

---

# Impact of Post-Election Violence of 2007/08 on Women in Kenya

**Joy Ndirangu, Simon Njoroge, Martin Njoroge and Ruthie Rono**

International Relations, United States International University, Nairobi, Kenya

## To cite this article:

Ndirangu et al. (2024). Impact of Post Election Violence of 2007/08 on Women in Kenya. *Journal of Diplomacy, Peace and Conflict Studies*, 1 (1), 21- 31

**Received:** 05 January, 2024; **Accepted:** 31 January, 2024; **Published:** 01 February, 2024

---

**Abstract:** The purpose of the study was to examine the impact of post-election violence (PEV) of 2007/08 on women in Kenya. The study was underpinned by the liberal feminist theory. The study adopted mixed reach methodologies including qualitative and quantitative approaches. The target population comprised women living in Kibra Sub County, women groups involved in peacebuilding, area ward administrators, local chiefs and individual women who were victims or had first-hand experience of PEV of 2007/08. The study adopted stratified random sampling to select individual women living in Kibra Sub County to participate in the study. The study also adopted purposive sampling to select women groups involved in peacebuilding, area ward administrators, and local administrative chiefs. Snowball sampling was adopted to identify women who were victims or had first-hand experience of PEV in 2007/08. The study used questionnaires, Key Informants Interview and Case narratives to collect needed information. In analyzing qualitative and quantitative data, content analysis and simple descriptive analysis were done respectively. The effects of PEV of 2007/08 on Women included lost sources of livelihood, killings, creation of more female household heads, lost properties, displacement and sexual assault.

**Keywords:** Post Election Violence 2007/08, Liberal feminist theory, Sexual Assault, peace dialogues.

---

## 1. Introduction

Conflict has plagued humanity for as long as the existence of man. Conflict is a contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals. Conflict denotes the incompatibility of subject positions (Diez, Stetter, & Albert, 2006, p. 574). The root cause of most conflicts often includes poverty, struggle for scarce resources and violations of human rights. Conflict throughout history has had a disproportionately high impact on women and other vulnerable groups as compared to the general population (Bangalie, 2011, pp. 15-16). Even though women experience the same trauma as the rest of the population during a conflict such as bombings, famine, epidemics, cleansing, threats and intimidation, they are also exposed to targeted forms of violence and abuse such as rape, forced pregnancies, sexual slavery, assault and exploitation (Birgen, 2015, p. 15). Women have participated in different roles in conflicts at various levels including household, community, national level and international level. Such roles include being victims of conflict, agents of destruction as well as agents of peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery (Kimokoti, Matanga, & Odada, 2014, p. 71). Violent conflict has plagued several African countries. In the past three decades, several parts of Uganda have experienced violent civil and armed conflicts. The most devastating conflict was in Northern Uganda which resulted in hundreds of thousand deaths, over 60,000 children abducted and close to two million people internally displaced. The armed conflict between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the government of Uganda turned northern Uganda into mayhem of human suffering. The LRA terrorized the local population with women and girls being sexually violated (Ekiyor & Wanyeki, 2008, pp. 15-17). During the Rwandan genocide, women and young girls were sexually violated and a large number of them were left widowed. Women had to contend with negative traditional customs in the aftermath of the genocide in addition to having little or no means to earn income (Omondi, 2015,p.41). South Sudan's struggle for self-determination and self-government which began in 1955 and ended in 2011 led to the death of over two million people (Martin & Pelekemoyo, 2012, pp. 22-27) As in many conflict zones, South Sudanese women were not spared from the adverse effects of war. Beyond the death and displacement suffered by the general population, women experienced several gender-based violence with sexual violation being predominant (Martin & Pelekemoyo, 2012,p.31). Kenya has also experienced its share of violence against the general population and women in particular. As presented in the report by

the Commission of Enquiry into the Post-Election Violence, the post-election of 2007/08 was the most violent conflict in Kenya's history. The violence resulted in 1,133 deaths and the displacement of over 300,000 people (Government of Kenya, 2008). The 2007/08 post-election violence saw violence meted out to men, women and children. Sexual violence against women increased with the intensity of the violence culminating in camps set up for internally displaced persons (IDPs). The women and girls who fled their homes and sought sanctuary in the IDP camps were exposed to and experienced gender-based violence ranging from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation to physical and domestic violence. Women and girls were coerced into giving sexual favours for basic resources such as food, sanitary supplies and transport (Meredith & Njoki, 2011, pp. 1-9). The study therefore sought to establish the examine the impact of post-election violence of 2007/08 on women in Kenya.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study was underpinned by liberal feminist theory. Feminism is a diverse, competing and often opposing collection of social theories, political movements and moral philosophies largely motivated by or concerning the experience of women especially in terms of their social, political and economic inequalities (Adawo et al., 2011,p.25). Feminist theories attempt to describe women's oppression, explain its causes and consequences, and prescribe strategies for women's liberation (Tong, 2009,p.33). Based on the root causes of women's oppression and subordination, different feminist groups have emerged in different times. Although their assumptions and interests vary, the main goal is to identify the causes of women's oppression and suggest solutions to achieve gender equality. Among the varieties of feminism, liberal feminism is the most dominant and the groundwork for other feminist groups. The other variants of feminist theories include socialist feminism, Marxist feminism and radical feminism. Giddens and Sutton, (2017,p.23) define liberal theory as a "feminist theory that believes gender inequality is created by lowering access for women and girls to civil rights and allocation of social resources such as education and employment. This situation is mainly centred on the socially constructed ideology of patriarchy that perpetuates inequality between men and women. Liberal feminism is derived from the liberal political philosophy of the Enlightenment period, and centres on the core ideas of autonomy, universal rights, equal citizenship, and democracy (Tong, 2009, p.56). The theory focuses on individual rights and on the concepts of equality, justice and equal opportunities, where legal and social policy changes are seen as tools for engineering women's equality with men (Maynard, 1995,p.11). In its central assumption, liberal feminism maintains that differences between women and men are not based on biology, which represents reproduction differences. Hence, women should have the same rights as men, including the same educational as well as employment opportunities. Unfortunately, liberal feminism cannot overcome the prevailing belief that women and men are intrinsically different; but to a degree, it succeeds in showing that, although women are different from men, they are not inferior (Nienaber & Moraka, 2016,p.13). According to liberal feminists, female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that block women's entrance to success in the public sphere such as peacebuilding. As stated in the work of Tong (2009,p.24), liberal feminism has two competing major ideologies. These are classical liberals and welfare liberals. The former liberals assert that the state's role should be protecting civil rights, providing everyone equal opportunity and freedom to enter into the free market; while the latter welfare liberals assert that the state should interfere to make adjustments to make the playing field equal for every gender through affirmative actions. The theory believes gender inequality in issues of involvement of women in peace processes is created by lowering access for women and girls to civil rights and allocation of social resources such as education and employment. The unequal involvement in peace processes is centred mainly on the socially constructed ideology of patriarchy that perpetuates inequality between two women and men.

