

Drone operators involved in the War on Terror tend to replicate the gender stereotypes of regular armies.³ Women remain a minority even though drone operators do not face the kind of risks experienced on a physical battlefield – the argument usually made for excluding women from the frontline (Kennedy-Pipe and Ashraf 2024).

Women’s involvement in military activity can be perceived as emancipatory and empowering, but it rarely indicates equality. The reality is that women typically remain a minority within fighting forces, are generally denied high-ranking positions, and may still be excluded from combat. They are typically tasked with ‘women’s’ functions such as medical care of the wounded, producing food, organizing humanitarian assistance, and provider of sexual services. They carry out recruitment and fundraising activities – women’s presence possibly seen as reassuring and less belligerent. They are also used – exploited – for spying, message taking, or carrying supplies and lethal weapons across lines where those commanding such activities assume a gender stereotype that women are less likely to arouse suspicion or be searched by males from opposing forces.⁴ These cases reinforce an unequal – often coerced – gender order, in which men retain top command positions and women experience ‘double’ or ‘triple’ exploitation as they combine war participation, perhaps also citizenship or nationalist roles, with replication of the sexual division of labour despite their apparent rejection of assigned social gender norms. But it is also important that in some contexts women perceive these tasks – whether from within military forces or acting within the community – as providing important and supplementary assistance to the war effort.

The active participation of women may enhance the position of women in society as a whole but there are many cases where such engagement runs counter to social norms and practices, destabilizing gender roles within the broader society. Women combatants are sometimes perceived to have broken accepted gender norms of behaviour regardless of whether they joined voluntarily (perhaps precisely to contest accepted social norms or to escape domestic violence or poverty) or were forcibly recruited or abducted. The stigmatization caused by women combatants’ assumed or real rejection of traditional societal gender roles may contribute to their being targeted as deviant by enemy forces (OHCHR 2012), subjected to sexual violence on capture, and making difficult – if not impossible – their reintegration into society. The notion that it is women’s own ‘deviant’ behaviour that has led to their being subjected to such violence means they are likely to be doubly stereotyped: by their own communities and by opposing forces. It also underlies the targeting of women human rights defenders, who often ‘operate in environments where, in addition to facing violence, legal restrictions, physical attack, intimidation and criminalization ... must also battle against deeply embedded patriarchal values that do not see them as equal or legitimate actors’ (Report, Situation of Human Rights Defenders 2023, para. 41).

Gendered harms

Gender bears upon how women and men experience conflict and its aftermath; their different roles impact upon the harms inflicted against them. As the majority of those actively engaging in combat are men and boys, they primarily experience combatant

injuries and deaths; further, the gendered assumption that all males of fighting age are weapon-bearers and thus pose a threat often makes all men and boys of an opposing ethnicity vulnerable to being targeted and killed, as witnessed in Srebrenica in 1995 (*Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* 2007, para. 297).

Sexual and gender-based violence has always been prevalent in warfare, committed for multiple reasons and often on a large scale but the complex types of sexual violence are different in different types of war. In ‘old wars’, where women were supposed to be ‘protected’, sexual violence was assumed to be a side effect of war, even though pervasive and often systematic. One form of sexual violence that persists is that experienced by women active in armed forces. For instance, Israeli women participants in the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) experience discrimination, sexual and domestic violence, and harassment (CEDAW Committee 2017a, Concluding Observations) and the UK Ministry of Defence has noted that women disproportionately suffer from sexual harassment within UK armed forces (Ministry of Defence March 2022). Other types of gendered harms typical of ‘old wars’ include systematic prostitution linked to the armed forces, for example the Japanese ‘comfort women’ in World War II; systematic rape in occupied territories, as undertaken by the Soviet army at the end of World War II; or widespread domestic violence from returning soldiers.

