

Sexual Violence as a Weapon in Armed Conflict: A Case Study on the Yazidi Genocide

By

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Abstract

During different periods of history, the Yazidis have suffered from marginalisation and discrimination because of their religion. The scale of the persecution suffered by the Yazidis was highlighted by Yazda (2017) in a report that suggested the religious minority had suffered 74 genocidal campaigns against them throughout their history. Allison (2018) highlights that they have been targeted because they are viewed as 'devil worshippers' due to the fact that they are a non-Abrahamic religion. They came to the forefront of the world media's attention following the siege of Mount Sinjar where tens of thousands of Yazidis were trapped by attacking IS forces (Cooper and Shear, 2014). It has been suggested that since the so-called Islamic State started attacking Yazidi settlements in August 2014, around 3100 Yazidis have been killed, and around 6800 have been kidnapped. Ultimately, on August 3, 2014, ISIS exploited the political, social, economic, and security collapses in the country and invaded Nineveh province, including Sinjar city and the surrounding Yazidi villages in northern Iraq (Lister, 2015).

The so-called Islamic State (IS) is a non-state military/ terrorist organisation that started as an off-shoot of al-Qaeda (Gerges, 2014). The group has devastated the lives of countless people through a campaign of terror designed to create an Islamic Caliphate, starting with Syria and Iraq. The group has been responsible for widespread human rights abuses and terror attacks, not just in the region, but worldwide. ISIS were able to exploit social, political and security collapses in the country and sweep through provinces with relative ease (Lister, 2015), leaving a wake of devastation and destruction behind them.

The Yazidi people deserve justice. At present, with the fight against IS still ongoing, it is unclear when and how that justice will be delivered. What can and should be done now is increase awareness and understanding about these people, what they've been through and what they are still going through. There has not been much research produced thus far, the information available comes mostly from journalists or human rights groups on the ground. Of the limited research carried out on this topic area, few studies address the specific issue of sexual violence as a weapon of war and genocide. This report aims to fill in the gaps by piecing together information from different conflicts and theoretical approaches, to create a better picture of the issues and impacts of the Yazidi genocide.

“Rape, like genocide, will not be deterred unless and until the stories are heard. People must hear the horrifying, think the unthinkable and speak the unspeakable”

(Tompkins, 1995, p.852).

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Introduction

It is important to highlight at the outset, that although world leaders have declared the so-called Islamic State dead or dying, they are in fact still active in the Middle East and Africa, and many of the Yazidi women and girls that were kidnapped back in 2014 are still missing. Fighting in Syria continues. The Iraqi government is beginning to find its feet again, but normality hasn't quite returned to the country yet. There is still an element of uncertainty in the region. One thing is for sure though, the Yazidi people deserve justice. Just how exactly they will get it or when is unclear. Desbois (2018, p.xiii) stated "little by little, public opinion in democratic countries has forgotten the shootings, bombings, beheadings, crucifixions, and the black flags...aren't mass amnesia and individual forgetfulness the necessary price of a comfortable life and untroubled sleep?"

Despite the loss of interest of the media and the general public as a whole, it is important to continue to raise awareness and understanding about this situation and the people involved. There has not been a great deal of research published on this topic area, and even fewer on the specific issue of sexual violence used as a weapon of war against the Yazidi people. This report aims to provide an insight into the situation in the form of a case study.

The objectives of this research report are as follows:

1. To highlight how the so-called Islamic State has carried out widespread sexual violence as a weapon against the Yazidi population
2. To highlight the effects of these human rights abuses on the victims
3. To analyse the motivations of the perpetrators of these crimes
4. To discuss the prospects of accountability of the offenders

In order to give a clear and concise overview of this phenomenon whilst meeting all of the objectives laid out above, this report is separated into different sections. **Section one** will focus on the context and background around the situation and the people involved. First and foremost, it will highlight exactly who the Yazidi people are and where they are from and also who the so-called Islamic State are and what they represent. Definitions will be discussed to make clear what is meant by terms such as genocide and rape. Then examples of other conflicts where sexual violence was prevalent will be put forward in order to begin drawing comparisons with the situation in question. **Section two** will then provide evidence of the sexual violence faced by the Yazidi women at the hands of ISIS members. A range of sources have been utilised to provide a clear picture, including first-hand accounts from survivors, reports from journalists on the ground, reports published by human rights organisations and studies produced by academics. **Section three** will then highlight the effects of these heinous crimes for the survivors who have had to live through it. The section is split into three parts, focussing on the physical effects, the psychological effects and then the psychosocial effects on the community as a whole. The focus of **section four** is the perpetrators of these acts. Theories relating to the motivations behind such acts are put forward and examples from other conflicts and situations are used to highlight similarities and differences in the cases, in order to build a picture of the reasoning behind ISIS carrying out these human rights abuses against the Yazidi women and girls. Although there were a number of theories available, only the three that were best suited to analyse the situation were used. They are, the Feminist theory of sexual violence, the Cultural Pathology Theory and the Theory of Strategic Rape. Finally, **section five** discusses the prospects of ISIS members being held accountable for their crimes.

Methodology

Whilst conducting research for my undergraduate dissertation on the topic of Western female jihad, in particular the recruitment of females by ISIS, I became more aware of the severity of the human rights abuses being carried out by the group. What shocked me the most was the treatment of the Yazidi women and girls. It was my interest in this on-going situation that led me to study human rights at master's level and was always my intention to conduct a dissertation in this topic area. Due to the nature of the topic, there were a number of ethical issues to consider before deciding what research could be achieved. It has been stated that "the fact that human rights research is conducted in the pursuit of a good cause in no way exempts practitioners from ethical scrutiny and accountability" (Andreassen et al. 2017, p.192). What is important is that ethical principles of social research (Diener and Crandal, 1978) are always at the forefront of decision-making. The leading principle is to make sure that no participants are exposed to harm; as an inexperienced researcher, I am not qualified or trained to be in a position to help research participants if they become distressed at any point in the process. Also, due to having never conducted research of this nature before, I would find it difficult to gain access to appropriate participants in the first place, due to the politically sensitive nature of the topic (Aron, 1979).

As well as ethical issues, there were also issues around practicality that needed to be considered when planning the research strategy and design for a project of this nature. Being constrained by time played a big part in the final research design. It has been noted that the time needed to obtain familiarity of different cultures, histories and possible credible interviewees is unreasonable for most academics (Bryman, 2012; Berg 2004). Having other university assignments alongside working full-time meant that being able to travel in order to conduct primary research was unrealistic.