### 2.2 Impact of Violent Conflict on Women

Violent conflict has had dire consequences on the general population and women in particular. Sexual violence is rampantly used as a weapon of choice by perpetrators of violence and combatants in conflicts across the globe where women and girls are shamefully singled out for rape, imprisonment, torture, and execution (Guggisberg, 2018, p. 12). Terming rape as the most intrusive of traumatic events, Seddighi, Salmani, Javadi and Seddighi (2019,p.26) have documented its use in many armed conflicts including those in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Cyprus, Haiti, Liberia, Somalia, Uganda, Rwanda, Syria, and Sudan. Mantula & Saloojee (2016, p. 865) further reports that families and communities suffer double tragedy when systematic sexual violence is used as a weapon of war in 'ethnic cleansing' where many of the women and girls who became pregnant are later ostracized. Sexual violence against women not only erodes the fabric of a community but is also an attack on her family and cultures, especially considering that in many societies' women are viewed as repositories of a community's cultural and spiritual values (Mantula & Saloojee, 2016, p. 870). In Nepal, Goswami (2015, p. 26) in a study on combatant women in Nepal established that many Maoist women, apart from being part of the violent struggle, that happened between 1996 to 2006, were themselves victims of sexual violence perpetrated both by members of the Royal Nepal army as well as by fellow Maoist cadres. Nepali society deeply stigmatizes victims of sexual violence, putting the onus of responsibility on the victim rather than

the perpetrator, for Maoist women to admit or report sexual violence meant being doubly stigmatized. In transitional justice processes, therefore, the Maoist women were as much in need of reparations as other civilian women. Addressing issues of sexual and gender-based violence, apart from tackling trauma needs, also entails a long-term commitment and interventions to bring about structural and systemic changes including unravelling the deep-rooted causes of such violence.

In Sudan, as observed by Wanjala (2019, pp. 25-30), patterns of rape in South Sudan in 2014 and 2015 show that various South Sudanese units have purposefully committed rape and other forms of sexual violence against large numbers of women in many attacks at various locations and times. Due to the sexual and gender-based violence that women face, South Sudanese women are fearful of male military peacekeepers and therefore including female peacekeepers in troops helps build trust and reduce the cases of sexual violence against women (Luedke & Logan, 2018, p. 110). These perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence were male service members from troop-contributing countries as well as those from the militia affiliated with the opposition (Haastrup, 2018, p. 223). The displacement of women was another impact of the conflict in South Sudan. As of May 2014, an estimated nine hundred and twenty-three women had been internally displaced in South Sudan, and thousands had fled the country and have become refugees in neighbouring countries e.g. Kenya and Uganda (Adeogun & Muthuki, 2018, p. 85). In Somalia, the collapse of the Somali state in the early 1990s led to a deadly and prolonged conflict that severely affected the security of all Somalis, but women and children especially have borne a heavier brunt of them to date. In many UN conferences, women from conflict zones, particularly those affected by the militarized violence in Somalia, have testified and shared their own experiences of how the conflict disproportionately affected them as women. Women in war-torn Somalia find their rights and responsibilities restricted by the militarized violence and that there are social, economic and political barriers that favour men (Abdi, 2011, p. 190). The suffering Somali civilians experienced did not end with the 1991 conflict but continued in later conflicts as late as 2010. The suffering by women extends to insecure camps in neighbouring countries. For Somali women fleeing to Kenya, sexual violence in camps committed by male militias, soldiers and camp police, international staff, and refugees all testify to the fragile ecological context where camps are set up. The dependence on humanitarian aid with limited employment opportunities and constrained freedom of movement all contribute to women's vulnerability to sexual abuse (Abdi, 2011, p. 193). In Kenya, the post-election violence of 2007/08 is considered the worst conflict in Kenya's history. The violence amounted to 1,133 deaths and the displacement of over 300,000 people (Government of Kenya, 2008, pp. 23-29). The 2007/08 post-election violence saw violence meted out to men, women and children. Sexual violence against women increased with the intensity of the violence culminating in camps set up for internally displaced persons (IDPs). The women and girls who fled their homes and sought sanctuary in the IDP camps were exposed to and experienced gender-based violence ranging from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation to physical and domestic violence. Women and girls were coerced into giving sexual favours for basic resources such as food, sanitary supplies and transport (Myrum & Marsh, 2008, pp. 25-56). Birgen, (2015,p.1-89) examined the impact of post-election violence on women in Uasin Gishu. The study revealed that women were greatly affected by the violence as most of them became victims of Sexual and Gender Violence and displacement, others were killed and their property destroyed and burnt to ashes. The violence left most women vulnerable, as most of them became breadwinners for the family despite the lack of adequate resources to help them support their families.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design, Population and Sampling**