Another side effect of war that has been given greater prominence in new wars is that of sexual violence against persons in detention (Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic 2018), primarily male civilians and prisoners of war, as is the case in Syria, the Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt) (OHCHR February 2024a; OHCHR October 2023–June 2024), Russian-occupied Ukraine (OHCHR 27 June 2023), and elsewhere. Sexual violence in detention is intended to humiliate, shame, and feminize men. Exercise of power and control are paramount, including through gendered forms of humiliation (forced nudity, forcing men to watch the rape of female relatives, invasive body searches). Sexual violence against women in detention may be used as an abuse of the justice system to enforce social gender norms for instance by labelling them as prostitutes and accusing them of immoral behaviour (United Nations 13 September 2024). Additional gendered forms of humiliation include forcing women to cook and perform laundry services. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTI) persons are also targeted because of their sexual orientation or gender identity; the Independent Commission of Inquiry on Syria found evidence of attacks on the premises of LGBTI organizations, at checkpoints, during a house search, and at one victim’s workplace (Independent Commission of Inquiry on Syrian Arab Republic 2018).

The widespread commission of gendered atrocities targeted at civilians as weapons of war (or of extremist ideology) are especially emblematic of new wars, as is the pervasiveness of sexual violence as a deliberate tactic and even strategy, where the ‘practice’ of sexual violence is not merely condoned but is ordered and occurs within both state and non-state militaries (Wood 2018). There are two types of such deliberate gendered harms. One is systematic sexual violence as an instrument of forced displacement. Security Council resolution 1820 on women, peace, and security affirmed that ‘women and girls are particularly targeted by the use of sexual violence, including as a tactic of war to humiliate, dominate, instil fear in, disperse and/or forcibly relocate civilian members of a community or ethnic group’ (S/RES 1820 (2008) (19 June 2008)). The UN Commission

of Experts that investigated the war in Bosnia/Herzegovina reported that the Bosnian Serbs had a plan for systematic rape as a weapon of psychological warfare: ‘Analysis of Muslim behaviour showed their morale, desire for battle and will could be crushed most easily by raping women, especially minors and children’ (United Nations 27 May 1994). Rapes included the systematic rape of all women when Serb forces entered a village, the establishment of rape camps, and rape by individual soldiers taking over houses. Rapes were often performed publicly and in forced pornographic roles. Slavenka Drakulic writes:

What seems to be unprecedented about the rapes of Muslim women in Bosnia (and to a lesser extent the Croat women too) is that there is a clear *political* purpose behind the practice. The rapes in Bosnia are not only a standard tactic of war, they are an organised and systematic attempt to cleanse (to move/resettle) the Muslim population from certain territories Serbs want to conquer in order to establish Greater Serbia. (Quoted in Jones 1994, 117; italics original)

A second deliberate form of gendered harm occurs where gender is deeply imbricated in the ideology of war, where the aim is an alternative gender order involving extreme patriarchy. The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) has observed that gender-based violence by non-state actors in armed groups is pervasive and committed with high levels of impunity (CEDAW Committee 2017b, para. 6). From witness testimony in the case against Dominic Ongwen the International Criminal Court (ICC) trial chamber provided a graphic account of the forms of gender-based violence experienced by abducted civilian women and girls in the LRA. These included forced marriage where the leadership ‘designated abducted women and girls as so-called “wives” of male members of Sinia brigade. ... The abducted women and girls were not able to refuse’ (*Situation in Uganda* 2021, para. 2201; *Situation in Uganda* 2022, para. 1024). Women and girls were also subjected to sexual slavery, prevented from leaving, beaten, required to cook, work in the garden, do laundry, fetch and chop wood, fetch water, and nurse Ongwen when he was injured (*Situation in Uganda* 2021 paras. 3046–7).

Another example is the genocidal violence in Northern Iraq conducted by ISIS (Daesh). Daesh engaged in an extremist gender order through their massacring of Yazidi men, forced ‘recruitment’ of Yazidi boys to fight with them and kidnapping, raping, trafficking, and enslaving Yazidi women. In 2021, Iraq adopted the Law on Support to Female Yazidi Survivors (and women from Turkmen, Christian and Shabak communities), but implementation is slow.

This extremist form of patriarchy is not just a collective goal but also an individual motivation. Scholars have identified social tensions of ‘failed’ masculinities both before conflict begins, as a consequence of unemployment or lack of income and inability to marry, as well as in post-conflict contexts, such as when former traumatized fighters lose their previous social status, and this may also contribute to domestic or intimate partner violence perpetrated against women by family members – fathers, brothers, husbands, and extended family members.

