

WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION

Topic A: The Militarisation of Pandemics: the implications and consequences.

Topic B: The role of international peacekeeping organisations in the aid of victims of sexual violence as a weapon of war.



Topic A: Chair Introduction

Esteemed Delegates,

I am thrilled to welcome you to, without doubt, one of the best and most important committees, the World Health Organisation. My name is Srisai Sureshkannan, and I will be one of your Chairs for this year's KCSOTO MUN for the topic of "The Militarisation of Pandemics."

I am excited to see the innovation and the different kinds of perspectives you will bring to this topic. As delegates, you will be expected to investigate both the benefits and drawbacks of militarisation of pandemics, explore case studies from past disease or virus outbreaks, and think about how governments and international organisations can respond effectively and ethically.

As a chair, my only advice is to know your topic and your country really well, and you must defend your country no matter what accusation and criticism it may face. This will make you a more suitable candidate for awards.

While you may use this study guide as the foundation of your speeches, we encourage you to do your own research too as there is way more to this topic than what is here on this study guide. Doing this will also make you a more suitable candidate for awards.

Thank You,

Srisai Sureshkannan

Introduction to the Committee

The World Health Organisation also known as the WHO is the United Nations department responsible for international public health. Its role is to coordinate responses to health emergencies, offering guidance, and supporting countries in strengthening their healthcare systems. The WHO does not command military forces, but it often works in environments where the military is involved, especially during pandemics or humanitarian crises. Understanding how WHO operates in this area is essential for this debate.

Pandemics are seen as public health risks, yet in recent decades they have increasingly been framed as a threat to national and international security. In some countries, military forces are deployed during health crises to enforce quarantines, manage vaccines, build infrastructure, or support healthcare systems. While this kind of involvement can provide rapid responses, it also raises important questions about the impact this has on humanitarian principles and the trust of the public.

Whether militarisation in pandemics is a good or a bad thing really depends on the context, in some cases it may speed up the response to the crisis, while in others it may damage public's trust.

This topic invites delegates to investigate more on how and why governments involve the military in managing disease outbreaks and to consider the long-term consequences of this approach.

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Topic A: Background and History

1918 Spanish Flu Spread rapidly through soldiers during WWI. Military keeping this a secret likely contributed to delayed healthcare response, and a higher mortality rate.

SARS Outbreak (2002–2003)

Several Asian governments used police and military units to enforce quarantines. The outbreak helped shape future pandemic management systems. While these measures helped contain the virus in some areas, it also created public fear and in some cases led to complaints of excessive restrictions on free movement.

Ebola (2014–2016)

In West Africa, troops from the UK, US and France built treatment facilities, transported medical supplies, and supported local responses. However, strict military-enforced quarantines blocked communities from accessing food or non-Ebola medical care, leading to public protests and

COVID-19 Pandemic (2020–2022)

The military of many countries were used to manage lock downs, border closures, vaccine delivery, and healthcare infrastructure. However this weakened public trust in some countries and resulted in the public not cooperating.

Current Situation

COVID reshaped the way countries coordinate and respond to global health crises. In some countries, military personnel took on key roles in managing healthcare facilities and crises. In others, their involvement sparked a debate about accountability and civil rights. Some view pandemics through the aspect of bio security, framing health crises as potential security threats. This perspective can influence decisions to involve more military forces in public health operations.

Topic A: Main Parties

United States

The U.S. military played a key role in logistics, vaccine distribution, and setting up temporary medical facilities during COVID-19. Its approach often links pandemics with national security. The US also gave military aid to countries in Europe such as Italy.

China

China enforced strict lockdowns using military and security forces, their troops also built hospitals, and transported medical personnel and supplies. This response has triggered discussions about civil rights and liberty. They sent military medical teams to Africa for assistance with testing.

India

India deployed its military extensively for medical supply management, oxygen delivery, and setting up quarantine centres, demonstrating the military's critical support role in managing large-scale health emergencies. They also used military personnel for delivery of aid to neighbouring countries such as Nepal. However, corruption had led to personnel accepting bribes, and people violating the restriction.

