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Gender and War: Sexual Violence and the Shifting Landscape of International Law

This seminar examines the critical role of gender-based violence, particularly sexual violence, in the context of armed conflict. It explores the discourses surrounding this phenomenon and analyzes their implications for understanding war, criminal proceedings and peacebuilding efforts.

We will begin by exploring the long-standing and pervasive role of sexual violence in wars, highlighting its systematic use to achieve military and political objectives. This will be followed by a discussion of the historical and political contexts that led to the global recognition and condemnation of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). The seminar will also delve into the contributions of feminist scholars and activists in international law, international relations and security studies, examining a range of feminist perspectives on these areas. The seminar will then touch upon the specific vulnerabilities faced by marginalized groups in conflicts, including the intersections of sexual violence with issues of race, ethnicity and class. The key focus will be on the obligations of states and international bodies in preventing sexual violence and providing justice to survivors. To this end, the seminar will critically evaluate the international instruments, bodies and practices related to CRSV cases. We will examine how international law defines and prosecutes acts of sexual violence in war and the challenges in holding perpetrators accountable, including the effectiveness of legal frameworks such as the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

By the end of the seminar, students will have a thorough understanding of CRSV and the available instruments for combating such crimes, as well as insight into the impact of gender on the commission, prosecution and punishment of CRSV.

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Besucheradresse

Sekretariat:

Bergstr. 53

Zimmer 325



The seminar is open to all students interested in engaging deeply with these topics and actively participating in discussions. Prior knowledge of gender studies and international human rights law is recommended but not required.

The seminar will take place on 24-25 January 2025. A preliminary Zoom meeting will be held on 15 October 2024 from 11:10 to 12:40 am, after which students can choose their topics. The link to the meeting is here: <https://tu-dresden.zoom-x.de/j/65045065248?pwd=sdwk16BjuiPbiAVqtl263e6pjoYfmK.1>.

The seminar will be conducted in English.

Seminar Topics:

1. Sexual Violence and the Problem of Definition: A Critical Analysis of Rape Legislation and Policy
2. Gender Crimes as War Crimes: Integrating Conflict-Related Sexual Violence into International Criminal Law
3. Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: A Weapon, a Strategy or “Merely” a Practice?
4. The Women, Peace and Security Agenda: A Critical Examination of Its Impact and Limitations
5. Prosecuting Sexual Violence: Addressing Common Challenges and Misconceptions in Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Cases
6. Voices of Survivors: Analyzing Their Role in the Legal Process for Sexual Violence
7. Moving Beyond Binaries in Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Cases: Sexual Violence Against Men and Boys
8. Moving Beyond Binaries in Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Cases: Female Perpetrators of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence
9. Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and UN Peacekeepers: Accountability and Challenges
10. Combating Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in an International Setting: A Case Study of Former Yugoslavia
11. The ICTR’s Legacy on Sexual Violence
12. Gender Justice at the ICC
13. Prosecuting the Nexus Between Terrorism and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: Case Studies of Boko Haram and ISIS
14. Transitional Justice Mechanisms and Innovative Strategies for Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: Exploring Women’s Courts
15. Children Born of Wartime Rape: Legal Challenges and Human Rights Implications