Finally, the temporal persistence of new wars provokes negative coping strategies that further disrupt gender dynamics. The United Nations Population Fund has reported that

current trends in the coping strategies for bridging income, access to basic needs, services gap adopted by vulnerable IDPs and at risk groups include, child marriage, survival sex, sex for rent, forced/coerced prostitution, begging, child labour, sexual harassment and assault, eating less, borrowing, thus exposing them to exploitation. (UNFPA 2016)

The perpetrators are close family members, including fathers, brothers and husbands.

Gendered political economy

Classic old war economies were mobilizing, centralizing, and autarchic. Indeed, the classic war economy became the model for centralized and state-dominated economies in the two decades after World War II. It was not just that centrally planned and administered economies resembled capitalist economies in wartime; they also tended to prioritize military spending and only really worked efficiently in wartime since they were not subject either to a market logic or to public accountability through democratic means. It was only in actual battle that efficiency was tested. In many of the newly independent states of the so-called third world, this centralized, militarized model was replicated (Kaldor and Eide 1979).

Already by the 1970s, most such economies faced huge difficulties in achieving innovation and economic growth and were often the sites of growing corruption and criminal activity. In middle-income economies like the former Communist countries and Middle East countries like Syria and Iraq, this type of economy had been associated with a high level of employment, nevertheless gendered with the tendency for women to be employed in public services while men dominated agriculture and industry.

New wars typically occur in the context of a transition from this type of economy towards a market economy, under the impact of neo-liberal policies that include liberalization of trade and capital flows, privatization, and macro-economic stabilization. Liberalization of trade and prices including ending fuel subsidies, has contributed to the decline of traditional industrial and agricultural sectors. Unemployed men make up the ‘left behind’ of globalization, vulnerable to nationalist ideologies and recruitment in armed groups or criminal gangs as a way of overcoming ‘fragile’ masculinities. The Syrian war, for example, was preceded by a dramatic decline in agricultural output, as a consequence both of economic liberalization and climate change-induced drought, causing a decline in agricultural employment and a rise in migration from the countryside to towns. Joining a militia was often the only possible source of income.

Privatization of state enterprises and the reduction and contracting out of state functions has, almost everywhere, has given rise to a new class of entrepreneurs dependent on the state, variously described as state capture, oligarchy, or crony capitalists. Alex de Waal uses the term ‘political marketplace’, which he sees as systematic corruption, prone to violence and turbulence. Political entrepreneurs compete for access to the state’s resources and violence is part of the bargaining process. Oligarchs, crony capitalists, or political entrepreneurs are almost always men (de Waal 2015).

Macro-economic stabilization – essentially austerity – involves reductions in public spending. This tends to affect women disproportionately both because of women’s employment in the public sector and because of reduced spending on health, social care, and education, thereby imposing a greater burden on women’s unpaid labour.

New war economies can be depicted as an extreme and violent form of neo-liberalism. They involve dramatic falls in GDP, public spending, taxation, and employment because of both wartime physical destruction of societal infrastructures and the blocking of access to markets and inputs. New war economies are almost the reverse of old war economies. They are heavily dependent on external sources of finance since food and weapons are increasingly imported: delivery of the former may be used as a further weapon of war while delivery of the latter may involve third states in complicity in war crimes and crimes against humanity. New war economies are decentralized and fragmented and participation in the war effort is low so that unemployment is high. Armed groups tend to depend on sources of finance that are derived from coercion and widespread commodification – looting of food, medicines, weapons, uniforms (e.g. *Situation in Uganda* 2021, para. 873), hostage-taking, ‘taxation’ of humanitarian assistance, checkpoints, bribes, and a variety of smuggling and trafficking activities (oil, diamonds, timber, antiquities, arms, and human beings – women and children for sex, begging, body organs).

This political economy contributes to an extreme gender order, where the role of combatants and criminals (the two often merged) tends to be filled by men, while women are hardest hit by the lack of public services and the burdens of unpaid labour, including those caring activities traditionally deemed women’s work.

