

SocialDialogue

Free Magazine of The International Association of Schools of Social Work



**Wars and
Armed
Conflict:
Voices from
the Unheard**

Social Dialogue #27

The International Association of
Schools of Social Work

Website: socialdialogue.online

ISSN: 2221-352X

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Editor-in-chief
Carolyn Noble, PhD

Editorial:

There is no excuse for anyone not to know that wars and armed conflict cause huge disruptions in the social fabric of countries, communities, families and individuals potentially contributing to long-term intergenerational trauma and infrastructure destruction. People are killed, disabled, displaced, and raped. Children are abandoned and/or separated from their family, networks and social and welfare supports: the consequences are life changing for everyone.

In order to bring to our attention to current and past consequences of wars and armed conflict the IASSW Human Rights and Social Justice committee has gathered articles for this 27th edition of the Social Dialogue from social workers working within their communities that have been affected by internal conflict and civil wars. They have gathered articles covering conflicts in Northeast Pakistan, the war against the Amazonian Indians in Brazil, the long serving Marawi conflict in Philippines, civil war in Sri Lanka, Columbia, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Palestine, Kashmir, Democratic Republic of Congo and Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict, tensions between Israelis and Arabs in Israel doing social work, and the war in the Ukraine. Indeed, these instances of internal conflict and wars are most often underreported or ignored. While the geo-political and cultural factors need addressing, the immediate needs of individuals, families, women and children and communities are also pressing, varied and complex. And, as with most events such as this social work has an important role to play: from peace-keeping and peace- building, to reparation, and professional interventions to address the trauma, and secure resources for peoples survival and wellbeing.

The stories in this edition are sobering, with examples of thoughtful action social workers can take when faced with war and armed conflict and its consequences. Enjoy!

Guest Editorial: Human Rights and Social Justice Committee

Guest Editors: Human Rights and Social Justice Committee; IASSW



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The proposal for this special edition of Social Dialogue came from the Human Rights and Social Justice Committee of the IASSW. Following many discussions on the positioning of social work in the context of violent conflicts and destructive disasters, a decision was taken to create a platform where members of the social work fraternity can speak to these events in their respective or neighbouring regions. People across the globe continue to experience atrocities that negatively impact their lives with the most vulnerable members of society experiencing the brunt of these man-made and natural destructions.

News outlets provide coverage of some prominent events while many, because of the postcolonial global order, escape the exposure and thus the consciousness of the international community. The social work profession finds itself amid various forms of interventions between governments and these vulnerable communities, shining the light on various forms of human rights violations and injustices. This special edition is designed to create a discussion platform about various conflicts and disasters from a social work perspective, essentially recognising the right for all atrocities to be acknowledged.

This special edition includes 13 articles which from the perspective of social work discuss the violation of human rights and oppression of various groups in many parts of the world. Social workers and social work educators from areas of conflict around the globe, such as Africa, the Middle East, Europe and America made contributions. The articles are addressing professional and pedagogic dilemmas, regarding social work practice and education under conflictual circumstances. The types of conflict presented in this issue are varied and include different circumstances causing human rights violation, such as military conflicts, natural

disasters, governmental corruption, religious radicalization, conflict driven by colonial violence, and conflict driven by ethnoreligious differences.

Despite the variation in the locations and in the types of conflict presented in this issue, we can identify a few reoccurring themes that characterize social work in areas of conflict. Armed conflicts, wars and disasters and internal displacements impact all dimensions of human development and are specifically detrimental to vulnerable groups, women and children, indigenous communities and young people who grow up witnessing violence and conflict in their social environment. These atrocities silence the voices of people in these territories. Social work has the roots to fight social injustice and human rights violations and should be a central role-player to hold governments accountable. By its design, social work focuses on mediating conflict in daily practice. For the social work profession to strengthen its role in the context of wars, conflict, internal displacement due to political atrocities, social work education should facilitate greater understanding of local context to develop context-specific and more radical intervention strategies.

**Annamaria Campanini**

President, International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW)

**Barbara W. Shank**

Secretary, International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW)

President's report

Dear colleagues,

We are looking forward to welcoming in the new year and providing an update on IASSW activities. First of all we would like to report about the Joint World Conference on social work education and social development sponsored collaboratively by IASSW and ICSW held on October 26-28, 2022, in Seoul, South Korea. In short, it was an amazing experience using hybrid technology opening up the conference to colleagues around the world who could not attend in person.