This study adopted a mixed methodology comprising qualitative and quantitative approaches. This study employed mixed paradigms research that according to Ivankova et al. (2006, p.46) makes use of both qualitative and quantitative research paradigms in a single study. The adoption of a mixed research design helped the researcher to gain a better understanding of the current study on impact of post-election violence of 2007/08 on Women in Kenya. This study population focused on the role of women at the grassroots level in the Kibra area of Nairobi. Kibra constituency is considered one of the hot spots of 2007/8 post-election violence (PEV) in Kenya. The target population comprised all individual women who are living in Kibra, leaders of local women groups who are actively engaged in peace activities, Sub County ward administrators, local area chiefs and individual women who were victims or had first-hand experience with PEV of 2007/08 or had been involved in post-conflict peacebuilding. Kibra area of Nairobi has five wards including Laini Saba, Lindi, Makina, Woodley/Kenyatta Golf Course and Sarang'ombe with a combined population of 185,777 (KNBS, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). In collecting data from the individual women residing in Kibra Sub County, the study used stratified random sampling where the population of women in Kibra Sub County was divided into five administrative wards including Lindi, Makina, Laini Saba, Woodley and Sarang'ombe. The study then applied a simple random sampling technique to pick the women to participate in the study from each of the five administrative wards in Kibera Sub-County. Regarding the key informants, the study adopted purposive sampling. Purposive sampling was used to select leaders of local women groups who are actively engaged in peace activities, Sub County ward administrators and local area chiefs in Kibra Sub County. Concerning individual women who were victims or had first-hand experience with PEV of 2007/08, snowball sampling was adopted. The snowballing involved identifying the first case of women who were victims or had first-hand experience with PEV of 2007/08. The first cases

identified then lead the researcher to other cases until 10 cases are identified. The ten cases provided narrative information on their experiences during the post-election violence of 2007/08 and peace-building initiatives thereafter. Since the population of women from the Kibra sub-county is large, the study adopted the formulae by Kothari (2012, p.77) to arrive at the sample size for the women residing in Kibra sub-county to be involved in the study as respondents. The formulae generated a population of 118. Regarding Key informants, the study purposefully selected the group of interest for the study. The key informants constituted leaders of ten (10) local women groups who were and are still actively engaged in peace activities within Kibra, five (5) sub-county ward administrators, five (5) area chiefs and ten (10) women who either were victims or had first-hand experience of PEV of 2007/08. This is to say one hundred and forty-eight (148) is the total number of people who participated in this study.

### **3.2 Data Collection**

This study used semi-structured questionnaires to collect data from individual women residing in Kibra Sub County. The semi-structured questionnaires were administered to individual women who were randomly selected from the total population of women in Kibra sub- County. The questionnaires had both structured and unstructured questions. The respondents were required to fill out the questionnaires after which they were collected back immediately for further analysis. The study also used Key informant interviews to collect data from representatives picked from women's organizations and NGOs. The study specifically administered KII to leaders of women groups who are actively engaged in peace activities, sub-county ward administrators and area chiefs in Kibra Sub County. The KII was semi-structured and was carried out orally where the researcher took notes as the interview progressed. The interview schedule was prepared in advance before conducting the KII. Case Narratives (CNs) were conducted with ten women who had experienced the PEV of 2007/08 as well as participated in the PEV peace-building initiatives organised in the aftermath of the PEV. The case narratives focused on the experiences of the women during and after the PEV, the nature and scope of their participation in peace-building efforts, both formal and informal, as well as their experiences in these processes. The narratives also focused on any emerging issues affecting women in the peace and security sector including opportunities for their increased and strategic participation. Secondary data was also used in this study. The secondary data were retrieved from government reports and websites, government policy papers, previous research done by civil society organizations, Kenya National Action Plan among other sources. The secondary data was used to fill information gaps in the primary data sources.

### **3.3 Data Analysis Methods**

In analyzing qualitative data, content analysis was adopted in the examination of the impact of violent conflicts on women. Content analysis was situated within the specific contexts of the research questions. The content analysis was undertaken in three data analysis steps. Step one involved documentation of all the issues as were recorded during the various key informant's interview sessions. Step two involved clustering of all the issues under specific thematic areas. Step three involved the development of meanings and conclusions from the thematic areas about the key study objectives. Issues emerging from the key informant interviews were clustered into thematic areas upon which interpretation and conclusions were drawn. The interpretation used qualitative data to support the quantitative findings (Hsieh and Shannon (2005, p.1277)). The quantitative information collected in the structured sections of the questionnaire was analyzed using simple descriptive analysis and the data was presented in the form of tables and associated explanations. Before engaging in the process of data collection, formal approval from the USIU ethics committee was obtained to proceed with the collection of data. The approval from the USIU ethics committee was used to obtain a research permit from the National Commissions of Science, technology and Innovations (NACOSTI). The study sought the voluntary and full consent of respondents and any respondent was at liberty to exit from the study at any stage if they felt threatened or uncomfortable with the questions. While, on the issues of anonymity and confidentiality, participants were assured that their names were not needed, as codes were used to represent the respondents.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### **4.1 Introduction and Demographics**

Regarding the questionnaire, the researcher issued 118 questionnaires to the respondents of which 97 questionnaires were returned as being adequately filled and usable for data analysis. Fourteen (14) questionnaires were never returned with seven (7) questionnaires being rejected since they were not adequately filled. The response rate for the questionnaire was thus 82.2% which was more than adequate compared to the threshold of 70% suggested by Mugenda and Mugenda (2009). Concerning the key informants, 18 participated out of the targeted 20 respondents giving a response rate of 90%. Finally, regarding the case narratives, all targeted respondents were reached giving a response rate of 100%. The researcher also collected demographic information about the individual women living in Kibera who participated in filling out the questionnaires in the study. Regarding the length of stay in Kibra, the majority of the respondents had stayed in Kibra for 5 years and above with 41(42.2%) having stayed in Kibra for over ten years and 27(27.8%) having stayed in Kibra for between 5-10 years. This was

followed by 15(15.5%) who had stayed in Kibra for between 3-5 years. Ten (10.3%) had stayed in Kibra for less than one year and the remaining 4 (4.1%) had stayed in the same area for between 1-3 years. It is evident that the majority of the respondents had stayed for a longer time hence they are aware of the challenges in Kibra including the impacts of 2007/08 PEV as well as peace-building efforts that followed. Regarding educational level, the majority of the respondents held secondary education qualification at 39 (40.2%), this was closely followed by 23(23.7%) with primary level education qualification. Those with postsecondary qualifications were 35(36%) of which 15(15.4%) held artisan qualifications, 11(11.3%) held a diploma and certificate qualifications, 7(7.2%) held bachelors level of education and finally 2 (2.1%) were holding post-graduate qualification. Given that the majority of the respondents were either holding secondary or primary level qualifications, they were the most exposed to Post-election violence given that they were more likely living in poverty and not able to live in secured residential areas of Kibra.