At the same time, civil society is often active in new war situations and, indeed, everyday survival often depends on the existence of civil society. There are many examples where women, through their own agency, have engaged in emancipatory revenue-raising activities as well as collective activities aimed at improving welfare in their own communities. For instance, in Northwest Syria, women have initiated a range of home food-processing activities, as well as diversification of crops because of the collapse of the industrialized agri-food business, and have also engaged in mutual learning experiences with displaced women from other parts of Syria (Gharibah 2024). In war-torn Yemen, too, women have started their own businesses, ‘opening storefronts that sell beauty products, artwork, and even chocolate’, as well as working in traditional male sectors – agriculture, computer programming, renovation (Al-Kbat 2024).

Gendered vulnerabilities are exacerbated by the wartime and post-conflict political economy – women-headed households, especially where extremist ideologies have reduced women’s rights to movement, education, and employment; vulnerability to the continued militarized environment, to circulation of weapons; livelihood vulnerability where there is no access to the formal economy; vulnerability to domestic violence, to exploitation, being trafficked; transactional/survival sex.

The war in Ukraine

In this section we elaborate our arguments above through discussion of the war in Ukraine, making use of the framework that we have proposed, dealing with each of the dimensions in turn.

The war in Ukraine began in 2014 when Russia annexed Crimea and separatist movements backed by Russia seized territory in the Donbas region. At that time, the war took on the typical form of a ‘new war’ and indeed followed the template of what the Russians call ‘non-linear war’ involving a combination of ‘political technology’ (disinformation and propaganda), local dissidents, and special forces, aimed at reducing a country to ‘chaos’

(Galeotti 2013). Unlike Putin's earlier wars, the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 recalled a classic conventional inter-state war, even though the failed attack on Kyiv included hideous atrocities against civilians, as in Bucha (UK statement 2023). It has continued in a traditional mode with male soldiers facing each other across the frontlines with intensive effort for small territorial gain. Nevertheless, the war departs from a classic 'old war' in several significant respects and illustrates the fragmented nature of gender orders. We argue that the Russian side displays many of the characteristics of new wars and the victim/perpetrator type of gender order with which it is associated while the Ukrainian side is more complex, publicly presenting the protector/protected type of gender order and yet blurring that binary.

Narratives

Often what is depicted as irrational behaviour – 'Putin has gone mad' – is explicable when a gender/nationalist lens is engaged. Putin's war against Ukraine spotlights Russian ethnicity and nationalism – 'imperialism that claims Ukraine as its "little" province' (Hendl et al. 2024, 175). Russia extols its determination to redress the collapse of its colonial hegemony, entailing a 'remasculinisation' (Kotliuk 2023), seeking to preserve 'traditional family values' that are threatened by gender equality, gender diversity, and homosexuality, thereby conserving conventional womanhood and manhood, and the 'natural' place for women. Commitment to women's empowerment and recognition of homosexuality disrupt the hierarchies of patriarchal power and confront homophobic misogynists like Putin. The war against Ukraine 'is not only implicitly gendered, but gender becomes a central point of explicit contestation' (Kratochvil and O'Sullivan 2023, 350) that extends more widely beyond Ukraine to Europe. Ukraine is posited by a masculine Russia as feminized, the former providing 'an alternative to the decaying morals of the west'. Putin's language reveals this gendered text as he describes the European Union as 'gayropa' and associates feminism with the 'subversive ideology of liberalism'.⁵ Ukraine itself is portrayed as a sex worker with loose morals and male Ukrainian politicians as homosexual. This recurring rhetoric is engaged to justify the use of force against Ukraine that has been made 'the key litmus test for the success of the Russian project of alternative modernity' (Kratochvil and O'Sullivan 2023). Russia is seeking to destabilize European solidarity by exploiting 'gender fault lines through hybrid warfare'.