In order to conduct research in my chosen topic, and within the time frame, it was necessary to carry out a critical literature review. With the technological advances of the internet and widespread information sharing in today's age, it is possible to carry out library-based research from anywhere in the world. It is therefore possible to utilise the work available that

has been carried out previously by academics and researchers in the field to address my chosen research objectives. There are of course benefits and drawbacks to using secondary data; the main and obvious benefit is that the data collection has already been carried out by somebody else, however, this can also be a downside as you are forced to rely on their information, which although is in the same topic area, may be focussed on different issues. It is a key skill then, when conducting a critical literature review, to ascertain the relevance of each source as quickly as possible through the abstract, rather than getting bogged down in reading everything related to the area of interest.

My research design was that of a case study because I focussed on one particular crime against one community, rather than looking at the human rights abuses of ISIS as a whole. This focus really enabled an intensive examination of the phenomenon in question. Stake (1995) suggests case study research is concerned with the complexity and particular nature of the case in question. There are a lot of factors that make this case both complex and unique, such as religion, politics, legal frameworks and the accountability of non-state actors and foreign intervention.

In order to get a good grasp of the topic area and to ascertain what other research or reports were available already, a systematic literature review was required. A systematic literature review is an unbiased, replicable and inclusive account of the literature (Tranfield et al, 2003). According to Bryman (2012, p.14) a literature review is “a critical examination of existing research relating to the phenomenon of interest and of relevant theoretical ideas”. The first step in this process was the literature search. Initially, I used the SHU library gateway and Google Scholar to find sources; the use of Boolean operators ensured that the search brought up sources that were relevant to my topic area. After finding relevant studies and reports, I was lead to further research through ‘snowballing’. I found that although there are a limited number of studies on the sexual violence experienced by the Yazidi women and girls, there are a number of studies available on sexual violence in other conflicts, which were incredibly useful in terms of drawing comparisons and being able to ascertain key concepts and theoretical frameworks. There were a large number of news articles found in relation to the human rights abuses carried out on the Yazidi people by IS; although they cannot be viewed as academically sound, it is important to take them into account when building a

picture of the situation, as at the time, most of the information we were receiving from the region was from journalists on the ground.

Using multiple, varied sources will also help in terms of transferability, by producing what Geertz (1973) calls ‘thick description’. This is a way of providing cultural context and meaning that people place on actions and attitudes. The wider context was addressed by conducting content analysis on literature relating to regional histories, Yazidi history and religion, the so-called Islamic State and international legal frameworks. Creating a bigger picture by using as many different sources as possible and more than one method will improve the credibility of the research through triangulation, as findings may be cross-checked. This is part of establishing what Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to as ‘trustworthiness’, a way of assessing the quality of qualitative research.

1. Context/ Background

First of all, it is important to highlight who exactly the Yazidi people are. The Yazidi are one of the oldest ethnic communities of Mesopotamia, and mainly live in the north of Iraq (Fuccaro, 1997). They are mostly Kurdish speaking, and come from two main areas, Sinjar, which is in the northwest region close to Syria, and Sheikhan which is to the northeast of Mosul (Allison, 2018). Sadly, the persecution of the Yazidi people has a long history. Under Saddam Hussein, campaigns of ‘Arabization lead to the widespread displacement and unemployment of the Yazidis (Henne and Hackett, 2014). The great explorer Sir Wilfred Thesiger, when travelling through Iraqi Kurdistan in 1950 spoke of the Yazidi people as ‘oppressed’, and was shocked to hear a Kurdish official declare ‘these filthy people should be exterminated’ (Thesiger, 2003, p.149). The scale of the persecution suffered by the Yazidis was highlighted by Yazda (2017) in a report that suggested the religious minority had suffered 74 genocidal campaigns against them throughout their history. Allison (2018) highlights that they have been targeted because they are viewed as ‘devil worshippers’ due to the fact that they are a non-Abrahamic religion. They came to the forefront of the world media’s attention following the siege of Mount Sinjar where tens of thousands of Yazidis

were trapped by attacking IS forces (Cooper and Shear, 2014). It has been suggested that since the so-called Islamic State started attacking Yazidi settlements in August 2014, around 3100 Yazidis have been killed, and around 6800 have been kidnapped (Tagay et al, 2017). The women and girls that were taken have been subjected to the horrific act of sexual enslavement (Otten, 2017).

So, who exactly are ISIS? The so-called Islamic State (IS) is a non-state military/ terrorist organisation that started as an off-shoot of al-Qaeda (Gerges, 2014). The group has devastated the lives of countless people through a campaign of terror designed to create an Islamic Caliphate, starting with Syria and Iraq. The group has been responsible for widespread human rights abuses and terror attacks, not just in the region, but worldwide. ISIS were able to exploit social, political and security collapses in the country and sweep through provinces with relative ease (Lister, 2015), leaving a wake of devastation and destruction behind them. Former President of the United States, Barack Obama, said of the group ‘They kill children. They enslave, rape and force women into marriage. They threatened a religious minority with genocide’ (Obama, 2014). It has been highlighted that, unfortunately, the use of sexual violence is not a new phenomenon when it comes to Iraq and Syria. Ahram (2015) states that under both the Assad regime in Syria and the Hussein regime in Iraq, sexual violence was used in order to maintain ethno-sectarian hierarchies. Therefore, the actions of ISIS could be viewed as attempting to carry out a tried and tested means of maintaining power in the region. In this sense, unfortunately human rights abuses have become the rule rather than the exception, and it is often ethnic and religious minorities that are affected the most.

Article II of the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948), defines genocide as “any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such; killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole, or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; or forcibly transferring children of the group to another group”. According to the Human Rights Council (2016), there is no doubt that the so-called Islamic State has committed the crime of genocide

against the Yazidi people, thousands of whom are still missing. ISIS intended to destroy the Yazidi people through murder, sexual enslavement and torture; through the implementation of measures that prevented Yazidi children from being born, and also the transfer of Yazidi children from their families to ISIS households (Human Rights Council, 2016).

Rape has been defined as forced penetration that can lead to death, serious psychological or bodily harm and could impede births, which ultimately can lead to the destruction of the group (Reid-Cunningham, 2008). Which means that rape can be considered an act of genocide. In fact, Reid-Cunningham (2008) goes on to state that sexual violence is actually a ‘cornerstone of genocidal campaigns’ because of the effects it can have on communities and families as well as the women themselves. This is supported by Doctors Without Borders, that suggest rape can be used as a weapon to destabilise or break a particular group of people, or even to ethnically cleanse an entire group of society (Dusauchoit, 2003). In 2008, the United Nations Security Council stated that sexual violence could in fact been used as a tactic of war (OHCHR, 2008).

Thanks to the ground-breaking work of Susan Brownmiller (1975) there has been an increased interest in the academic study of sexual violence during conflict. Therefore, even though there are relatively few academic studies about sexual violence being used as a weapon against the Yazidi people, there are a number of studies that address similar issues related to other previous conflicts, that help guide my own research. Over the next couple of chapters, reference will be made to a number of these conflicts, however in this section, two conflicts have been chosen as they represent similarities to the situation faced by the Yazidi.