#### 4.2 Impact of PEV of 2007/08 on Women in Kenya

The study sought to establish the effect of PEV of 2007/08 on women in Kenya especially those residing in the Kibra area of Nairobi. The analysis was based on data collected using questionnaires, case narratives and Key Informant Interview (KII). The results are presented in Table 1 and the discussion ensuing after.

Table 1: Effect of PEV of 2007/08 on Women in Kenya

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Women lost their sources of livelihood during the PEV of 2007/08	4.3814	.58529
Some women were killed during the PEV of 2007/08	4.3608	.63222
Post-election violence of 2007/08 created more female heads of households	4.2784	.60797
Women lost their properties to theft and destruction during the PEV of 2007/08	4.2680	.66951
Women were displaced and rendered homeless during the PEV of 2007/08	4.2268	.68473
Women experienced Gender-Based Sexual Violence during the PEV of 2007/08	4.1856	.52698
The PEV of 2007/08 negatively impacted on women	4.0515	.52779

##### 4.2.1 Lost Source of Livelihoods

From the questionnaire's response as shown in Table 1, the statement that women lost their sources of livelihood during the PEV of 2007/08 was highly supported as depicted by a mean response of 4.38 which tends to strong agreement and a standard deviation of 0.58. The result implies that most women lost their source of livelihood. The KII interview also expounded on the impact of PEV of 2007/08 on the livelihood of women. The respondents who participated in the KII and were present at the time of the violence revealed that most women who were into a small business (i.e. salon, shopkeeping, cereals etc) had their establishments burned down. Others who were into non-formal employment (i.e. housekeeping, security etc.) were also released by their employers. One of the area chiefs stated:

"At the time of the post-election violence of 2007/08, I was an assistant chief in this area of Kibera. What I can say, there were untold levels of suffering especially the women. Most women in my locality lost their businesses and those in employment lost their jobs. The area chief and I at that time were forced to look for assistance from well-wishers so that we supply food for desperate women with their children who camped around our office."

The responses from the case analysis also show the level of suffering women faced especially regarding loss of livelihood. The women narrated how they lost their livelihood during the time and the challenges of adjustments they faced. One of the women a resident of Sarang'ombe who participated in the case narrative and was a victim of the violence stated:

"I remember that day very clearly, I was in my cereal shop, I had just opened for business at around midday. We had been warned that we could be attacked any time but then what could I do as a single mother with bills to pay? I opened my business as usual, it was around 9:30 am when I shouted, on checking four men accosted me at the door of my business carrying something like a jerrican, sharp pangas and a matchbox. They threw me out and set my shop on fire! I shouted but no one came to my aid...like that, I lost my lifetime business to the violence. I had to depend on well-wishers for provision for a long time..."

From the information collected and analyzed, it was clear that most women lost their source of livelihood including businesses and employment. The finding is in agreement with the reporting empirical literature. The suffering Somali civilians experienced did not end with the 1991 conflict but continued in later conflicts as late as 2010. The suffering by women extends to camps in neighbouring countries. The loss of livelihood and dependence on humanitarian aid with limited opportunities for employment and constrained freedom of movement all contribute to women's vulnerability to sexual abuse (Abdi, 2011, p. 193).

#### 4.2.2 Killings of Women

The study based on the questionnaire responses presented in Table 1, the statement that some women were killed during the PEV of 2007/08 was supported by the majority of the respondents as shown by the mean response and standard deviation ( $M=4.3608$  and  $SD=.63222$ ) of agreement with the statement. This implies that the PEV led to deaths in the population with women being among the victims. The death of women was also expounded further in the KII where respondents revealed that among the reported cases of murder during the time, women were included. One of the area ward administrators who was a community worker during the time of the PEV reported:

"Never in my life have I seen gory images compared to what I saw during the PEV. I was at the time working as a social worker in Kibera. I remember one of the days during the violence period, I accompanied the Red Cross Society to check on an area where there was serious violence. I remember seeing a woman lying in a pool of blood. She had a deep cut in the head. Her lifeless body lay across one of the narrow streets in the Laini Saba area. There were also other deaths including men and children. Truth be told, I would not wish to witness such kind of violence in my life..."

The case narratives also depict the same picture of torture and death being suffered during the PEV of 2007/08. The victims reported how they had each lost a relative or someone close in the ensuing violence and the trauma they continue to experience to date. One of the victims who resides in Makina narrated:

"The violence that took place found me living in the Makina area, I had planned to go vote at my ancestral home in Seme Nyanza but we did not make it due to the work commitment of my parents. I remember one evening, my late mother who worked as a house help failed to return home that evening... my dad and I tried calling her but her phone was off....we did not even sleep a wink that night...the next day, there was news that a woman had been hacked to death and her body was left in the nearby dumpsite. When we went to confirm, we got the shock of our life, Mom lay there lifeless with other bodies of young men. They had been murdered on their way back home that evening..."

