



SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT ZONES: WOMEN AS WEAPONS OF WAR

OLIVIA WELLS
DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS, NADIA'S INITIATIVE



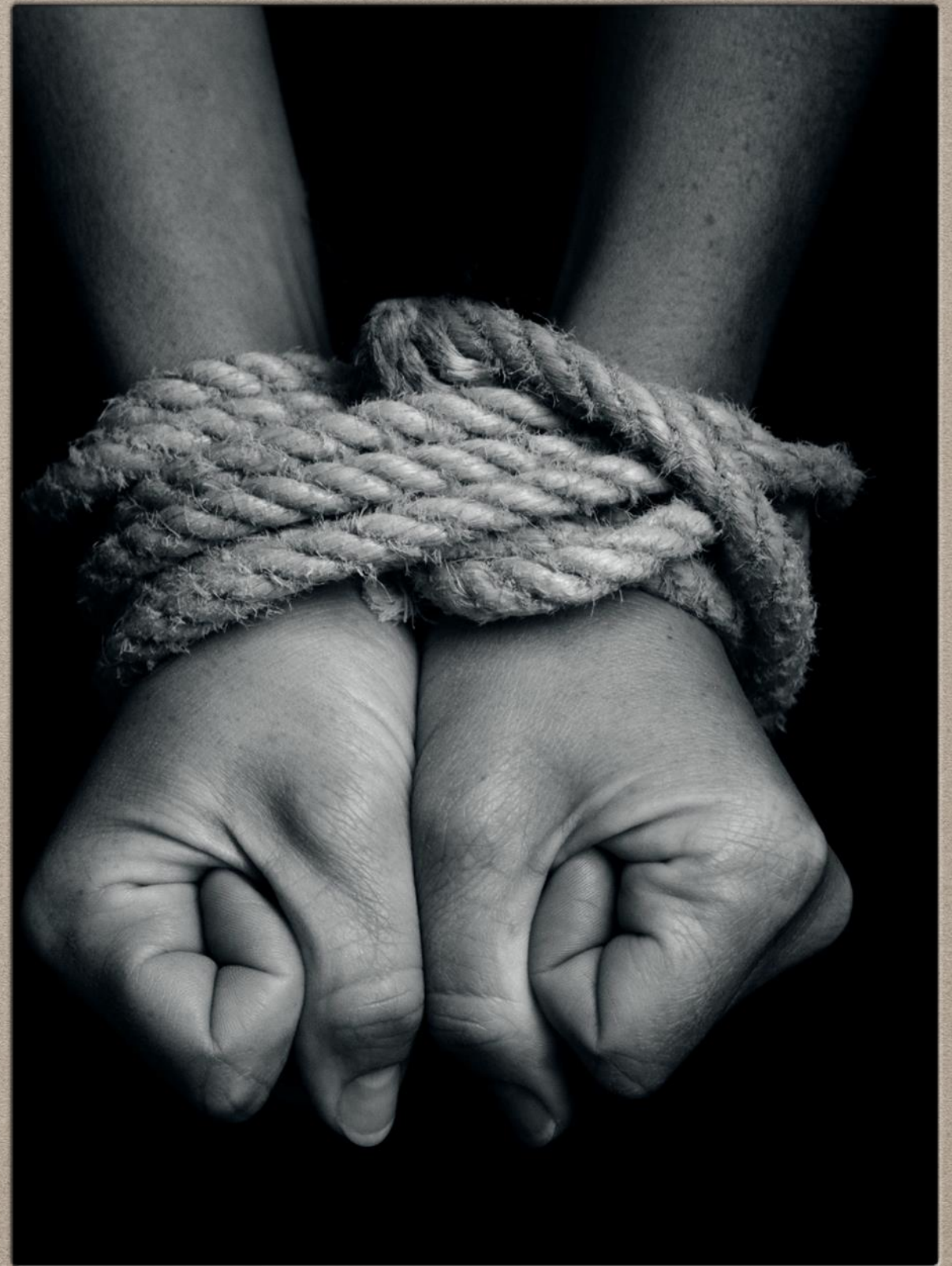


SUBSTANTIVE CHALLENGES TO REFRAMING GENDER CRIMES IN INTERNATIONAL LAW

TRANSITIONING FROM RAPE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AS CRIMES OF
ASSOCIATION TO CRIMES IN THEIR OWN RIGHT