The conference opening with remarks from Dr. Sang-Muk Suh, President of the International Council on Social Welfare and Dr. Annamaria Campanini, President of the International Association of Schools of Social Work. A congratulatory message was delivered by Kyoo-hong Cho, Minister of Health and Welfare, Republic of Korea.

During the opening ceremony, we experienced a fantastic digital show, and skilled Korean traditional musicians and dancers.

Two plenary lectures were delivered. The first by Dr. Gloria Kirwan from the Graduate School of Healthcare Management, Royal College of Medicine and the second, the Katherine Kendall Lecturer, Dr. Julia A. Watkins, Co-director of the Southeast Europe Academic Women's Leadership Initiative. Four special lectures were delivered by Sang-Mol Suh, Neil Gilbert, Chaime Marcuello-Servos and Darja Zavirsek, the Eileen Younghusband lecturer. During the Opening Ceremony, President Campanini presented Dr. In-Young Han, an award from IASSW in appreciation for her long-time service and commitment to IASSW.

IASSW extends its heartfelt thanks to the local management committee, the global management committee (Annaline Keet, Alexandra Mustafa and Junko Wake representing IASSW) and the scientific committee for organizing and putting on this amazing world conference.

All sessions were recorded and broadcast synchronously. Over one hundred and twenty-seven presentations, workshops, and posters were delivered on day two with several

hundred presenters. The range of topics was extensive, all contributing to the consideration of social work education and social development post-pandemic.

Following presentations on day two, IASSW and ICSW held a book launch featuring two books, *Remaking Social Work for the New Global Era*, edited by Tiong Ngoh Tan and P. K. Shajahan. This book was the product of work completed for the Rimini World Conference that was cancelled due to COVID. *Digital Transformation and Social Well-being: Promoting an Inclusive Society* edited by Antonio Lopez Peaez, Sang-Muh Suh and Sergei Zelenev was also launched. Two books *The Origins of Social Care* and *Social Work: Creating a Global Future and HIV, Sex and Sexuality in Later Life* were presented by Mark Henrickson.

The final day of the conference included a field site visit to the Social Welfare Corporation Angel's Haven which cares for children and also provides services to the elderly in the community.

Delegates traveled to Seoul from many different countries, and all indicated their appreciation of returning to in-person meeting to strengthen old relationships, build new ones and have the opportunity to collaborate and network with likeminded colleagues.

SWESD 2022 Seoul was a major success. All involved must celebrate the accomplishments. We are looking forward to the next tripartite world conference to be held in Panama, April 4-7, 2023. I hope to see you all there!

IASSW in collaboration with IFSW has launched the Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training (2020). IASSW plans to work with schools of social work across the globe to implement these standards to achieve excellence in social work education, grounded in deep respect for cultural and regional contexts. Since launching the revised Global Standards, IASSW has disseminated them through workshops, webinars and conferences. IASSW has convened a Task Force of thought leaders to develop ways to support the adoption of the standards as a framework for social work education across the globe.

A reminder: IASSW Capacity Building Committee offers Peer Review Consultation services intentionally and explicitly aligned with the Global Standards: <https://www.iassw-aiets.org/capacity-building/> <https://www.iassw-aiets.org/capacity-building/>. In 2023 IASSW plans to launch an online certificated course for educators worldwide to comprehend and reflect on the Global Standards. Details to follow. Follow IASSW on <https://www.iassw-aiets.org/news/>

International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) has launched its student membership for all social work students. The membership is available at 20\$ for all students. We are very excited about welcoming students, particularly doctoral students, into our global network.

Student member have access to:

- A worldwide network of social work educators through conferences, seminars, exchanges, and listservs.
- The IASSW Virtual Knowledge Center.
- Monthly & Weekly updates from social work schools and associations through newsletters.
- Opportunities to apply and benefit from IASSW projects and funds for enhancing social work education.
- Eligibility to participate in the proceedings of the United Nations (UN)
- The IASSW website, Social Dialogue online magazine
- Free access to monthly webinars on discussions around social work-relevant themes.

2022 was a busy year for IASSW, please review our newsletter, participate in the webinar and join IASSW to be part of the Global community educators and scholars.

We are also proud to introduce to the 27th edition of the Social Dialogue guest edited by members of the IASSW Human Rights and Social Justice Committee that addresses the topic: Wars and Armed Conflict: Voices of the Unheard. There are some very important and sobering articles in this edition.