President Putin himself represents a stereotypical example of hyper or toxic masculinity, the 'embodiment of the new Russian neo-colonial masculinity' that is 'necessarily bound up with the enabling of violence' (Kotliuk 2023). Brought up in sports clubs, especially martial arts (the source of many criminal gangs in post-Soviet Russia), and shaped by his career in the KGB (Short 2023), his rule has been associated with more or less continuous new wars – first in Chechnya (1999–2009), then Georgia (2008), then Syria (2015 onwards), on the African continent (various places and years), and now Ukraine (although Ukraine has turned out to be a different type of war, as elaborated below). After the shortcomings of the first Chechen war (1994–96), where the high casualty rate of untrained conscripts produced domestic opposition, especially among mothers and other women, Putin developed the techniques of airstrikes and artillery

used against civilian targets as well as the use of mercenary groups on the ground. Widespread looting and sexual violence (both in areas of fighting and in detention centres) are also characteristic of the Russian way of war.

In Ukraine, a traditional view of women was purveyed in the immediate aftermath of the break-up of the Soviet Union. This was associated with right-wing nationalism and centred around the notion of *bereskyna* – hearth mother. In part this was a reaction to the double (triple) gender exploitation of Soviet times, with many women wanting more time at home with their families. Nevertheless, women’s organizations formed (as they had in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries), including in the democracy movement, especially the Orange Revolution (November 2004–January 2005) and the Euro-Maidan protests (November 2013–February 2014), as feminism took further root. More egalitarian gender relations came to inform the civic (as opposed to ethnic) identity of Ukraine that emerged from these protests. A series of laws banning gender discrimination and promoting gender equality was passed in the last decade (CEDAW Committee 2022). In 2022, Ukraine ratified the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention that requires positive action by the state to combat violence against women and domestic violence.⁶

During the war, the Ukrainian government has engaged gendered tropes to support its defence of national sovereignty: ‘If there is a feminist way to wage war, Ukraine wants everyone to know that this is how it is fighting its battle against Russia’ (cited NCGM 2023, 12). Gender is used strategically by Ukraine intelligence, for instance through dating apps to locate Russian troops, gather intelligence, and to spread counter-narratives about the invasion (NCGM 2023, 13). President Volodymyr Zelensky has resorted to the gendered trope of motherhood by exhorting Russian mothers to ‘check where your son is. And if you have the slightest suspicion that your son could be sent to war against Ukraine, act immediately to prevent him being killed or captured’ (Zelensky 2022). He has appealed to Russian mothers, urging them to break the silence in Russia about the war crimes and atrocities committed by their sons: ‘I want every mother of every Russian soldier to see the bodies of the dead’ (Zelensky 2022).

Roles

On the Russian side, military forces are predominantly male and also involve several mercenary groups following a new war pattern; the role of the Wagner group is the best known, as well as that of criminals released from prison.

In Ukraine, the armed forces had been ‘hollowed out’ as a consequence of budgetary cuts and corruption in the period after independence. Following the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the takeover of Donetsk and Luhansk by Russian-backed separatists, it was largely volunteers who went to fight in eastern Ukraine, of whom around a quarter were women.⁷ During this period, military spending increased. Ukraine adopted its first National Action Plan (NAP) on Women Peace and Security (WPS) in 2014. The NAP focused on women in the military, where they ‘were mostly registered in low paid positions, and thus were not seen, nor properly compensated’ (Chinkin and Potapova 2023, 7). They have since accessed higher positions but remain underrepresented in the security and defence sectors,⁸ in particular at the decision-making level

in military and civilian positions in the armed forces, the Border Guard Service, the national police, the State Emergency Service, the national guard, and among Ukrainian military contingents participating in international peacekeeping and security operations (CEDAW Committee 2022). They ‘face barriers in their work – from scepticism about their abilities, obstacles to promotion, to difficulties with basic yet vital matters such as proper uniforms and body armour’ and risk sexual harassment and violence (Chinkin and Potapova 2023).

The full-scale war triggered a massive exodus of women and children. Men of fighting age and trans women were forbidden to leave. The earlier pattern has continued. Inside Ukraine, women participate in the armed forces and play a key support role, although men remain numerically dominant and occupy power positions. The picture is, however, complex; male fighters are exhorted to protect the country: ‘[p]rotecting the family and community is associated with being “a good man”, and men who do not want to fight are often mocked and shamed for it’ (NCGM 2023, 14). Women are under-represented in political and public life and those that participate face ‘misogynist public discourse by male politicians, political commentators and media professionals that perpetuate discriminatory gender stereotypes’ (CEDAW Committee 2022, para. 33(c)). The recruitment of women in the armed forces has increased and, although the share of female soldiers has declined, the absolute number of women in the armed forces has grown to around 100,000, of whom 5,500 are serving on the frontline. There is a growing number of all-female drone crews: as one person has put it, ‘genitals are irrelevant to flying drones’ (*Economist* 31 July 2025).