The responses from KII and the Case narrative depict the graveness of the situation during the PEV. Most lives were lost in general and women in particular. The finding is supported by Birgen, (2015,p.1-89) who examined the impact of post-election violence of 2007/08 on women in Uasin Gishu. The study revealed that women were greatly affected by the violence some were killed and their property destroyed and burnt to ashes. It is thus clear that the PEV of 2007/08 led to many deaths including women. The post-election violence of 2007/08 is considered the worst conflict in Kenya's history. The violence amounted to 1,133 deaths and the displacement of over 300,000 people (Government of Kenya, 2008, pp. 23-29).

#### 4.2.3 More female heads of households

Based on the questionnaire items as presented in Table 1, the statement that post-election violence of 2007/08 created more female heads of households was highly supported by the respondents. This is depicted by mean responses and standard deviation of agreement ( $M=4.2784$  and  $SD=.60797$ ). The responses imply that more women became heads of their households after the PEV of 2007/08. The responses based on KII expound on this impact further. The respondents in the KII revealed that more women were introduced to being the head of their families upon the death or incapacitation of their husbands. One of the leaders of 'Kibera Women for Peace and Fairness (KWPF), a leading group in promoting harmony and peace in the area stated-

"After the violence that happened all over the country and Kibera in particular, we as Kibera Women for Peace and Fairness were actively involved in post-conflict assistance and peacebuilding. From our records at that time, over 500 women living in Kibera were reported to be responsible for the family upkeep after they either lost their husbands to death were incapacitated or their husbands lost their jobs. The women were now responsible for the daily livelihood giving for their respective families. We tried our best to connect them to various sources and organizations that could help them fit into the new role..."

The situation on the rise in female household heads is further depicted in the case narratives with victims of post-election violence. The respondents reported having been through the challenging role of being the head and provider of their families for various reasons. One woman from the Lindi area narrated:

"At the onset of the violence, I was a stay-at-home mom with my husband being the sole provider. My husband who was by then a motorcycle spare parts seller...when violence broke out, my husband's shop was among the ones torched. He lost everything he had worked for and was reduced to begging. I had to come in and help him, I began a small roadside business selling mandazi and chapati to enable us to pay rent, buy food and pay for school fees. I thank God, that after one year of being the one responsible for family upkeep, my husband finally got back on his feet and was able to fully support our family as before. I have also continued

with my business where now I have diversified into selling cereals"

The results presented in the questionnaires, KII and case narratives responses clearly show that the PEV had ushered in women into being the heads of their families. They were responsible for providing all the daily needs of their various families after their partners were rendered jobless, incapacitated or killed in the violence. Birgen, (2015,p.1-89) revealed that women were greatly affected as the violence left most women vulnerable, as most of them became breadwinners for the family despite lack of adequate resources to help them support their families. During the Rwandan genocide, several women were left widowed with family responsibilities. Women had to contend with negative traditional customs in the aftermath of the genocide in addition to having little or no means to earn income (Omondi, 2015,p.41).

#### **4.2.4 Loss of Property to Destruction and Theft**

The responses presented in Table 1 revealed that most of the respondents were in support of the statement that women lost their properties to theft and destruction during the PEV of 2007/08. This is shown by a mean and standard deviation response tending to strong agreement (M= 4.2680 and SD= .66951). The finding implies that women and their families lost their property to destruction and theft. Further, the responses from the KII revealed the extent of the depth of destruction and loss of property that was experienced. The respondents stated that people in general and women in particular lost valued property running into millions. One of the area chiefs stated:

"...when violence broke out in the Kibra area, I was into my second year as the chief of this area. The kind of loss of property was imaginable. In my small estimation, my area residents lost property worth millions. I remember over 200 people; women and their children included, camped around my office for protection after assailants broke into their houses, carried away every valuable belonging and torched their houses after. The AP officers working with me were forced to provide some of the beddings to cover small children from the harsh weather at night..."

On the same issue of loss of property, the case narratives were also in congruence with KII. The respondents gave various narrations on how they had lost their valuable properties to the violence. Most of them reported theft and destruction of property by fire. Others reported grabbing their properties. One of the case narrative respondents said:

"...I do not wish to be reminded of the Kibera violence that I experienced over here in 2007. I remember a group of highly charged youths, about 100, armed with pangas and rungs invaded our residential estate. We quickly locked ourselves in our 'mabati' iron sheet houses hoping we would be safe...but we were wrong, the youths broke into our houses, and grabbed all they could lay their hands on. They took away my electronics, cooking utensils, mattress and clothes. We are lucky they spared our lives but not after warning us that if our presidential candidate refused to admit defeat, they would come back and deal with us most cruelly..."

The analysis concerning the loss of property as shown in the preceding text reveals that the loss and destruction of property was widespread affecting women from various wards in the Kibra area of Nairobi. The findings are by Birgen, (2015,p.1-89) who examined the impact of post-election violence on women in Uasin Gishu. The study revealed that women were greatly affected by the violence as most of them had their property destroyed and burnt to ashes.

#### **4.2.5 Women Were Displaced and Rendered Homeless**

Most respondents who participated in filling out the questionnaires agreed with the statement that women were displaced and became homeless during the PEV of 2007/08. This was depicted using response score and narrow standard deviation tending to strong agreement (M= 4.2268 and SD=.68473). The finding implied that those who were displaced were rendered homeless and had to live in camps or go back to rural homes. The KII interview also expounds on the issue of women displacement during the PEV of 2007/08. The respondents were of the general view that the violence ultimately led to women being displaced from the residential areas where they were staying. One of the leaders of a local women's group reported:

"The number of people, including women and children, displaced from their homes were many. Our organization that led peace-building efforts were faced with a burgeoning size of the number of women who were displaced from their residential areas. Most of those displaced were living in rental houses. Either their houses were torched or the property owners chased them away fearing the security of their rental building. During our peacekeeping efforts, there were so many families camping in local primary schools, churches, and police camps after they had been displaced..."