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Social Work Practice in Conflict Zones of Northwest Pakistan: Key Lessons from the Field on Gender Justice and Violence Against Women Prevention Initiatives

The Role of Social Work in Global Conflict Zones

The proliferation of armed conflict and natural disasters in the 21st century has redefined and reshaped the role of international and local social workers. Social workers are at the frontline in the post-conflict and post-disaster phases in various regions across the globe (Truell, 2019; Yesufu, 2006). The global agendas for international social work practice and policies are urging social workers to play an active role in addressing issues of socioeconomic inequalities, promote the dignity and worth of all people, create awareness on environmental sustainability, and advocate for recognition of the importance of human relationships (Rinkle & Powers, 2019).

Thus, social workers have become critical actors in stability, security, rebuilding, and rehabilitation efforts in these conflict and disaster zones and have adopted an increasingly influential role in policymaking as they navigate through novel global challenges for the

profession (Radulescu, 2020). Social workers' efforts are not limited to conflict and disasters, but they also play a critical role as countries encounter its post-conflict or post-disaster phases, in particular, in leading initiatives in humanitarian relief, food and water security and distribution, mental health, and other redevelopment and rehabilitation efforts (BASW, 2019).

As the role of social workers continues to develop and advance in this regard, it is critical to acknowledge that those in the profession themselves are also faced with a multitude of issues such as "fear of loss of life, violence, unstable infrastructures, and working conditions" as well as their own ethical and personal conflicts in their fieldwork (Moore, 2016, p.384; Simmons & Rycraft, 2010). Despite these concerns, social workers are often at the forefront of any conflict, providing critical support and assistance in conflict zones and having a major impact on the post-conflict, post-disaster trajectory of a country. The most impacted by such conflicts and disasters are women, children, and marginalized communities, often overlooked by governments and mainstream rehabilitation programmes and whose special needs and rights are easily negotiated out (Snouber, 2016). Social workers bring social justice and equity perspectives to advocate for marginalized groups and provide greater assistance and support to those who are identified as historically oppressed. As such, social workers play a more critical role in supporting gender justice initiatives and preventing violence against women and children during and after conflicts and disasters (Javadian, 2007).

Conflict Background of Pakistan

Pakistan has faced a multitude of conflicts and disasters that have left devastating impacts on the country. The War on Terror launched by the United States (US), in response to 9/11 attacks with the help of members from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Pakistan alliance, invaded Afghanistan in 2001. The Taliban's top leadership managed to flee and seek refuge across Afghanistan's eastern border with Pakistan, that is to say the ex Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). The Taliban retaliated against the Pakistan government mainly through suicide bombings specifically on the armed and security forces but also on the general public. This has resulted in over \$150 billion in economic losses, over 3.7 million persons displaced, and over 70,000 citizens killed which has left the country still dealing with its repercussions (Ahmed, 2011). The 2005 Kashmir earthquake resulted in the deaths of over 100,000 people and displaced over 2.5 million people across Kashmir and Pakistan.

This was considered the deadliest earthquake in the South Asian history, forcing the country into extensive rebuilding and recovery efforts (Mahmood et al., 2015). The impact of these conflicts and disasters cannot be underestimated as Pakistan continues to face complex issues stemming from these conflicts and disasters. More specifically, women and children have been significantly impacted by these conflicts and disasters, with females making up nearly half of internally displaced persons (IDPs) at 46% of all age groups. With girls' education and health centers being the common targets of Taliban's militant attacks, the

female literacy rates in the northwest tribal areas of Pakistan have fallen below 1% (Mohsin, 2013; Naqvi et al., 2012).

Taliban resists girls' education based on their rigid and extreme interpretation of religion in which women have a restricted role at home and in the community. They also consider girls' schools as symbols of the western education system - as 'the smiling faces of western invaders' (Jamal, 2016). In addition, these centers have already been struggling with longstanding infrastructural, functional, and logistical issues. In response, social workers in Pakistan have begun to play a more prominent role in every sector, thus casting a wide net to assist in and resolve a variety of issue areas, especially with regard to gender justice and violence against women and children (Kamali, 2016).