South Africa

The South African military took part in enforcing lockdowns and building testing facilities and vaccination efforts. This represents the usage of the military in a health crisis even in an environment with few resources. In poorer areas, military enforcement led to reports of abuse and reduced public trust in authorities. India deployed its military extensively for medical supply management, oxygen delivery, and setting up quarantine centres, demonstrating the military's critical support role in managing large-scale health emergencies. They also used military personnel for delivery of aid to neighbouring countries such as Nepal. However, corruption had led to personnel accepting bribes, and people violating the restriction

Brazil

The Brazilian military supported healthcare infrastructure and management during rising political tensions within the country, This gave challenges in balancing military involvement with public trust in health crises.

United Kingdom

During COVID, the UK military supported the civilian health system by setting up temporary "Nightingale" hospitals, assisting with testing and helping with vaccine management. The UK's approach aimed to use military resources to strengthen public aid delivery efforts while keeping civilian control. However more reliance on the military led to less resources for the NHS, the national health service.

Topic A: Previous Solutions

The Legal Frameworks

During the Ebola outbreak, the governments of West African countries introduced legal frameworks to regulate military enforcement of quarantines and curfews, aiming to prevent abuses and protect citizens' rights during emergency measures. The EU also developed civil-military cooperation frameworks emphasising proportional force and human rights, which continue to guide EU companies during pandemics like COVID-19. The Strong Involvement of Civilian Agencies The U.S. carried out a civil-military operation during COVID-19 by clearly defining the military's support role such as logistics and medical assistance while civilian agencies led public health decisions, helping maintain accountability and public trust.

World Health Organization

Since the early 2000s and especially after the Ebola outbreak, WHO has published guidance emphasising that military involvement in health crises must prioritise human rights and support civilian health systems. WHO also monitors military actions aligned with ethical standards during health crises.

Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders)

MSF has always advocated for humanitarian rights. During the pandemics such as COVID and Ebola, MSF had advised governments on minimising human rights violations by their military during health crises. Multiple other NGOs have raised awareness emphasising the military's boundaries. However not all governments listen to this or do anything about it.

Topic A: Other Useful Info

- Benefits and disadvantages of Militarization of pandemics
- <https://www.rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/nts/global-health-security-military-response-to-covid-19-advantages-and-constraints>
- <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/a-double-edged-sword/>
- <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/272226/1/1847668240.pdf>
- Quarantine
- Isolation of people to prevent the spread of disease.
- Lockdown
- Government-imposed restrictions on movement to control disease.
- Biosecurity
- Measures to protect populations from infectious diseases.
- Public Health Emergency
- A situation that threatens the health of a population requiring urgent response.
- Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC)
- Coordination between military and civilian agencies during crises.
- Humanitarian Principles
- Guidelines that prioritize human life, dignity, and neutrality in crises.
- Vaccine Distribution
- Planning and delivery of vaccines to populations.
- Health Infrastructure
- Hospitals, clinics, labs, and systems supporting healthcare delivery.
- Surveillance
- Monitoring populations for disease spread or health threats.
- Containment Efforts to stop a disease from spreading.
- Ethical Standards
- Rules guiding moral conduct during health emergencies.
- Medical Logistics
- Management of medical supplies, personnel, and equipment.
- International Health Regulations (IHR)
- Rules that govern how countries respond to global health threats.

Topic A: Bibliography

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- <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-sends-military-doctors-shanghai-test-26-mln-residents-covid-2022-04-04/>
- <https://www.reuters.com/article/world/special-report-bolsonaro-brought-in-his-generals-to-fight-coronavirus-brazil-idUSKBN2321DT/>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/jan/27/empty-nightingale-hospitals-government-healthcare-staff>
- <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/09/15/west-africa-respect-rights->

Topic B: Chair Introduction

Greetings esteemed delegates. Welcome to the Kings college III MUN edition and to the WHO intermediate committee. My name is Lucas Manso, I am a year 13 studying IB and I will be chairing Topic B: 'The role of international peacekeeping organisations in the aid of victims of sexual violence as a weapon of war'. It's my first time chairing but I have had a plethora of MUN experiences in the past as a delegate.