In common with many other new wars – and contrary to the demands of WPS – women have been largely excluded from peace negotiations (Council on Foreign Relations). But the role of civil society both abroad and at home in providing support for individual battalions – weapons, funding, humanitarian assistance, medical support, etc. (Czerska-Shaw and Jacoby 2023; Czerska-Shaw and Dunin-Wąsowicz 2024) – has been critical. Crowd-funding organizations are estimated to have raised some \$8 billion in military and humanitarian assistance in the first two years of the war (Fedirko 2025). Women have become increasingly responsible for what happens despite the worsening burden of unpaid labour and volunteer activities because of cuts to social spending and increased unemployment. They have petitioned for inclusion in peace talks and have conducted peace-building dialogues between ethnic Russian and Ukrainian communities. Jarymowycz argues that these activities have entailed gender relations becoming more fluid. The war, defined in terms of the protector/protected binary, has blurred this distinction (Jarymowycz 2020).

The experience of women in the diaspora has in many ways echoed that inside Ukraine. Women have had to become the heads of households and take more responsibility. A Ukrainian woman in Krakow told us: ‘we have to fight, the fight for Ukraine is here as well’. She saw her work in Poland on seeking and transporting hospital supplies, food, and humanitarian aid to Ukraine, facilitating transportation of refugees across Poland, and helping displaced women and children as essential war work: ‘Women are like soldiers fighting for Ukraine.’ The Ukrainian women we interviewed in Poland emphasized the importance of women being ‘strong’ and how this impacted boys and girls in the inverse of what is usually assumed:

Girls are more inward and internalize emotions while boys seem to be easier at processing it because they can do sports or other activities – they have a way to channel it. Girls – if their parents are working or they have a single mother – have to look after younger siblings and do cooking and cleaning so have no time to express emotions. So we try to support girls with for example art therapy or help them with cooking – we try to give girls this sort of support to manage emotions.

This assessment also illustrates continuing norms about unpaid labour.

Harms

Russia has engaged in tactics typical of a new war, as seen earlier in Chechnya and Syria, encompassing the deliberate bombing of civilians, civilian infrastructure, widespread looting, and sexual violence. Strikes targeted at civilian structures have gendered implications, including those associated with women's caring functions, for instance medical and educational establishments (OHCHR 8 July 2024b). Displacement of the civilian population creates vulnerability to further gendered harms through sexual exploitation, abduction, and trafficking (United Nations 2018). Women who left Ukraine have faced discrimination in Poland, where abortion is criminalized even in the case of pregnancy following wartime rape. Patterns of harms 'perpetrated against an individual or a group of people based on gender considerations' include rape and sexual violence committed by Russian military personnel during house patrols (United Nations Human Rights Council 29 August 2023). Women comprised the majority of victims, for instance older women and girls who had been unable to evacuate in time, who were often alone, lacked the financial resources to flee, or who had remained to care for older relatives. Sexual violence is often accompanied by other crimes, such as further torture, killing, and looting. In addition, thousands of civilians have been forcibly deported to Russia, including an estimated 20,000 children, many of whom have been allocated to Russian homes. And thousands of Ukrainian civilians, mainly from the occupied territories, have been imprisoned in Russia and subjected to torture and sexual violence.

In terms of harms, the main victims on the Russian side are male soldiers. The rate of death and injury is estimated at 1000–1200 per day; the total is estimated to have surpassed 1 million casualties. Ukrainian military casualties have been much lower, estimated in a leaked Ukrainian intelligence report from September 2024, as 70–80,000 soldiers; this reflects the defensive tactics of Ukraine and greater attentiveness to risk (*Economist* 2 June 2025). In addition, hundreds of Russians have been imprisoned for protesting the war.