The first conflict is that of Sierra Leone; during a civil war that lasted ten years, thousands of women and girls were subjected to sexual violence, including sexual slavery and rape (Human Rights Watch, 2003). The vast majority of cases were carried out by rebel forces known as the RUF; this is similar to the Yazidi case, in the sense that the perpetrators are non-state actors. This has implications for responses when it comes to international legal frameworks – something that will be addressed in a later section. The sexual violence carried out by the rebel forces peaked during military operations, as the combatants rewarded their

victories by looting properties and raping women (Human Rights Watch, 2003). In comparison to ISIS, the rebels in Sierra Leone preferred to target younger girls and in particular those that were deemed to be virgins. However, in contrast to ISIS, the RUF targeted women and girls from all ethnic groups and socioeconomic classes.

The second conflict that drew similarities was that that took place in Bosnia–Herzegovina; this time not because of the perpetrators, but instead, the victims being targeted in the crime of genocide. Ethnically Serbian soldiers carried out the majority of rapes against Croatian and Muslim women; these crimes took place in their homes, in the streets and even in ‘rape camps’ (Amnesty International, 1993). One of the intended aims of the Serbians was to rape the women repeatedly in order to get them pregnant, and in many cases, soldiers detained the women for a period of time so that they were unable to have an abortion (Sharlach, 2000). This links in to the evidence available in the next section.

2. Evidence of Sexual Violence in the Yazidi Genocide

In the immediate aftermath of the attack on Sinjar and the kidnapping of women and girls by ISIS, a lot of the information available came from journalists that were reporting from the ground. However, in the years that have followed, there have been a number of high-profile reports and studies carried out, that have provided a clear picture of the situation. This section will build a picture of this situation by piecing together information from a mixture of sources.

Following the attack, ISIS members were said to have separated the men from the women; they then executed all men and boys aged over fourteen (Reinl, 2015). The ISIS members then stripped the women and girls naked and began to ‘assess’ them in terms of prettiness and

breast size and were trying to ascertain which of them were virgins. Those that were deemed to be the most profitable – the youngest and prettiest virgins – were then taken to the IS stronghold of Raqqa (Reinl, 2015). Farida Khalaf (2017) was amongst those young girls and women that were abducted and taken to Raqqa, she went on to write a book describing her ordeal. She stated that her and her friends were at school when ISIS members arrived and mustered the Yazidi girls in the school yard while they were rounding up the local men. She didn't know at the time what was going to happen to them, but described how, on the journey to Raqqa, ISIS men had told her that all the men had been murdered, and that the girls were to be sold to fighters.

Amnesty International (2014) released a report that highlighted the plight of the Yazidi women and girls, called 'Escape from Hell', it presented first-hand accounts of their ordeal. The report highlighted how Arwa – a fifteen year old girl – had been abducted from her village near Mount Sinjar with a number of her relatives and hundreds of her neighbours. She stated that following her capture, she had been raped by ISIS members, but had managed to escape, however, sixty-two of her relatives, including her siblings and mother had not managed to escape. Sixteen year old Randa was also kidnapped and managed to escape; she described how she had also been raped, after being 'gifted' to a man that was twice her age (Amnesty International, 2014). Human Rights Watch (2015) interviewed women and girls that had escaped between September 2014 and January 2015. They described how nearly all of them had been forced into marriage, sold or given as gifts. Not only were these women sexually assaulted themselves, but many were also forced to witness other women being sexually assaulted (Human Rights Watch, 2015).

Most shocking of all is the age of some of the young girls that have become a victim to this heinous abuse of human rights. Human Rights Watch (2015) described how the youngest victims interviewed were two twelve-year-old girls that had both been raped. More horrifying yet, one Yazidi woman described how she had witnessed a seven-year-old girl being torn from her mother's arms – she was said to have been raped by five men and had died from her injuries a few days later (Desbois, 2018). This is a grotesque example of ISIS crimes against humanity and abuse of human rights against children.

Father Patrick Desbois fronts an organisation called Action Yazidis that aims to collect testimonies from survivors of the genocide. So far, the group has collected more evidence from survivors than any other organisation, and Desbois (2018) recently released a book that provides evidence from some of those testimonies. One such testimony is by a woman referred to as Avine, she describes being forcefully separated from her loved ones along with other young women from her village, being locked up and then being sexually abused. Avine stated that she was lucky to have hidden her mobile phone, as ISIS members that were acting as jailers would search the women and girls and create an inventory of the possessions; if incriminating photos were found on mobile phones, such as pictures of Iraqi soldiers or Peshmerga, severe punishments would be enacted (Desbois, 2018).

Avine was taken to ISIS 'slave markets' and sold many times. On one occasion she was bought by an IS slave merchant, who had acquired a number of women and girls and was keeping them in a large house – whose previous owners had been murdered. She described how ISIS members would come to buy a girl and would inspect them as if they were animals for sale (desbois, 2018). There was reportedly a hierarchy in place when it came to the sale of these women and girls. Sheiks would get first choice, then the emirs could choose and then after that the fighters were invited to make their selection (Dakhil et al. 2017). Girls were often bought in threes and fours, taken away and sexually abused until the ISIS member 'grew tired' of her; at which point she would be taken back to the market and sold again (Dakhil, 2017). Callimachi (2015) reported that this 'trade' in Yazidi women and girls played a huge part in the infrastructure of the so-called Islamic State. They had a dedicated fleet of buses used to transport victims, a large number of warehouses used to hold them and even viewing rooms that were used to inspect the girls before being sold (Callimachi, 2015). There were huge sums of money changing hands in purchasing these girls, one 'wholesaler' was described as earning as much as \$4000 for the sale of a Yazidi (Desbois, 2018) which could explain why some ISIS members went to despicable lengths to protect their profits. One Yazidi woman described how she had witnessed another woman being held by four men – two had hold of her arms and two had hold of her legs. She was then given an injection to anaesthetise her so that she could not fight back, as this may have left cuts or bruises to her body which would have decreased her value at the markets. When she woke, she had not realised she had lost her virginity (Desbois, 2018).

The operational set up of this system and the sheer scale of the 'slave markets' seems to support the position of Marczak (2017), who stated that the widespread abduction and enslavement of these women and girls must have been planned in advance by the so-called Islamic State as part of their wider strategy of genocide against the Yazidi population. Human Rights Watch (2015) highlighted the fact that in October 2014, ISIS had declared that the Yazidi women and girls were taken as 'spoils of war', and that sexual violence against non-Muslim slaves was justified within Islam. This is further evidence of a widespread and systematic plan of action by the so-called Islamic State.