This committee will challenge your view on international problems, giving you the opportunity to truly understand the implications of conflict in recent and present years. This study guide serves as an overview of the topic. Hence, I strongly encourage you to carry out more independent research to consolidate your arguments and delve into your country's stand on the respective topics.

To fully enjoy this experience, please keep an open and respectful mind at all times, not only to facilitate the flow of debate but also because these topics can and will include sensitive subjects. When further exploring and researching I also warn you to tread with caution, especially if you are more sensitive to topics like sexual violence. Any questions please feel free to reach out to lucas.man.gar@kcpupils.org.

**IF YOU ARE NOT COMFORTABLE WITH THESE SENSITIVE TOPICS,
PLEASE REACH OUT TO PREVENT ANY PROBLEMS.**

Topic B: Introduction

Has there ever been a time in history where sexual violence did not accompany conflicts? No. From Viking raids to the Mongol conquests, from the muslim occupation of Spain to the world wars, sexual violence has always been a part of conflict. And for much of history, rape was not formally recognized as a tactic of war but was instead seen as an inevitable byproduct of conquest, alongside looting and pillaging. Civilian populations within conflicts have lived in fear not only of death but also of violation. However, over time, the scale and impact of such violence has been impossible to ignore. In some cases, such as the Mongolia conquest of Asia and the Middle East, the mass rapings managed to change entire demographics; Japan carried out mass rapings in China during WW2 that caused generational traumas. Even in recent years, such as in the Rwandan genocide or the wars in the Balkans, sexual violence has been used as a strategy of terror, ethnic cleansing and genocide. It was due to such escalation of sexual violence in conflict that the United Nations began to formally recognize sexual violence as a weapon of war to ensure accountability and humanitarian response. This recognition has been crucial towards shifting global response to sexual violence in conflicts, especially regarding protecting survivors and addressing the long-lasting effects of such violence.

However, we have still had a fair share of conflicts in recent years that have deliberately used sexual violence as a weapon of war. The following cases highlight how sexual violence has been used in war: (when researching these conflicts independently please beware you might find gruesome statistics and repercussions of such conflicts including discussions of damage to genital areas and other disturbing topics, information below has been moderated for user discretion.).

Topic B: Past Conflicts

Rwandan Civil War (1994)

The Rwandan civil war was a large-scale conflict fought between the Rwandan Armed Forces (RAF), representing the government, and the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). The war was caused by the deep-rooted dispute between the Hutu and Tutsi groups within the Rwandan population. After the Rwandan revolution in 1959, the Tutsi monarchy was replaced by a Hutu-led republic. This caused great emigration to Uganda by the Tutsis, who then founded the RPF and came back and invaded Rwanda.

During the 1994, at the end of the conflict when peace seemed close at hand, the assassination of President Juvénal Habyarimana instigated the Rwandan genocide in which sexual violence was used systematically as a weapon of war, primarily targeting Tutsi women. According to the Human Rights Watch report *Shattered Lives* (1996), perpetrators included Hutu militias, members of the Rwandan Armed Forces, and some civilians, committing individual and gang rapes, sexual slavery, and sexual mutilation, often accompanied by torture or the killing of family members. These acts were deliberately planned as part of the broader genocidal campaign to terrorize, humiliate, and destroy the Tutsi population, with victims attacked even in “safe” locations such as homes, churches, hospitals, and orphanages. While Rwandan law criminalized rape, prosecutions were extremely limited, and international recognition through the ICTR later established that rape constituted a component of genocide. Survivors faced severe physical and psychological trauma, and the systematic nature of these crimes highlighted sexual violence as both a tool of oppression and a deliberate method of ethnic extermination.