HISTORIC DISREGARD FOR GENDER CRIMES

WOMEN AS OBJECTS





THE “COMFORT” WOMEN

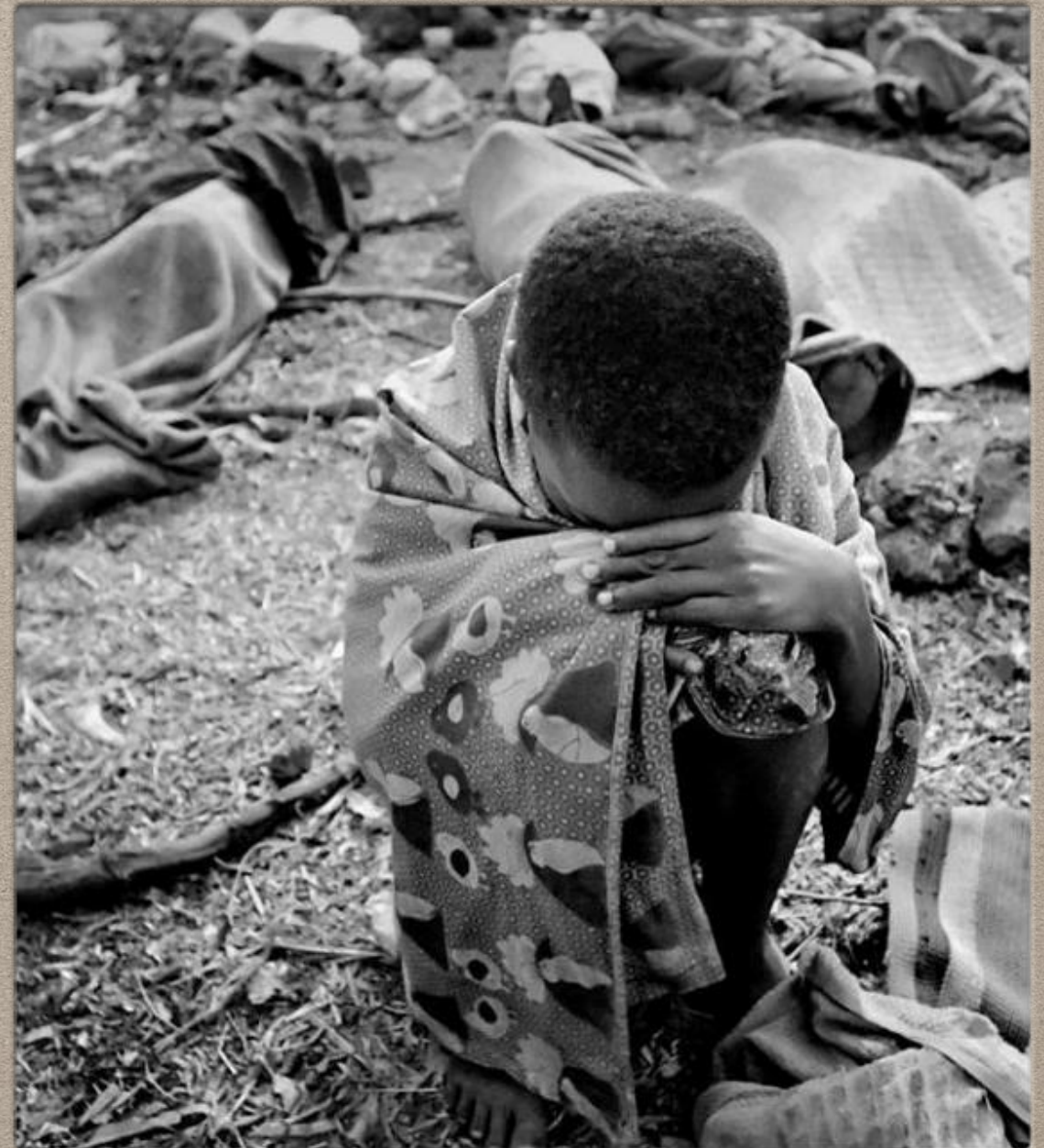
GENDER CRIMES ABSENT FROM POST-WII
TRIBUNALS