Human Rights Watch (2015) has been documenting the system of organised sexual assault and sexual slavery, and highlights that these constitute crimes against humanity. This is supported by a report carried out by the Human Rights Council (2016) which highlighted categorically that ISIS had carried out acts of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity against the Yazidi people. The report suggested that over 3,200 women and girls had been taken by members of ISIS and were being subjected to what it described as 'unimaginable horrors'. The commission determined that the Yazidis are a protected religious group within the meaning of Article II of the Genocide Convention. Cetorelli et al. (2017) produced a report aimed at estimating the number of Yazidi people that had been affected by the attack. The research was carried out by interviewing Yazidi people from Sinjar that had been displaced and were now living in refugee camps in Kurdistan. They used a systematic random sample of 1300 households within the camp, and asked about household composition and whether they had experienced murders or abductions by IS members. Using this data, they made estimations to apply to the wider Yazidi community. They concluded that 2.5% of the Yazidi population was either murdered or abducted over the space of just a few days in August 2014 – amounting to some 9,900 innocent people.

Yazda are an organisation that has been set up to help the survivors of the Yazidi genocide to reintegrate into society and also to hold ISIS members accountable for their crimes. They are represented by the human rights lawyer Amal Clooney. In a report released by the organisation, it was highlighted that the enslavement of thousands of these women and girls – many of which are still missing – was intended to cause harm to the victims both physically

and psychologically, so as to cause long-term damage and create stigma in order to make it harder for survivors to rejoin their community (Yazda, 2017). This leads us on to the next section of this report – the victims.

3. Victims

One thing I noticed during the process of researching for this report was that articles and studies around this topic tended to focus mostly on the perpetrators of these human rights abuses. This report will discuss the implications and effects on the victims before moving on to discuss the perpetrators. The focus of research and policy in the field of human rights should be focussed on supporting the victims, whereas the popular media outlets tend to sensationalise the perpetrators which can lead to society being distracted from what is important, in this case, the young women and girls that are trying to rebuild their lives and those that are still missing.

Through the course of my literature review, there were a number of issues that were raised in terms of effects of sexual violence on victims during conflict. As there is not enough academic research on this in terms of the Yazidi genocide, I have collected what I feel is the most relevant information from other conflicts in order to apply to this situation. In doing so, three main themes appeared from the text and therefore each will be discussed separately in this section. Those are, the physical effects; psychological effects; and what can be described as the psychosocial effects.

Physical effects

Reid-Cunningham (2008) highlights that for survivors of sexual violence during conflicts, there is a high risk of contracting illnesses and infections such as HIV, syphilis and hepatitis.

This can apply to the Yazidi genocide as well as other conflicts, as the more a woman is bought and sold by different men, the more she is susceptible to the spread of infections. In the Rwanda conflict, it was suggested that as many as 70-90% of rape victims contracted HIV (Reid-Cunningham, 2008). The widespread nature of the ISIS 'sex markets' described in the previous section makes the spread of infections a serious concern for victims. A worrying issue to consider, especially with the backdrop of genocide, is that if any women were to contract infections such as HIV or hepatitis, and then were to become pregnant, these infections would be passed on and therefore essentially would create more victims.

For survivors of rape, their capacity to reproduce may be affected due to the physical injuries they receive. This is more relevant in the frame of sexual violence during conflict as women become victims of this crime on numerous occasions and often by more than one perpetrator at a time. Genital mutilation, such as torn vaginal walls, is therefore a common physical effect in sexual violence survivors (Reid-Cunningham, 2008). Physical trauma like this, especially in young victims can lead to complications when giving birth and effect the ability to carry a child to full term (Human Rights Watch, 2003). This is also an important point to consider in terms of the Yazidi genocide, where so many young women and girls have been the victims of sexual violence, if their ability to reproduce is compromised, then the future of the population is affected as new generations are not being born. This therefore highlights the effectiveness of sexual violence in terms of genocide.

On the other hand, the opposite may in fact be the case, victims could become pregnant. Gottschall (2004) states that often the desired goal of rape in conflict is to impregnate women from an enemy population. It has been said that the longest lasting effect of rape as a weapon in conflict, is the number of children it bears. According to a report by Greig (2001) rape during conflicts had led to the births of tens of thousands of children.

Human Rights Watch (2003) also highlights the effect of painful scarring in the genital area, making it difficult for victims to have a normal sex life in the future. Reid-Cunningham (2008) also points to scarring as having a huge impact of victims because they are unable to hide the fact that they have been raped. In certain cultures, this often prevents them from

having a 'normal' life in the future, as the woman becomes unacceptable as a wife in the eyes of her community. The effects of sexual violence are therefore both painful and stigmatizing, this can have a huge effect on the mental well-being of the victim, which leads on to the next area of discussion.

Psychological effects

Human Rights Watch (2003) found that a sense of immense personal shame was common amongst survivors. Women were embarrassed that they had been defiled by rebels in Sierra Leone and would therefore often fail to seek medical attention. This is an issue that is relevant to the Yazidi genocide as well. Yazda (2017) stated that one of the intentions of ISIS when carrying out their widespread campaign of sexual violence against the Yazidi women and girls was to create long-term psychological damage and create a stigma that would prevent these women from returning to their communities. It is common that victims of rape that struggle to reintegrate into their communities are either forced or choose to leave their country of origin. For example, it is said that between fifty and seventy per cent of females seeking asylum in the United Kingdom are victims of sexual violence and use this stigma as the basis of their claim for asylum (Amiss and Neale, 2006; Crawley, 1997).

Becoming pregnant through rape can have psychological effects as well as physical. Clifford (2008) suggests that regardless of whether the mother of a rape child decides to keep the child, give the child up for adoption or have the pregnancy terminated, they will still face a lifetime of anguish because of the conception. Often, mothers that keep their children can feel mixed emotions about the child, both loving and hating the child at the same time (Clifford, 2008). This could of course lead to issues around bonding with the child and creating a loving relationship which in the long-term can lead to further mental health issues for both the child and mother.

Victims that have been through events as traumatising as these need professional help and support. Foster and Minwalla (2008) highlight that survivors can become traumatised further

when they receive intrusive questioning rather than professional support. Following the escape of some Yazidi survivors, they were met with intrusive questioning by journalists that sought to find out about their experiences of abuse at the hands of ISIS. The priority of the journalists was to sell stories, and sensational headlines appeared globally, such as “ISIS sells sex slave girls for 'as little as a pack of cigarettes'" (Smith, 2015) or “Yazidi woman held as sex slave for three months by ISIS and gang raped speaks out about hideous suffering” (Halkon, 2015). This of course can have a huge impact on the psychological health of a survivor, now their traumatic experiences have become a topic of conversation around the world. When details of cases are revealed in the media, it can have a marginalising effect as other members of the community now know details of what has happened to the women. In conservative cultures, this can stigmatise individuals as well as the female population in general (Minwalla, 2015). By publishing the names of victims, reports published severely compromised the safety of survivors and their families (Biggs, 2015; Tomlinson, 2014; Callimachi, 2015). Human rights advocates have been vocal about the harm these reports have on victims (Amnesty International, 2014; Minwalla, 2015; Shackle, 2015). It has even been stated that journalists had violated ethical principles for reporting on sexual violence in conflict zones (Amnesty International, 2014). In some cases, journalists had offered money to Yazidi victims in exchange for personal information; in many cases women opened up, but then were left with emotional pain after recounting their traumatic experiences (Foster and Minwalla, 2018).