The women victims who participated in the case narratives resound the information collected in the KII and questionnaires regarding the displacement of women and their households from their residential areas during the violence. One woman living in around Woodley area of Kibra narrated:

"I lost everything to the violence that was experienced here in Kibra in 2007. I was living in a rented house by then. One evening just after election results were disputed, leaflets were thrown into our residential estate stating that the people belonging to a certain tribe should vacate or otherwise face death...we were scared to the core but had nowhere to run to. Our landlord fearing that his estate would be burned down told us to leave his house the next day without fail. We had no choice but to run for security into the nearby Catholic Church. When we came back to our residential area to check on our belongings, to our dismay and shock, the houses were empty having been broken into and all belongings taken away. I was left homeless with nowhere to turn to. I had to go back to the church where we were hosted..."

The study finding revealed that the PEV of 2007/08 left many households including women and children homeless after they were evicted from where they were staying. Most of the evictees in Kibra were living in rented houses hence they had no legal authority to stay there. Most victims camped in places they thought were safer as they awaited help and assistance. Empirical literature reports that the displacement of women was another impact of the conflict on women in South Sudan. As of May 2014, an estimated nine hundred and twenty-three women had been internally displaced in South Sudan, and thousands had fled the country and have become refugees in neighbouring countries e.g. Kenya and Uganda (Adeogun & Muthuki, 2018, p. 85).

#### **4.2.6 Gender-Based Sexual Violence**

The questionnaire responses revealed that women were sexually assaulted with most respondents agreeing with the statement that women were sexually assaulted during the PEV of 2007/08 was experienced over the country and Kibra area in particular. The mean response and standard deviation were ( $M= 4.1856$ ) and ( $SD=.52698$ ) respectively. The finding implied that sexual assault and violation happened to many women and girls during the violent period and even in camps after the end of the violence. The KII with one of the area chiefs expounded on the magnitude of the sexual violence during the period. The chief stated:

"During the 2007 violence, many women reported to my office for having been sexually violated either in the violence or in the displacement camps. I remember over 300 cases alone were reported to my office alone the unreported cases which is usually the majority. In a dozen cases, the victims especially the girls reported blood-stained clothes. In the camps, due to the limited nature of resources, victims were forced to offer sexual favours to be favoured during the distribution of food, clothing and other essentials by administrators in camps..."

The gender-based violence was also reported in the narrative responses among the women victims of the said PEV. Most respondents narrated their experiences during the period regarding sexual assault and violation. One victim residing in the Sara Ng'ombe area of Kibra stated:

"I still do not believe how low we can go as a society. It was a pathetic and horrific experience. Four men accosted me in my house. You know these iron sheet and semi-box houses we were living in at that time offered little protection. The men took advantage of me being without a man for to protect me. They pinned me to the floor and one after the other, they violated me until I lost consciousness...I have since forgiven them but I cannot forget..."

The data gathered through the questionnaires, KII and case narratives depict the mental picture of what transpired during the violence. Other women victims were reported to have been forced to give sexual favours to be considered for the distribution of essentials like food, clothing, and sanitary towels among others. The finding is consistent with empirical literature. Guggisberg, (2018, p. 12) revealed that Sexual violence is rampantly used as a weapon of choice by perpetrators of violence and combatants in conflicts across the globe where women and girls are shamefully singled out for sexual violence. Seddighi, Salmani, Javadi and Seddighi (2019,p.26) have documented the use sexual violence of in many armed conflicts including those in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Cyprus, Haiti, Liberia, Somalia, Uganda, Rwanda, Syria, and Sudan.

## **6. Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **6.1 Conclusion**

The study sought to establish the effect of PEV of 2007/08 on women in Kenya especially those residing in the Kibra area of Nairobi. Based on the analysis of data collected using questionnaires, case narratives and Key Informant Interview (KII). The study identified several effects of PEV of 2007/08 on Women in the Kibera area of Kenya. One of the effects was that women lost their sources of livelihood, some women were killed, the violence created more female heads of households, women lost their properties to theft and destruction, women were displaced and became homeless and some experienced GBSV. The study



thus concluded that the PEV of 2007/08 had adverse impacts on women in Kenya and Kibra in particular. The findings on the effect of post-election violence are incongruent with empirical literature. Bangalie (2011, pp. 15-16) noted that conflict throughout history has had a disproportionately high impact on women and other vulnerable groups as compared to the general population. Even though women experience the same trauma as the rest of the population during a conflict such as bombings, famine, epidemics, cleansing, threats and intimidation, they are also exposed to targeted forms of violence and abuse such as rape, forced pregnancies, sexual slavery, assault and exploitation (Birgen, 2015, p. 15). Commission of Enquiry into the Post-Election Violence in Kenya reported that the post-election of 2007/08 resulted in 1,133 deaths and the displacement of over 300,000 people (Government of Kenya, 2008). Sexual violence against women increased with the intensity of the violence culminating in camps set up for internally displaced persons (IDPs). The women and girls in the IDP camps were also exposed to and experienced gender-based violence ranging from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation to physical and domestic violence. Women and girls were coerced into giving sexual favours for basic resources such as food, sanitary supplies and transport (Meredith & Njoki, 2011, pp. 1-9). The study findings on the impact of violence on women is also based on Galtung's Conflict Theory which expounds on the origin of conflict in the society. According to Galtung (1973), conflicts mainly result from a mismatch in the goals to be achieved where actors in pursuit of incompatible goals introduce conflict. In this case, actors in conflict include both men and women interested in participating in various socio-political processes (Confortini, 2006). The theory holds that the goals of various actors are incompatible in such a way that while men seek to maintain the status quo by being considered the main people behind political activities, women are trying to break the status quo to make their activities recognized and acknowledged. The theory implies that conflict during elections results from incompatible goals to be achieved by actors. The men may resort to violence against women if they feel women are trying to break the status quo to make their activities recognized and acknowledged.