Yugoslav wars (1991-2001)

The Yugoslav Wars were a series of separate but related ethnic conflicts, wars of independence and insurgencies from 1991 to 2001 in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It resulted in the break-up of Yugoslavia into its respective ‘republics’: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and Macedonia. Within this conflict sexual violence was most prominent in the Bosnian war.

During the Bosnian War (1992–1995), sexual violence was systematically used as a weapon of war, particularly in the town of Foča, where Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim) women and girls were detained in “rape camps” by Bosnian Serb military, police, and paramilitary forces. Victims were subjected to repeated rape, sexual slavery, and abuse in schools, sports halls, and private homes, often accompanied by severe physical and psychological trauma, including unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections. These crimes were part of a deliberate strategy of ethnic cleansing, aimed at terrorizing, displacing, and ultimately altering the demographic composition of the region. Survivors also faced social stigma and marginalization, compounding the long-term effects of the violence. At the time, there was a lack of accountability. However, it was one of the turning points that later helped establish international law regarding sexual violence in conflict. (“Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Closed, Dark Place”, 1998)

Topic B: Past Conflicts

Second Liberian Civil War (1999-2003)

The Second Liberian Civil War was a civil war in the West African nation of Liberia that lasted from 1999 to 2003. The war was mainly caused by transition failures after the First Civil War, especially the peace-building process which would result from re-integration, disarmament, rehabilitation and demobilization.

During the Second Liberian Civil War, sexual violence was widespread and systematic, affecting women and girls across the country. According to Amnesty International (2004), armed combatants from all factions committed rape and sexual assault in homes, villages, streets, and refugee camps, with some reports indicating that up to 75% of women in camps had experienced sexual violence prior to displacement. These crimes were rarely prosecuted, leaving survivors without justice, while the National Transitional Government of Liberia failed to implement policies to prevent or address such abuses. Survivors endured profound physical and psychological trauma, as well as social isolation and community rejection.

Second Congo War (1998-2003)

The Second Congo War was a major conflict that began on 2 August 1998, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, just over a year after the First Congo War. The war initially erupted when Congolese president Laurent-Désiré Kabila turned against his former allies from Rwanda and Uganda, who had helped him seize power. The conflict expanded as Kabila rallied a coalition of other countries to his defense. The war drew in nine African nations and approximately 25 armed groups, making it one of the largest wars in African history.

During the Second Congo War, sexual violence emerged as a pervasive and systematic weapon of war, particularly in eastern provinces such as North and South Kivu. There was widespread rape, gang rape, and sexual assault committed by armed groups, including the Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie (RCD) and allied Rwandan forces. These attacks often occurred during military operations and in areas under armed group control, targeting women and girls to terrorize and destabilize communities. Perpetrators operated with near-total impunity, and victims faced significant obstacles to accessing justice, medical care, or psychological support. There was an urgent need for accountability mechanisms and assistance for survivors, underscoring how sexual violence functioned as both a tool of war and a means of social control during the conflict. ("The War Within the War: Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls in Eastern Congo", 2002)

Topic B: Past Solutions and Action

Recognizing sexual violence as an international crime

It was not until 1992, in the face of widespread rapes of women in the former Yugoslavia, that the issue came to the attention of the UN Security Council. They condemned the “massive, organized and systematic detention and rape of women, particularly Muslim women, in Bosnia and Herzegovina” as an international crime. The 1993 ICTY (International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia) Statute recognized rape as a crime against humanity, and in 2001 it convicted the first person of this crime. The Court also broadened the definition of slavery to include sexual slavery. Similarly, the 1994 ICTR (International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda) recognized rape as a war crime and a crime against humanity, and in 1998 it became the first international tribunal to convict someone for rape as an act of genocide. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (2002) codified rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, and other forms of sexual violence as crimes against humanity when committed systematically. However, despite these legal advances, survivors often face social stigma, highlighting the need for cultural change alongside legal accountability.