Many women are left in a state of sadness and anxiety, and have flashbacks (Foster and Minwalla, 2018). Some relatives fear that this trauma has become so unbearable that survivors will be driven to suicide. One Yazidi man described how his wife couldn't sleep and had panic attacks. He was afraid to leave her alone for her own safety (Amnesty International, 2014). This is supported by a Human Rights Watch report (2015) that stated that many survivors had already attempted suicide.

This can be linked to a study by Tekin et al (2016) that suggested Yazidi women had reported feeling depressed and worthless; and was linked to the diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder. According to the American Psychiatric Association (2000) post-traumatic stress disorder occurs when an individual experiences or witnesses events that threaten death or

serious injury. This therefore could be applied to the vast majority of Yazidi women and girls, as even the ones that avoided becoming victims themselves inevitably became witnesses to these crimes. Allen (1996) highlights rape as one of the most salient risk factors in terms of post-traumatic stress disorder. This is supported by the American Psychiatric Association (2000) that reported that the highest rates of PTSD were found in survivors of rape, military combat and captivity and genocide. The victims of the Yazidi genocide therefore need to receive professional help as soon as possible, rather than being stigmatised. If left untreated, post-traumatic stress disorder can cause victims of sexual violence to have re-experiences through reminders of the event (American Psychiatric Association, 2000).

Psychosocial

Psychosocial effects can be described as the way in which the genocide impacts on the Yazidi population in general. Amnesty International (2014) highlighted that relatives of kidnapped women and girls had projected concerns not just about the physical suffering they experienced, but also the negative social impact caused by the abductions. As stated before, one of the main concerns was about finding husbands for Yazidi women, even those that had not been a victim of sexual violence themselves, as it was just commonly assumed that all those that were abducted had been raped (Dakhil et al. 2017).

Survivors of sexual violence can find it incredibly difficult to re-join their communities and struggle to maintain relationships with their loved ones (Reid-Cunningham, 2008). This is a desired effect in genocidal campaigns, Seifert (1994) highlights that women are targeted during ethnic conflict due to their importance in the family structure. By preventing women from returning to their previous roles within the family and society, the entire community is affected. This is supported by Macdonald (2003) who highlights that women hold communities together, therefore an attack on them is an attack on the community as a whole, and preventing them from returning causes a collapse in familial as well as societal structures. Copelon (1994) states that women, as mothers, wives and caretakers, keep society functioning. They therefore become prime targets in conflict. In Rwanda, rape survivors became social outcasts, they became segregated and destitute and many claimed that death

would have been a preferable fate (Sharlach, 2000). It has been suggested that, in some cultures, rape is worse than death (Reid-Cunningham, 2008), this is due to the fact that the survivor lives through the experience. Therefore, their suffering continues indefinitely and can impact the rest of their lives and can even have effects on their communities. During genocide, rape is used as it achieves two goals; the woman loses the will to live, so is theoretically 'killed', but because she continues to live, she acts as a constant reminder to her people of their downfall (Reid-Cunningham, 2008). It has been suggested that mass rape can leave lasting, perhaps irreversible trauma for the individual and the wider community and is therefore used as a weapon in the destruction of ethnic groups (Sharlach, 2000). In terms of the Yazidis, only time will tell how these women and girls will be reintegrated with their communities when they return to their homelands. However, early reports suggested that Yazidi families were ready to welcome back victims of ISIS (Amnesty International, 2014).

4. Perpetrators

It has been said that “conflict-related sexual violence is undoubtedly a complex phenomenon” (Wood, 2014, p.463), and that statement certainly applies to this situation. However, it is important to attempt to understand as much as we can because understanding the situation can be the first step in preventing future incidents. Sharlach (2000) wrote a report on the use of rape in genocide in three different conflicts, Bangladesh, Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. This study highlighted the ability to apply concepts and theories across different conflicts and geographical locations. In this section, theories and evidence from previous conflicts will be used to explain why perpetrators carry out such devastating human rights abuses. In the course of the literature review, a number of theories were put forward, but only the three most relevant theories will be addressed in this section (Feminist theory, cultural pathology theory and strategic rape theory).

Feminist Theory

As mentioned previously, Feminist scholars such as Brownmiller (1975) deserve credit for leading the way in documenting and investigating the issue of wartime rape. The idea was to extend the power hypothesis of rape into the sphere of war (Brownmiller, 1975). That is that, just like in peacetime, rape is used to ensure male dominance (Barstow, 2000). Therefore, in its simplest terms, sexual violence is about misogyny, about men asserting their dominance over women (Gottschall, 2004; Thornhill and Palmer, 2000). So, in this respect, it could be argued that this could be applied to ISIS as, on the one hand, they do use sexual violence to exert their dominance. However, on the other hand, it could be argued that ISIS are attempting to ensure dominance over other ethnic minorities, which is the more pressing issue. This ties in with Ahrum (2016), who suggests that the so-called Islamic State attempted to construct a hyper-masculine state, based on supremacist ideology and Sunni fundamentalism. Their idea was formed around a notion of ethno-sectarian hierarchy. So, in essence they were asserting their dominance not just over women, but also other ethnic groups within their controlled territories. Although the use of sexual violence is widespread and ingrained in the ISIS system, which highlights the issues of masculinity and dominance, a critique of the Feminist theory in terms of its applicability to ISIS would be to ask the question, if sexual violence is about male dominance over women, why don't ISIS rape all women? No reports so far have suggested that members of ISIS have raped local Muslim women in their controlled territories.

Mullins (2009) produced a report that attempted to highlight elements that were at play when it came to influencing individual's decision-making processes when involved in acts of serious sexual violence during the Rwandan genocide. On the individual level, it boiled down to a combination of motivation and opportunity. Essentially, this rings true with Brownmiller's (1975) suggestion that men rape because they can. This can be applied to ISIS because, for a long time in Iraq and Syria, they operated with relative impunity, the armed forces of each country struggled to contain IS forces and without real international intervention, ISIS were able to literally do whatever they wanted. They persecuted ethnic and religious minorities, persecuted the LGBT community, destroyed holy sites and enslaved women because they could, nobody was stopping them.

There is a suggestion that during war, men must prove themselves, not just to each other, but to females as well, and sexual violence therefore becomes a means to do just that (Benard, 1994). This suggestion of masculinity and dominance is said to be an inevitable component of war, and that women are simply 'regrettable victims' (Brownmiller, 1975, p.32). Some commentators have declared that sexual violence is the act of the conqueror, as a way of quantifying success and being the victor includes a right to both the enemy's property and their women (Brownmiller, 1975; Benard, 1994). This directly relates to ISIS, as previously mentioned, they claimed that the Yazidi women were their 'spoils of war' (Human Rights Watch, 2015). The idea that this was justified within Islam because the women they were enslaving were non-Muslim links to Brownmiller's (1975) notion of 'rape in the name of God. ISIS members believe that they are fighting in order to carry out God's will of creating an Islamic caliphate and therefore all non-believers are legitimate targets.