## 6.2 Recommendations

Gender-based violence (GBV) especially during the electioneering period remains one of the major challenges in most conflict societies and addressing it seems arduous. In the context of post-election violence in Kenya, the UN and government already have several programmes on stopping gender-based violence with most efforts directed at building courts, training judges and ensuring there are protection sections for women, girls, and children in most of the police depots. Additionally, there have been awareness and sensitization on GBV, revolving particularly around issues of rape. However, there has been a challenge to the conviction of violators hence there is a need to increase access to justice, seeing as many women are still violated and abused. The justice system must play a larger role in enhancing women's role in peacebuilding processes by passing out punishments to violators. The local community should have watchdog systems that empower its residents to develop their home-grown strategies to prevent some of the community challenges and ensure there is zero tolerance for rape and any kind of sexual violence in the communities. Therefore, there is a need for the implementation of social protection policies based on a bottom-up approach where systems such as watchdog systems can be adopted by the government, external and even some internally well-grounded organizations working with women grassroots groups and communities, to address the GBV challenges by building more monitoring capacity. Mindful of the cultural barriers that cloud the reporting of such violence, the inclusion of all voices on the matter will go a long way to underline its severity and the importance of curbing such acts and sanctioning perpetrators. Local administrators and law enforcement should sensitize locals on signs to watch out for to identify cases of GBV and the appropriate channels for reporting. Patriarchy is quite a complex challenge to women's peacebuilding efforts in Kenya. Addressing patriarchy and the gender inequalities that come with it should entail training and nurturing men to be practical and proactive in addressing patriarchy by challenging themselves and their fellow men on their sexist ideologies and practices. Moreover, providing educational opportunities and building the capacities of women who have been subjugated to patriarchal culture and practices is a given way forward from this challenge. To build such capacities, there is a need for skills training and the meaningful involvement of women's organizations to work with communities where patriarchy remains a dominant practice and to monitor progress and outcomes. However, the lack of/or inadequacy of financial resources is a challenge for most women's organizations, especially those at the grassroots levels. There is a need for these organizations to be supported financially and empowered on how to source funding for their activities from both donors and the government.

## Conflicts of Interest

“The authors declare no conflicts of interest.”

---

## References

- [1] Goldstein, J. (2001). *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- [2] Tønnessen, L. (2014). *The Norwegian Peace Building Resource Centre complex realities and astute actors: Sudanese Women's Centre*.

- [3] Abdi, C. (2011). *A Gendered Perspective on the Impact of the Conflict in the*. Lund, Sweden: Proceedings of the 10th Annual Conference.
- [4] ACORD. (2013). *Women Building Peace*. UK: Conciliation Resources.
- [5] Adawo, L., Gikonyo, L. W., Kudu, R. M., & Mutoro, O. (2011). *History of feminism in Kenya*. October 2011 <http://www.nawey.net/WpContent/Uploads/Downloads/2012/05/History-of-Feminism-in-Kenya.Pdf>.
- [6] Adeogun, T. J., & Muthuki, J. M. (2018). *Feminist perspectives on peacebuilding: The case of women's organisations in South Sudan*. *Agenda*, 32(2), 83-91.
- [7] Akter, M. (2013). *UN Security Council resolution 1325 and its implementation*. New York: Center for Gender and.
- [8] AU Summit. (2010). *Solemn declaration on gender equality in Africa*, Adis Ababa: AU.
- [9] Banerjee, P., Poutiainen, P., Dey, I., Dunghana, S., Kioko, W., Mattila, P., & Muhindi, M. (2010). *Women, Peace and Security: Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in the Context of Finnish Development Policy*. With case studies from Kenya, Nepal and North-East India. Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.
- [10] Bangalie, F. (2011). *An Examination of the Role of Women in Conflict Management: Sierra Leon Case Study*. Masters Dissertation, University of Malta.
- [11] Birgen, C. (2015). *The role of women in peacebuilding: a case study of Uasin Gishu County*. Unpublished Masters Dissertation, University of Nairobi.
- [12] Björkdahl, A., & Mannergren Selimovic, S. (2015). *Translating UNSCR 1325 from the global to the national: protection, representation and participation in the National Action Plans of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Rwanda*. *Conflict, Security & Development*, 15(4), 311-335.
- [13] Blumberg, B. F., Cooper, D. R., & Schindler, P. S. (2014). *Business Research Methods*. 4th Edition. London: McGraw Hill: London.
- [14] Boutros-Boutros Ghali, G. (1992). *An Agenda for Peace, preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping*. New York: UN.
- [15] Brynard, D. J., Hanekom, S. X., & Brynard, P. A. (2014). *Introduction to Research*. 3rd Edition. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- [16] Butler, M., Ruane, A., & Sastry, M. (2015). *The Pieces of Peace: Peace through Gendered Conflict Prevention*. London: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom: Peace Women Programme.
- [17] Chebet, G. (2011). *The Role of Women in Conflict Management in the Great Lakes Region: The Case Of Kenya's Post-Election Violence*. Nairobi: Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Nairobi.
- [18] Cockburn, C. (2001). *The Gendered Dynamics of Armed Conflict and Political Violence*. New York: Centre for Advanced Research in Conflicts.
- [19] Confortini, C. C. (2006). *Galtung, violence, and gender: The case for a peace studies/feminism alliance*. *Peace & Change*, 31(3), 333–367.
- [20] Dahlström, I. (2013). *Women's Recognition in Peacebuilding: Implementing Security Council Resolution 1325 in South Sudan*. New York: Centre for Advanced Security Studies.
- [21] D'Amico, F. (1996). *Feminist Perspectives on Women Warriors*. *Peace Review*, 8(3), 379-384.
- [22] Diez, T., Stetter, S., & Albert, M. (2006). *The European Union and border conflicts: the transformative power of integration*. *International Organization*, 563-593.
- [23] Ekiyor, T., & Wanyeki, L. M. (2008). *National Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) in Africa: Needs Assessment and Plan for Action*. Nairobi: Kenya Human Rights Commission.
- [24] El-Bushra, J. (2012). *Gender in Peacebuilding, Taking Stock*. London: International Alert.
- [25] Eyben, R. (2011). *Supporting Pathways of Women's Empowerment: A Brief Guide for International Development*. Pathways Policy Paper, October 2011. Brighton: Pathways of Women's Empowerment RPC.
- [26] Galtung, J. (1973). *Theories of conflict: Definitions, Dimensions, Negotiations, Formations*, URL: [http://www.transcend.org/Files/Galtung Book Theories Of Conflict.Pdf](http://www.transcend.org/Files/Galtung%20Theories%20Of%20Conflict.Pdf).
- [27] Giddens, A., & Sutton, P. W. (2017). *Essential concepts in sociology*. John Wiley & Sons.
- [28] GOK. (2020). *Kenya National Action Plan for the Advancement of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security*. Nairobi: Government Printer.
- [29] Government of Kenya. (2008). *Report by the Commission of Enquiry into the Post-Election Violence*. Nairobi: Government Printers.
- [30] Guggisberg, M. (2018). *The impact of violence against women and girls: A life span analysis*. Western Australia: Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research. Retrieved from <https://d1wqtxts1xzle7>.
- [31] Haastруп, T. (2018). *Creating Cinderella? The Unintended Consequences of the Women Peace and Security Agenda for EU's Mediation Architecture*. *International Negotiation*, 23(2), 2018-237.
- [32] Ivankova, N. V., Creswell, J. W., & Stick, S. L. (2006). *Using mixed-methods sequential explanatory design: From theory to practice*. *Field Methods*, 18(1), 3–20.
- [33] Jelušič, L. (2018). *Conversion of the military: resource-reuse perspective after the end of the Cold War*. In *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military*. Cham: Springer.
- [34] Jeong, H. W. (2017). *Peace and conflict studies: An introduction*. UK: Taylor & Francis.
- [35] Kimokoti, S., Matanga, F., & Odada, H. (2014). *A Review of the Integrated Post-Conflict Management Strategies in Kenya*. *International Journal of Managerial Studies and Research*, 2(4), 68-75.
- [36] Korir, C. (2009). *Experience of community Peace Building in the North Rift Region of Kenya*. Nairobi: Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Nairobi.
- [37] Lonsdale, J. (2017). *Kenya: Ethnicity, Tribe and State', Open Democracy*. Centre of Open Democracy. Retrieved from [http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/democracy\\_power/kenya\\_ethnicity\\_tribe\\_state](http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/democracy_power/kenya_ethnicity_tribe_state)
- [38] Luedke, A. E., & Logan, H. F. (2018). *That thing of human rights: discourse, emergency assistance, and sexual violence in South Sudan's current civil war*. *Disasters*, 99-118.
- [39] Maina, G. (2010). *Resolution 1325 in 2020 looking forward to looking back*. High-level Seminar organizes. Durban: International Conference Centre.
- [40] Mantula, F., & Saloojee, H. (2016). *Child sexual abuse in Zimbabwe*. *Journal of child sexual abuse*, 25(8), 866-880.