Political economy

Russia is an oligarchic society, even though Putin politically controls the oligarchs, who are all men. It is heavily dependent on oil rents. However, Russia has reacted to sanctions by reverting to a more classic war economy, with increases in employment, which partly explains the relative lack of opposition to the war. Some 20 per cent of the population have experienced increases in real income (Vlasiuk et al. 2025). However, the bulk of the population is less well-off and the economy is vulnerable to fluctuations in the oil price and to sanctions.

Ukraine has been hugely impacted by neo-liberalism. While the IMF and the World Bank have exempted defence spending from conditionality on the grounds that it is ‘political’, there have been several emergency agreements involving draconian cuts to social spending and public employment that disproportionately affect women (especially in conjunction with the destruction of education and health establishments) (Matthews 2020). There is real concern that exhaustion from volunteering, unpaid labour, and lack of income could weaken the civic effort and lead to the rise of criminal and informal activities, as in a new war. Since the full-scale invasion, however, there has been a gradual shift in Ukrainian economic policy, interestingly promoted by the international financial institutions. This has involved the suspension of debt repayments, the introduction of progressive taxation, and efforts to reduce corruption and promote Ukrainian industry. Ukrainian industry has been innovative in new technologies such as drones and AI, often with the involvement of women. Indeed, one in two new businesses are said to have been started by women (Clawson 2024).

What emerges from a gendered understanding of the conflict is a complex set of differences about how society is organized. The Russian framing of the conflict represents an extremist version of patriarchy that is expressed in the narratives and tactics of the war, the harms inflicted, and the behaviour of the armed forces. In the Ukrainian case, there is a more differentiated set of gender relations, including both the classic binary protector/protected and a blurring of that binary that is linked to a greater sense of legitimacy of the war effort, a more salient role for civil society, and a significant openness to debate and change.

Conclusion

In contrast to the image of heroic (albeit mythical) masculinity associated with soldiers operating within the legitimate framework of international humanitarian law, ‘new wars’ have given rise to a fragmentation of our understandings of the relationships between men and women. These range from the toxic masculinity of violent entrepreneurs embedded in extremist versions of patriarchy, to the fragile or reluctant masculinities of potential military recruits, to more traditional conceptions of the protector manifested in theory by the peacekeeper and humanitarian worker,⁹ and indeed to more egalitarian conceptions of gender order to be identified within civil society.

Analysing conflict through a gender lens calls into question the binaries through which conflict is defined, for instance: friend and enemy, protector and protected, victim and perpetrator, conflict and post-conflict. It opens up the social relationships underpinning conflict, potentially offering an alternative route to dampening down violence and polarization. Gender equality cannot be achieved through equalizing the number of men and women in different roles. Increasing the number of women in the military, as called for by the UN Security Council WPS agenda, just turns more women into protectors or perpetrators (or both). Rather, roles must be transformed so as to overcome, blur, or navigate these binaries. In other words, the very nature of the military and its privileged position in society has to be transformed. The argument is even starker in relation to harms. The solution is not to reverse the role of perpetrator and victim but to recognize all gendered and racialized harms and insist on accountability for all such harms; hence the

importance of both individual liability under international criminal law and state responsibility under general international law and human rights law. And in terms of political economy, the issue is not paid versus unpaid labour, or the type of jobs undertaken by women and men, though these matter. Rather, greater gender equality cannot be disentangled from the wider issues of social justice and economic equity before, during, and post-conflict.

This suggests a different way of thinking about peace negotiations. The WPS agenda rightly emphasizes women's participation in decision-making about conflict management and resolution, but more important is the content of peace processes. Typically, top-down national-level peace talks focus on borders and ethnicity – the binaries that frame conflict. Yet if we think about conflict from a gender perspective, as required by Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and the subsequent further nine WPS resolutions, then it must be holistic, addressing the complex social relationships that shape and are shaped by conflict.