Cultural Pathology Theory

The idea behind a Cultural Pathology Theory is to look back at a culture's or nation's history to ascertain whether there are certain developmental factors that can be linked to the prevalence of sexual violence perpetration. An example of this is Iris Chang's (1997) study of Japanese soldiers that carried out widespread sexual violence against Chinese women in Nanking. Her research posited that a combination of the contempt for women within Japanese military culture, a notion of the Chinese being an inferior people, the high level of militarisation in Japanese schools and the brutality of Japanese military training had all culminated in the what became known as 'the rape of Nanking' (Chang, 1997).

In terms of cultural pathology and ISIS, we are looking at a religious ideological viewpoint, that of sunni fundamentalism. Therefore, even though members of ISIS joined the organisation from all over the world, they all come from the same cultural background. With that in mind, we can link this to the idea that sexual violence can be used as a way of reinforcing the bonds between Sunni fundamentalist Muslims that are from different geographical locations (Ahram, 2016). Furthermore, we know that the leadership of ISIS is

made up mostly of men from Syria and Iraq (Schaak, 2018) and that both these countries had a long history of sexual violence prior to the existence of ISIS (Ahram, 2015), therefore, it could be suggested that the organisation would have an ingrained cultural pathology and newcomers from around the world would be indoctrinated accordingly. There are aspects of Chang's (1997) study that ring true when applied to ISIS; specifically, the idea of viewing other peoples as inferior. Callimachi (2015) described the rape of a twelve-year-old Yazidi girl by an ISIS fighter who justified the heinous act by suggesting it was not a sin to do so because she was a non-believer. He believed that the Quran gave him the right to rape her. These individuals have been radicalised in a way that they cannot see that their actions are human rights abuses/ crimes against humanity.

Some scholars have claimed that military organisations actually have a culture of their own and recruits adopt this culture, one that generally fosters hostile attitudes towards women. In situations of conflict, these hostile attitudes towards females can lead to a sense of 'entitlement' to rape (Morris, 2000; Chang, 1997). This of course can be linked to ISIS' idea that they are entitled to rape non-Muslim women because of their ideological version of Islam that they have internalised as the true representation of Islam. It could be argued then, that this is their cultural pathology leading to sexual violence which they view as their 'entitlement'.

Mackinnon (1994b) used the widespread availability of pornography as an example to explain why Serbs raped Muslim and Croat women. The idea put forward was that, pornography was so readily available and viewed by men that a whole population was able to dehumanise women in a way that led to sexual violence during the genocide. Now of course this was written in 1994 and if written in today's society it would probably fail to gain much traction due to how much more pornography is available today. However, this can be linked in a way to the situation with ISIS and its members. If we consider the fact that ISIS haven't tried to hide the fact that they have created 'sex markets', in fact they have publicised the fact. This means that members of ISIS that have joined the organisation since the Yazidi genocide began in August 2014, are actively joining in order to claim what they view as their 'entitlement'. IS propaganda has created this cultural identity that has drawn fanatical Islamists from all over the world to take part.

Although this theory can be applied in part to the so-called Islamic State, in general applicability to sexual violence during conflict, if there is a cultural pathology that dictates men will become rapist during war, then why do men from all different cultures rape? Japanese soldiers in Nanking, RUF rebels in Sierra Leone, Serbian soldiers and Sunni fundamentalists all come from inherently different cultures, but they all rape innocent women and girls.

Strategic Rape Theory

Currently the most influential theory of mass wartime rape is 'strategic rape theory'. This theory suggests that widespread sexual violence can be used to achieve objectives in the same way as using bombs. Although some critics suggest that widespread rape during war is not planned but can benefit military planners (for example Wood, 2014), some academics suggest that mass rape is in fact a coordinated and effective means of conducting warfare (Thomas and Regan, 1994; Allen, 1996). Gottschall (2004) suggested that rape was used as a weapon of war in order to destabilise enemy populations and emasculate enemy forces by creating a sense that they had failed to do their duty in protecting their women. Following conflicts where rape was widespread, such as Rwanda and Bosnia, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1820 where they formally recognised rape as a tactic of war (UN Security Resolution 1820).

It has been suggested that sexual slavery is used to satisfy the needs of soldiers, so that they perform better in battle (Barstow, 2000). There is an underlying idea here that links into Brownmiller (1975), that soldiers will inevitably rape and in order to prevent soldiers from raping and pillaging uncontrollably, sexual slavery is brought into effect to facilitate the rape. It has been claimed previously in this report that ISIS had premeditated plans to create a sex trade, this theory could suggest why they did so. In an article written for the International Committee of the Red Cross, Elisabeth Wood (2014) claimed that often in conflict, widespread rape occurs as a practice rather than a strategy. However, she goes on to state that in the case of ISIS, the sexual slavery of the Yazidi women and girls is clearly strategic

(Wood, 2014, p.473). The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI, 2015) stressed that these acts were widespread and systematic and used to destroy the ethnic minorities in IS controlled territory.

Strategic rape theory suggests that the use of sexual violence is a method used by attacking forces to make the defending forces want to flee (Benard, 1994). In this sense, if a community hears about the use of sexual violence perpetrated by invading forces, they are much more likely to run away instead of staying and putting up a fight. As previously stated, ISIS has gone to great lengths to publicise their atrocities, through their media wing. By doing this, it has gained a fearsome reputation (Amnesty International, 2014). This strategy has had the desired effect, as both Kurdish and Iraqi forces have fled in the face of ISIS attacks. It was reported by Amnesty International (2014) that members of the Kurdish Peshmerga had claimed to have left their defensive positions in order to return home and ensure their wives and children were moved to safety due to fears that IS would enslave them. One Yazidi man suggested that the fear of the potential crimes ISIS would commit against his wife and children was greater than the fear of death (Amnesty International, 2014). The fear of ISIS spread so far that reports surfaced claiming that women besieged at Kobane and Mount Sinjar had equipped themselves with grenades as a last resort to prevent capture (Bright, 2014).

Not only does this strategy force people to flee, it can ensure that they don't return in the future. It is common for survivors or witnesses to avoid locations that act as traumatic reminders of the abuses that took place there. Zalihić-Kaurin (1994) states that public acts of sexual violence ensure that the desire to return to that location is removed for large number of people at once. This is true of the Yazidi people also, as reports have suggested that people are still taking refuge on Mount Sinjar despite the loss of territory ISIS has suffered.