GENDER CRIMES IN THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS AND PROTOCOLS

- Article 27 of the Fourth Geneva Convention: “Women shall be especially protected against any ***attack on their honor***, in particular against rape, enforced prostitution, or any form of ***indecent assault***.”
- Common Article III of the Fourth Geneva Convention does not mention rape or sexual violence as a prohibited act, but instead protects “outrages upon **personal dignity**, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment.”
- Article 76 of Additional Protocol to Geneva Convention: “Women shall be the object of special respect and shall be protected in particular against rape, forced prostitution, and any other form of **indecent assault**.”

TRANSITIONING TO THE CODIFICATION OF GENDER CRIMES

- Yugoslav Wars - International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY)
- Rwandan Genocide - International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR)
- The use of rape as an ethnic cleansing tool in the wars transitioned it from a private, inevitable “collateral of war” to a public, political “weapon of war.”



GENDER CRIMES AS GENOCIDE

- Landmark case *Prosecutor v. Akayesu*
- Historic conviction of **rape and sexual violence as acts of genocide**
- Recognized rape as a form of **torture** and acknowledged that rape and sexual violence are the “worst ways of inflicting harm on the victim as he or she suffers both bodily and mental harm.”



GENDER CRIMES AS CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY AND WAR CRIMES

- *Prosecutor v. Delalic:*
Acknowledged rape causes **more than an “outrage upon dignity”** - it inflicts severe physical and psychological suffering
- *Prosecutor v. Kunargc et al.*
and Prosecutor v. Furundzija:
recognized rape and sexual assault as **self-standing war crimes**



STILL A LONG WAY TO GO...

- 10 years after Rwandan genocide, the number of rape convictions is disturbingly low
- “The ICTR handed down 21 sentences: 18 convictions and 3 acquittals. An overwhelming **90% of these judgments contained no rape convictions**. More disturbingly, there were double the number of acquittals for rape than there were rape convictions.”
- *Special Court of Sierra Leone*: Civil Defense Forces Trial - silencing the testimonies of women



ISIS'S GENOCIDE AGAINST YAZIDIS

A SURVIVOR'S WORK ON REBUILDING AND
ACCOUNTABILITY

NADIA MURAD

- YAZIDI ACTIVIST
- NOBEL PEACE LAUREATE
- UNODC GOODWILL
AMBASSADOR
- PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER OF
NADIA'S INITIATIVE





STAGGERING STATISTICS

AUGUST 2014

- 10,000 Yazidis killed at start of ISIS invasion
- 6,400 Yazidis taken captive
- 450,000 Yazidis displaced in IDP camps

5 YEARS LATER...

- 12,000 Yazidis killed
- 3,000 still missing in captivity
- 350,000 Yazidis still displaced in IDP camps

NADIA's **INITIATIVE**

REBUILDING COMMUNITIES IN CRISIS

ADVOCATING FOR SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

SINJAR ACTION FUND

- HEALTH
- WOMEN
- EDUCATION
- LIVELIHOODS
- WASH
- DE-MINING



SURVIVOR ACTION RESPONSE

- GLOBAL ADVOCACY
- JUSTICE
- RELOCATION OF SURVIVORS
- GLOBAL FUND FOR SURVIVORS



WHAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CAN DO

- Put pressure on Baghdad and Erbil to end local disputes
- Invest in reconstruction and sustainable development initiatives in Sinjar
- Integrate Yazidis into security forces
- International Iraq-based War Crimes Tribunal
- Justice for Survivors



“Help us leave a better, safe, and just world to future generations.”

– *Nadia Murad*