- [41] Martin, R., & Pelekemoyo, J. (2012). Women Count, Security Council Resolution 1325 Civil Society Monitoring Report 2012. Global Network of Women Peace Builders.
- [42] Maynard, M. (1995). Beyond the 'Big Three': the development of feminist theory into the 1990s. *Women's History Review*, 4(3), 259–281.
- [43] McCarthy, M. K. (2011). Women's Participation in Peacebuilding: A Missing Piece of the Puzzle. *College Undergraduate Research Electronic Journal*, 4(2), 1-22.
- [44] Meredith, P. M., & Njoki, W. (2011). Beyond the Numbers: Women's Participation in the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation. Nairobi: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.
- [45] Molyneux, M. (1985). Mobilization without emancipation? Women's interests, the state, and revolution in Nicaragua. *Feminist Studies* 1, 1(2), 227-254.
- [46] Molyneux, M. (2001). Analysing Women's Movements. In: *Women's Movements in International Perspective*. Institute of Latin American Studies Series. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- [47] Myrum, W., & Marsh, M. (2008). A Rapid Assessment of Gender-based Violence during the Post-election Violence in Kenya, Nairobi. Nairobi: UNICEF, UNFPA, UNIFEM, CCF.
- [48] Nienaber, H., & Moraka, N. V. (2016). Feminism in management research: A route to justly optimise talent. *Acta Commercii*, 16(2), 139–163.
- [49] Omondi, M. A. (2015). An Assessment of the Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325(2000) and its impacts on the role of women in conflict management in Kenya. Nairobi: Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Nairobi.
- [50] Putnam Tong, R. (1998). *Feminist thought: A more comprehensive introduction*. NSW Australia Allen & Unwin.
- [51] Shepherd, L. J. (2017). The Women, Peace, and Security Agenda at the United Nations. In *Global Insecurity*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- [52] Smith, P. G. (2013). *John Dewey's Experience and Nature*, New York: City University.
- [53] Spasić, D. (2019). Un Security Council Resolution 1325 "Women, Peace And Security" In The Local Context Of Refugee Crisis: Old Experience Or New Challenges? *Facta Universitatis-Law and Politics*, 17(2), 113-124.
- [54] Stamnes, E., & Osland, K. M. (2016). Synthesis report: reviewing UN peace operations, the UN peacebuilding architecture and the implementation of UNSCR 1325. Norway: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs.
- [55] Strickland, R., & Duvvury, N. (2003). *Gender Equity and Peace Building from Rhetoric to Reality: Finding a Way*. Washington DC: International Centre for Research on Women.
- [56] Totten, S., & Pedersen, J. (2012). *Educating About Social Issues in the 20th and 21st Centuries: A Critical Annotated Bibliography*. New York: Information Age Publishing.
- [57] United Nations. (2002). *Women, Peace and Security*. New York: UN publications.
- [58] Wamai N., (2013), UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in Kenya: Dilemmas and Opportunities. Working Papers in British-Irish Studies. No. # 2013. (University College Dublin, Dublin)
- [59] Wanjala, M. A. (2019). Examining the role of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in fostering inclusive and sustainable peace in South Sudan. Nairobi: Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Nairobi.