Where strategic rape can be used as a technique to make defensive forces run away, it can also be used as a way of ensuring the attacking forces don't run away as well. We have already heard how Yazidi women and girls had been given as 'gifts' to ISIS fighters, this may have been as an incentive to stay and fight with the organisation. It has also been suggested

that sexual violence following a conquest creates a bond amongst soldiers, which can act as an incentive to continue fighting and taking ground in order to continue receiving the rewards that victories bring (Barstow, 2000; Wood, 2006).

Strategic rape can be directly applied to the idea of genocide and ethnic cleansing. In reference to the conflict in Rwanda, Mullins (2009) suggested that there was systematic evidence of the use of rape as a specific weapon of war, in order to maintain dominance by ethnically cleansing or creating mixed-ethnic children. Benard (1994) suggests that widespread sexual violence is a signal of intent to destroy an entire group. When the objective of an armed force/group is genocide, causing psychosocial trauma amongst the target community through mass rape becomes part of the plan. For this reason, it has been suggested that young girls are specifically targeted as the trauma caused will be much greater (Benard, 1994). Strategic rape theory is sometimes referred to as ‘genocidal rape’ as its main goal is to effectively destroy a people and its culture (Mackinnon, 1994a; Hyun-Kyung, 2000). During genocide, the desired outcome of mass rape is to cause pregnancies amongst the victim population (Gottschall, 2004; Barstow, 2000; Benard, 1994). This was certainly the case with ISIS. In the book ‘The Terrorist Factory’, Desbois (2018) described an initiative carried out by ISIS to train young male children in order to create an army of the future. Two ways that ISIS planned to gain young boys to implement this plan was to kidnap ethnic minority boys and convert them to their interpretation of Islam; and also, to impregnate the Yazidi women in their captivity and take the male children away when they would have been old enough.

5. Accountability

Yazda is an organisation that was set up to support the victims of the Yazidi genocide. As well as conducting advocacy around the world with survivors and international partners (Yazda, 2018b), they also collect testimonies of survivors in order to build up evidence against ISIS members. Amal Clooney has been a leading figure within the organisation since 2016 by acting as legal counsel. Her main goal is to secure accountability for international

crimes perpetrated by the so-called Islamic State against the Yazidi population (Yazda, 2018a). Amal led a year-long advocacy campaign which culminated in the Security Council adopting Resolution 2379 (UN Security Council 2017) on 21st September 2017. This Resolution established an investigative team to collect, preserve and store evidence of ISIS crimes.

Although the investigative team has been tasked with investigating all crimes and human rights abuses by the so-called Islamic State (UN Security Council, 2017), it is understood that the central motivation for this new and unprecedented initiative was the focus on gathering evidence concerning the genocide of the Yazidi people (Schaack, 2018; Yazda, 2018a). The resolution recognises that ISIS' crimes are part of the ideology and strategic objectives of ISIS. And that the establishment of the investigative team is a first step to holding ISIS members accountable, particularly those who bear the greatest responsibility (UN Security Council, 2017).

Following the liberation of Mosul in August 2017, the government in Iraq approached the Security Council to ask for assistance in ensuring that ISIS members were held accountable. The Iraqi government insisted on the pursuit of domestic criminal proceedings under Iraqi law (Schaak, 2018). Resolution 2379 (UN Security Council, 2017) aimed at supporting the domestic efforts of the Iraqi courts in their efforts to hold IS members accountable. The plan set out was to assist with the collection, and preservation of evidence that may amount to genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

An important part of the directive issued to the Investigative team was focussed on cooperation and capacity building (UN Security Council, 2017). This will see the team working closely with Iraqi criminal law experts and investigative judges, meaning there will be an opportunity to exchange ideas and best practice, with a view to improving the Iraqi institutional capabilities. This can have a positive effect in the long term as an increase in the capabilities of the Iraqi justice system could lead to more chance of ISIS being held fully accountable for their crimes.

The attempt to improve the domestic legal system has led to an emergence in a hybrid tribunal model (Schaak, 2018). This has seen international and domestic personnel working closely with their local counterparts. The investigative team is to be funded through assessed rather than voluntary contributions. Additional contributions will be provided through a trust fund set up by the Secretary-General to accept voluntary donations (UN Security Council, 2017). The United Kingdom has already pledged to contribute to the fund (Schaak, 2018).

This can be seen as a huge step forward for the Iraqi justice system, because the system in Iraq had been heavily criticised in a 72-page report by Human Rights Watch (2017) for relying on their counterterrorism courts to quickly put ISIS suspects to trial under their counter terror laws, often exclusively on the charge of membership of ISIS. There was no distinction between the severity of charges and no attempt to prioritise the worst offenses. The Human Rights Watch (2017) report also highlighted the fact that there was an absence of a national strategy when it came to prosecuting IS suspects, there were no thorough judicial record of the crimes and no meaningful participation of the victims.

At the time, the authorities had claimed to use compensation to address victim rights and a special review board to review the crimes against the Yazidi population. However, the report (Human Rights Watch, 2017) highlighted that in fact representatives of victims had no knowledge of any compensation scheme. Also, that Yazidi community leaders have never been contacted by the review board, and that the board itself had no budget or location.

A report released just this month (August 2018) suggested that things have not improved yet. NGOs working in Iraq have claimed that the government and justice system are not performing their duties properly, by claiming that the UN-mandated team have not been allowed to enter and begin work yet (Amnesty International, 2018). Furthermore, the Iraqi justice system remains critically flawed. It has been suggested that courts often resort to the death penalty after unfair trials and do not deliver justice for the victims of ISIS (Amnesty International, 2018).

Worryingly, it has also been claimed that Iraqi authorities are not protecting mass graves (Amnesty International, 2018). Since 2014, there have been around 68 mass graves discovered in Sinjar; protecting these sites is crucial not only for the preservation of evidence of ISIS crimes, but also essential in the process of identifying missing persons.

In the US, Amal Clooney represents two Yazidi survivors in a case against Umm Sayyaf, a captured ISIS member and widow of ISIS' former Minister of Oil and Gas, before the District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia (Yazda, 2018a). The fact that an ISIS member is on trial in the United States of America highlights the possibility of prosecuting other members in other countries. For example, if foreign fighters return to their home countries they could face trial for the crimes they have committed in the Middle East.

There have been calls amongst some commentators to try ISIS members at the International Criminal Court (ICC). The court was established in 1998 through the ratification of the Rome Statute (UN General Assembly, 1998). the intention of the court was to prosecute the most serious war criminals and tyrants. The ICC can obtain jurisdiction over individuals if the perpetrators are citizens of Rome Statute countries. The ICC therefore has jurisdiction over some foreign fighters that have joined ISIS, under Article 12(2)(b) of the Rome Statute. In 2016, for the first time in its history, the international criminal court added rape to a war-crimes conviction. Finding the former vice president of Congo guilty of abuses including sexual crimes relating to a militia intervention in the neighbouring Central African Republic (Sleff, 2016). Hopefully this case is only the beginning and more cases are brought to trial. Potentially members of ISIS if they avoid trial in Iraq, however, the right course of action for now would be to pursue trials within the Iraqi justice system with the assistance of the investigative team, so as to respect their jurisdiction as the offences mostly took place on their territory. For this to happen though, the Iraqi government need to step up, allow the UN-mandated team to get on with the task at hand and work together for the best outcomes for the victims. If not, we may see a more determined push from advocates of charging senior ISIS members at the ICC.