This is highly evident in Ukraine. Any negotiations need to encompass these differences. To some extent, this was achieved by the agreement about the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, the agreement to end the blockade (ended by Russia), and local agreements about exchange of prisoners, evacuations of civilians, or humanitarian access (Wittke 2023). Such agreements are about everyday life rather than constructed binaries. These kinds of issues, included in Zelensky's ten-point Peace Plan (Zelensky 2022), such as nuclear safety, food security, and human rights, need to be addressed in any national-level talks. Particularly important in this respect is the Ukrainian, Russian, and international civil society campaign, People First, that calls for prioritizing the human dimension of negotiations and freeing all captives of the war (Cooper and Kaldor 2025).

It can be argued that a major shortcoming of the Security Council's WPS agenda is the failure to analyse the complexities and fragmentation of different gender orders constructed in war. Law and policy with respect to the protection of women in armed conflict, in particular against sexual violence, were brought together in this agenda, which integrates IHL, international human rights law, and international criminal law (Chinkin 2022). It demands that parties to armed conflict comply with international norms, protect civilians, especially women and girls, from sexual violence, and seek an end to perpetrator impunity through criminal prosecutions. Although developed in the twenty-first century, this agenda appears to be based on a classic 'old war' model with additional applicability to the tactics of certain extremist groups.¹⁰ It fails to challenge the militarization that sustains the gender hierarchy by empowering men and diverting expenditure from public services. Nor does it provide any analysis of gender, gender relations, or gender-based violence. Its emphasis on conflict-affected sexual violence against women and girls obscures the commission of such violence against men and boys and those who reject the gender binary (Enloe 2023). The WPS agenda contains little awareness of the continuum of violence from everyday peacetime life that is grounded in gender inequalities and subordination, or of women's own histories of activism, organizing, and demanding rights. Commitment to supporting the role of civil society in conflict prevention and response efforts is expressed, but with little elaboration. The WPS agenda remains largely unfulfilled: prosecutions for such crimes remain rare, human rights law is largely discounted, and the necessary political will for implementation

is lacking in the Security Council and among member states. By reinforcing the imagery of women as passive victims of violence and reducing men to either perpetrators or protectors, the WPS resolutions obscure the complexity and fragmentation of gender relations in conflict. In other words, the agenda must be adapted and extended to the changing nature of conflict and, to ensure gender justice, it must reject the binaries of protector/protected or perpetrator/victim, and those that permeate international law.

Notes

1. The Lieber Code drafted as orders for the Union Army in the American Civil War (1861–65), Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field, Geneva 22 August 1864, and the Declaration Renouncing the Use, in Time of War, of Explosive Projectiles Under 400 Grammes Weight, St Petersburg, 1868 were the first significant steps in codification of the laws of war.
2. Women also join non-state forces and become fighters out of ‘a feeling of solidarity with the goals of the war or movement, and patriotism’ (Frerks 2019, 208).
3. Although this is clearly different in other situations, for example the active role of women drone operators on the frontline in Ukraine.
4. Female suicide bombers create complex gender constructions for the women involved, for those that send them, and wider society. There is now a wide literature (e.g. Bloom 2007).
5. Russian feminists resist the war and the inequalities it fosters; they work through networks within and outside Russia and face real danger as dissenters (Davies 2024).
6. Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, Istanbul, 11 May 2011.
7. One of us remembers visiting the informal blockade of Crimea in 2015 and the post she visited was commanded by a feisty female Crimean Tartar (Kaldor 2015).
8. Women participating as military personnel was 14.3 per cent in 2020 (9.7 per cent in 2017), women’s participation as civil personnel within the Ukrainian Armed Forces was 10.9 per cent (12.5 per cent in 2017). Two female generals serve in the National Police and the Security Service; Ninth periodic report submitted by Ukraine under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2021, CEDAW/C/UKR/9, 29 December 2021.
9. Nevertheless, incidents of sexual harassment and abuse by workers in international NGOs against the local population demonstrate the intersecting harms of racism, sexism, class, and homophobia.
10. UNSC Resolution 2242, 13 October 2015 recognizes that women and girls are ‘often directly targeted by terrorist groups’ and that ‘acts of sexual and gender-based violence are ... part of the strategic objectives and ideology of certain terrorist groups, used as a tactic of terrorism, and an instrument to increase their power’. Council on Foreign Relations, ‘Women’s participation in peace processes: Ukraine case study’ at <https://www.cfr.org/womens-participation-in-peace-processes/ukraine>.

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