The UN Security Council

The United Nations Security Council has done much in recent years to help raise awareness and trigger action against sexual violence in conflict:

- Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) called on Member States to increase the participation of women in the “prevention and resolution of conflicts” and in the “maintenance and promotion of peace and security.” It called upon parties involved in armed conflict to abide by international laws that protect the rights of civilian women and girls and to incorporate policies and procedures that protect women from gender-based crimes such as rape and sexual assault.
- Security Council resolution 1820 (2008) called for an end to the use of acts of sexual violence against women and girls as a tactic of war and an end to impunity of the perpetrators. It requested the Secretary-General and the United Nations to provide protection to women and girls in UN-led security endeavours, including refugee camps, and to invite the participation of women in all aspects of the peace process.
- Security Council resolution 1888 (2009) detailed measures to further protect women and children from sexual violence in conflict situations, such as asking the Secretary-General to appoint a special representative to lead and coordinate the UN’s work on the issue, to send a team of experts to situations of particular concern, and to mandate peacekeepers to protect women and children.
- Security Council resolution 1889 (2009) reaffirmed resolution 1325, condemned continuing sexual violence against women in conflict situations, and urged UN Member States and civil society to consider the need for protection and empowerment of women and girls, including those associated with armed groups, in post-conflict programming.

Topic B: Past Solutions and Action

- Security Council resolution 1960 (2010) asked the Secretary-General to list those parties credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for patterns of sexual violence in situations on the Council's agenda. It also called for the establishment of monitoring, analysis, and reporting arrangements specific to conflict-related sexual violence.
- Security Council resolution 2106 (2013) aimed to strengthen the monitoring and prevention of sexual violence in conflict.
- Security Council resolution 2122 (2013) reiterated the importance of women's involvement in conflict prevention, resolution and peace-building,
- Security Council resolution 2242 (2015), aimed to strengthen accountability mechanisms

UN Action – coordinating UN efforts to end conflict-related sexual violence

In 2007, the work of various UN agencies to combat sexual violence was put under one umbrella: UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict, uniting the work of 13 UN entities. It is a concerted effort by the UN system to improve coordination and accountability, amplify programming and advocacy, and support national efforts to prevent sexual violence and respond effectively to the needs of survivors. UN Action has, for example, supported the design and implementation of the first-ever Comprehensive Strategy on Combating Sexual Violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as the Joint Government-UN Programme on Sexual Violence in Liberia. Funded by the Australian Government's Aid Agency (AusAID), UN Action has also, together with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, documented best peacekeeping practices in addressing conflict-related sexual violence. From initiating firewood patrols in Darfur to establishing market escorts, night patrols and early-warning systems in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Analytical Inventory of Peacekeeping Practice catalogues direct and indirect efforts to combat sexual violence during and in the wake of war.

The Secretary-General's Special Representative

In 2010, following Security Council resolution 1888, the Secretary-General appointed Margot Wallström as Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. The current Special Representative is Ms. Pramila Patten of Mauritius. The job of the Special Representative is to provide coherent and strategic leadership, and to promote cooperation and coordination through UN Action. Upon taking up her post, Ms. Pramila Patten of Mauritius, outlined three objectives she intends to pursue:

- Converting cultures of impunity into cultures of justice and accountability through consistent and effective prosecution.
- Fostering national ownership and leadership for a sustainable, survivor-centered response.
- Addressing the root causes of CRSV with structural gender inequality and discrimination, poverty and marginalization as its invisible driver in times of war and peace.