Conclusion

The scale of the persecution suffered by the Yazidis was highlighted by Yazda (2017) in a report that suggested the religious minority had suffered 74 genocidal campaigns against them throughout their history. Allison (2018) highlights that they have been targeted because they are viewed as ‘devil worshippers’ due to the fact that they are a non-Abrahamic religion. They came to the forefront of the world media’s attention following the siege of Mount Sinjar where tens of thousands of Yazidis were trapped by attacking IS forces (Cooper and Shear, 2014). It has been suggested that since the so-called Islamic State started attacking Yazidi settlements in August 2014, around 3100 Yazidis have been killed, and around 6800 have been kidnapped (Tagay et al, 2017). The women and girls that were taken have been subjected to the horrific act of sexual enslavement (Otten, 2017). According to the Human Rights Council (2016), there is no doubt that the so-called Islamic State has committed the crime of genocide against the Yazidi people, ISIS intended to destroy the Yazidi people through murder, sexual enslavement and torture; through the implementation of measures that prevented Yazidi children from being born, and also the transfer of Yazidi children from their families to ISIS households (Human Rights Council, 2016).

Following the attack, ISIS members were said to have separated the men from the women; they then executed all men and boys aged over 14 (Reinl, 2015). The ISIS members then stripped the women and girls naked and began to ‘assess’ them in terms of prettiness and breast size and were trying to ascertain which of them were virgins. Those that were deemed to be the most profitable – the youngest and prettiest virgins – were then taken to the IS stronghold of Raqqa to be sold. Callimachi (2015) reported that this ‘trade’ in Yazidi women and girls played a huge part in the infrastructure of the so-called Islamic State. They had a dedicated fleet of buses used to transport victims, a large number of warehouses used to hold them and even viewing rooms that were used to inspect the girls before being sold (Callimachi, 2015). There were huge sums of money changing hands in purchasing these girls, one ‘wholesaler’ was described as earning as much as \$4000 for the sale of a Yazidi (Desbois, 2018) The operational set up of this system and the sheer scale of the ‘slave markets’ seems to support the position of Marczak (2017), who stated that the widespread abduction and enslavement of these women and girls must have been planned in advance by

the so-called Islamic State as part of their wider strategy of genocide against the Yazidi population.

In terms of effects on survivors of sexual violence, there is a high risk of contracting illnesses and infections such as HIV, syphilis and hepatitis. Genital mutilation, such as torn vaginal walls, is also a common physical effect in sexual violence survivors (Reid-Cunningham, 2008). Physical trauma like this, especially in young victims can lead to complications when giving birth and affect the ability to carry a child to full term (Human Rights Watch, 2003). Many women are left in a state of sadness and anxiety, and have flashbacks (Foster and Minwalla, 2018). Some relatives fear that this trauma has become so unbearable that survivors will be driven to suicide. One Yazidi man described how his wife couldn't sleep and had panic attacks. He was afraid to leave her alone for her own safety (Amnesty International, 2014). This is supported by a Human Rights Watch report (2015) that stated that many survivors had already attempted suicide. Allen (1996) highlights rape as one of the most salient risk factors in terms of post-traumatic stress disorder. This is supported by the American Psychiatric Association (2000) that reported that the highest rates of PTSD were found in survivors of rape, military combat and captivity and genocide. Psychosocial effects can be described as the way in which the genocide impacts on the Yazidi population in general. Survivors of sexual violence can find it incredibly difficult to re-join their communities and struggle to maintain relationships with their loved ones (Reid-Cunningham, 2008).

Feminist theory extended the power hypothesis of rape into the sphere of war (Brownmiller, 1975). That is that, just like in peacetime, rape is used to ensure male dominance (Barstow, 2000). Therefore, in its simplest terms, sexual violence is about misogyny, about men asserting their dominance over women (Gottschall, 2004; Thornhill and Palmer, 2000) Some commentators have declared that sexual violence is the act of the conqueror, as way of quantifying success and being the victor includes a right to both the enemy's property and their women (Brownmiller, 1975; Benard, 1994). This directly relates to ISIS, as previously mentioned, they claimed that the Yazidi women were their 'spoils of war' (Human Rights Watch, 2015). In terms of cultural pathology and ISIS, we are looking at a religious ideological viewpoint, that of sunni fundamentalism. Therefore, even though members of

ISIS joined the organisation from all over the world, they all come from the same cultural background. With that in mind, we can link this to the idea that sexual violence can be used as a way of reinforcing the bonds between Sunni Muslims that are from different geographical locations (Ahram, 2016). The idea of viewing other peoples as inferior. Callimachi (2015) described the rape of a twelve-year-old Yazidi girl by an ISIS fighter who justified the heinous act by suggesting it was not a sin to do so because she was a non-believer.

Strategic rape theory suggests that the use of sexual violence is a method used by attacking forces to make the defending forces want to flee (Benard, 1994). In this sense, if a community hears about the use of sexual violence perpetrated by invading forces, they are much more likely to run away instead of staying and putting up a fight. As previously stated, ISIS has gone to great lengths to publicise their atrocities, through their media wing. By doing this, it has gained a fearsome reputation (Amnesty International, 2014). This strategy has had the desired effect, as both Kurdish and Iraqi forces have fled in the face of ISIS attacks. It was reported by Amnesty International (2014) that members of the Kurdish Peshmerga had claimed to have left their defensive positions in order to return home and ensure their wives and children were moved to safety due to fears that IS would enslave them. Strategic rape can be directly applied to the idea of genocide and ethnic cleansing, a key component of ISIS' reign of terror.

In terms of steps towards accountability, Amal Clooney led a year-long advocacy campaign which culminated in the Security Council adopting Resolution 2379 (UN Security Council 2017) on 21st September 2017. This Resolution established an investigative team to collect, preserve and store evidence of ISIS crimes. Following the liberation of Mosul in August 2017, the government in Iraq approached the Security Council to ask for assistance in ensuring that ISIS members were held accountable. The Iraqi government insisted on the pursuit of domestic criminal proceedings under Iraqi law (Schaak, 2018). Resolution 2379 (UN Security Council, 2017) aimed at supporting the domestic efforts of the Iraqi courts in their efforts to hold IS members accountable. There is new hope that these developments will lead to ISIS members being held accountable for their crimes in the not too distant future.

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