Topic B: Current Conflicts and Action

Democratic Republic of Congo

In early 2025, the fighting between the Congolese security forces and militant groups led by M23 escalated rapidly reaching its peak on M23's capture of Goma, the regional hub of eastern Congo on the Rwandan border. Rwanda supported this offensive with three to four thousand troops, causing thousands of locals to flee the region. M23 is the latest Rwandan backed militant group that has been vying for precious mineral resources in eastern Congo since the 1990s. The escalation in Goma also elevated nationwide political violence, including the capital: Kinshasa. With one million Congolese seeking refuge abroad and twenty-one million people in the country in need of urgent medical, food, and other aid, the DRC represents one of the largest and deadliest humanitarian crises in the world. (Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 2025)

Sexual violence, unfortunately, has been rising with violence and still remains widespread and systematic. UN data shows cases increased by 250% between 2018 and 2023 with 89% of the victims being women and girls, but men and boys are also targets. Examples include: rape, gang rape, sexual slavery, forced marriage, and forced pregnancy. Opportunistic sexual violence is also reported in displacement camps and conflict zones, often linked to resource scarcity. The main perpetrators are armed groups such as the M23 and Mai-Mai militias and some elements of the Congolese army. Some perpetrators justify the rape as 'spoils of war'. Consequences from such rape include profound physical, psychological, and social consequences compounded by stigma. This is because in the DRC, women are often held responsible for sexual violence, viewed as a disgrace to their families, outcasts from society, and left with no support or resources.

The main peacekeeping force in Congo is MONUSCO (United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo). Its main objective is to protect civilians and consolidate peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It does this through monitoring to ensure accountability and legal measures, by supporting and assisting survivors and through physical protection and deployment of troops.

Topic B: Current Conflicts and Action

South Sudan

In South Sudan, the fragile peace following independence in 2011 collapsed into civil war by 2013, largely between forces loyal to President Salva Kiir and those aligned with his former deputy Riek Machar. Ethnic divisions between the Dinka and Nuer, along with political rivalries, have fueled ongoing violence despite multiple ceasefire agreements. Millions have been displaced within South Sudan and to neighboring states, while more than half of the population relies on humanitarian aid for survival. With persistent armed clashes, widespread food insecurity, and collapsed basic services, South Sudan remains one of the most unstable countries in Africa.

Sexual violence is rampant and often used systematically as a tactic of war. Armed raids, abductions, and attacks at checkpoints frequently result in rape, sexual slavery, and forced marriages. Women and girls are the primary victims, although boys have also been targeted. Reports highlight gang rapes carried out by both government and opposition forces, with perpetrators using sexual violence to terrorize civilians and punish perceived enemies. Survivors face severe trauma, stigma, and lack of access to healthcare or justice, further entrenching cycles of abuse and vulnerability.

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) provides protection of civilians through peacekeeping deployments and “protection of civilians” sites around major towns. It supports documentation of abuses, advocacy for accountability, and assistance to survivors through medical, psychosocial, and legal services. UNMISS also engages with local authorities and communities to raise awareness and promote prevention. However, persistent insecurity, weak governance, and limited resources undermine the mission’s ability to fully protect at-risk populations.

Topic B: Current Conflicts and Action

Central African Republic

Since 2013, the CAR has been engulfed in conflict between ex-Séléka rebels and anti-Balaka militias, fueled by political, ethnic, and religious divisions. Violence has destabilized the entire country, leading to repeated cycles of armed clashes, displacement, and humanitarian crises. Weak state institutions, poor infrastructure, and ongoing insecurity leave the population vulnerable, with millions dependent on humanitarian aid. Despite peace agreements, armed groups continue to control large parts of the country. Sexual violence is a consistent feature of the conflict. Armed groups and some elements of the national army have committed widespread rape, sexual slavery, and forced marriages, often as a method of punishing civilians, terrorizing communities, and consolidating power in contested areas. Women and girls are disproportionately targeted, though men and boys have also been victims. Survivors face devastating physical and psychological consequences, coupled with social exclusion, stigma, and impunity for perpetrators.

The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) has been deployed since 2014 to protect civilians and support the peace process. It works to prevent sexual violence, investigate allegations, and support survivors through partnerships with NGOs and local services. MINUSCA also engages in disarmament and reintegration efforts, aiming to reduce the influence of armed groups. However, insecurity, limited resources, and persistent violence hinder the mission's effectiveness in fully addressing conflict-related sexual violence.

Topic B: Current Conflicts and Action

Sudan

Sudan has faced decades of internal conflict, from the long civil wars between the north and south to the Darfur crisis in the early 2000s, and more recently the 2023 outbreak of fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). This latest conflict has devastated Khartoum and Darfur, leading to massive displacement and a worsening humanitarian crisis. Millions have fled across borders, and civilians face hunger, lack of medical supplies, and insecurity. The conflict is compounded by ethnic and political rivalries, competition over resources, and the collapse of governance structures.

Sexual violence is widespread in Sudan's conflicts, often used as a weapon of war and intimidation. Women and girls, particularly in Darfur, have been targeted for rape, sexual slavery, and abduction, sometimes in front of their families or communities. Survivors often face stigma, ostracism, and lack of access to justice or medical care. Reports from 2023–2024 highlight attacks committed both by state forces and RSF militias, where sexual violence was used to terrorize populations, punish perceived opposition, and reinforce control. Men and boys have also been subject to sexual violence in detention settings, though these cases remain underreported.

The United Nations and African Union operated a joint peacekeeping mission in Darfur (UNAMID) until its closure in 2020, and although its withdrawal left a security vacuum, UN agencies continue to provide humanitarian support and advocacy for survivors. The UN Human Rights Council and other bodies are now investigating recent atrocities, while NGOs and international actors deliver limited assistance to survivors. Yet ongoing hostilities and lack of access make sustained protection and accountability extremely difficult.

Topic B: Current Conflicts and Action

Syria

Syria's civil war, which began in 2011 following widespread protests against the Assad regime, has spiraled into a protracted conflict involving government forces, opposition groups, and foreign powers. More than a decade of violence has devastated the country's infrastructure, displaced over half its prewar population, and created one of the largest refugee crises in modern history. The conflict continues with shifting frontlines, persistent airstrikes, and deep humanitarian suffering across both government- and opposition-held areas. Sexual violence has been widely documented in Syria and is used both strategically and opportunistically by different actors. State forces and affiliated militias have used rape, sexual assault, and harassment during detention, house raids, and checkpoints, often to punish dissent and instill fear. Armed opposition groups and extremist organizations, such as ISIS, have committed sexual slavery, forced marriages, and trafficking of women and girls, often targeting minorities like Yazidis. Survivors face lifelong trauma, ostracization, and lack of access to justice, with many cases underreported due to stigma and fear of reprisals. There is no UN peacekeeping mission in Syria, but the United Nations provides humanitarian assistance, documentation of violations, and advocacy for accountability. Agencies such as UNFPA and UNICEF support survivors through medical and psychosocial services in displacement camps and neighboring countries. International organizations have also created safe spaces for women and girls and provide legal support for survivors. However, the lack of a political settlement, ongoing hostilities, and restricted access severely limit the reach of these interventions.

Other conflicts include:

- **Mali:** Sexual violence in Mali is perpetrated by state and non-state armed groups, often used to terrorize communities and maintain control over contested areas. These attacks contribute to displacement and exacerbate humanitarian challenges, particularly in the north and central regions.
- **Colombia:** Sexual violence in Colombia is primarily perpetrated by armed groups and criminal organizations, often linked to territorial control and recruitment. Despite peace agreements, these abuses persist, affecting women, girls, and boys in conflict-affected regions.
- **Nigeria:** In Nigeria, Boko Haram and other armed groups employ sexual violence as a tactic of terror and social control. These attacks have resulted in displacement, disruption of communities, and widespread humanitarian needs.

(CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE, 2024)

Topic B: Possible Solutions

- Tackling root causes
 - Address political, economic and social inequalities
 - Education and awareness
- Survivor-centered care
 - Expand medical, psychosocial, and trauma support for survivors
 - Address stigma and ensure economic reintegration
- Strengthening Legal and accountability mechanisms
 - Prosecute perpetrators
 - End impunity

Topic B: Bibliography

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