Social workers in conflict and disaster zones in Pakistan

Social workers in Pakistan often lead and coordinate relief efforts, work with the military, civilian government, and international relief groups, and provide professional, psychological, and personal assistance (Khan, 2012). Moreover, social workers provide critical assistance to particularly vulnerable groups such as women, children, older-adults, transgenders, sex workers, and religious minorities who already suffer from oppression and marginalization and are amongst the most neglected groups for protection and/or service provision (Ali, 2016). Local social workers have been actively involved through community-based humanitarian initiatives as well as working through local and International non-government organisations (NGOs). In conflict situations, professional social workers working with foreign

funded NGOs were commonly seen with suspicion as being agents of the western invaders (Jamal, 2018). They are often directly and personally impacted during violent attacks in their areas, becoming victims of kidnappings, and face security issues, threats to life, and being accused of spying for foreign governments, that often result in hostile and intimidating working conditions (Mohsin, 2013; Naqvi, 2012).

A Case of Social Work in Violence Against Women (VAW) initiatives in Pakistan

Beginning with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 to the American attack on the Taliban government in 2011 and since then a continued cycles of wars and conflicts in the Pashtun regions in both northwest Pakistan and Afghanistan created a hostile, insecure, and uncertain environment. This has discouraged any positive social change or socioeconomic development in the region. In particular, these conditions had a devastating impact on gender justice and women rights. This violent environment of fear and oppression introduced, and enriched extremist ideologies and men dominated rigid interpretations of Quran (scripture) that have had a direct impact on the role, status and well-being of women. Particularly, violence against women and girls significantly increased with local human rights organizations estimating 1000 "honor killings" every year and a minimum of 94 women murdered by family members in the Pashtun region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2017 (Zarar, 2018).

A countrywide study on the prevalence of domestic violence in Pakistan, where 3,687 married women were interviewed, showed that 32% of women had experienced physical violence, and 39% had experienced physical and/or emotional violence from their spouses (NIPS, 2013). 35% of women have faced multiple physical injuries, and one out of nine women encountered violence during their pregnancy (NIPS, 2013). Men who ascribe to rigid interpretation of religious text and a men dominated cultural framework of Pashtun patriarchy often accept and internalize gender inequality, commit and condone violence (Tremblay et al., 2007). However, in our more than 20 years of research and practice experience as social workers in this region, we always encountered a few men in the community who reject existing extreme and rigid gender norms and support gender justice and prevention of domestic violence. Through his extensive field research during conflict and post-conflict situation in Pakistan, Jamal (2018) found that those few men who support gender justice and are actively involved in preventing violence against women have become strong allies in offering and strengthening an "alternative narrative" on gender justice rooted in the socio-cultural and religious understanding of the Pashtun communities.

Jamal (2018) argues that "any social movement for gender justice will be successful only when men are involved in a collective attempt at change. Therefore, we need to mobilize these few men in every community while also building their collective consciousness and passion" (p. 172). In these wars and conflict affected regions, both international and local social workers need to mobilize these few men in every village and community, while also

building up their collective consciousness and passion to initiate change. We need to encourage these men by using community-centered research and practice models making them allies for gender justice and against all forms of violence. Violence against women is a men's issue as much as it is a women's issue, as the intergenerational impact of VAW cannot be understated as it impacts on multiple and future generations. As such, violence at home is connected with violence at the community, and ultimately violence at the state level (Jamal, 2020). Based on our many years of field experience as local social workers in the region, we offer following recommendations for International and local social workers working in the wars and conflict affected regions to achieve gender justice and build sustainable peace in society:

Creating dialogue by developing strong coalitions and networks including intersectoral collaborations between various stakeholders, institutions and community leaders

Using a holistic and multi-level approach to support individuals, families, and communities by using community institutions (for example, in the Pashtun region of Pakistan and Afghanistan use Hujra, Jirga and Masjid) to develop individual and institutional capacities.

Creating awareness through authentic teachings of religion and cultural traditions that support gender justice combined with evidence-based scientific knowledge that shows the negative impact of violence on communities. Universities, researchers and social activists need to come together for developing universally steeped local solutions that can influence policies and legislations. Learning from global initiative while creating sustainable solutions and intervention strategies in local contexts is needed.

Policy changes and awareness in organizations and service providers by training health workers, doctors, police and social services and by awareness through mass media campaigns.

Universities, researchers and social activists need to come together for developing universally steeped local solutions that can influence policies and legislations. Learning from global initiative while creating sustainable solutions and intervention strategies in local contexts is needed.

Peace, stability, and development is a right and a gift to the devastated people of this region, but it needs to start from home, grow among communities, and be a focal point of policymaking institutions. This gift should be negotiated and offered in such a way in which all segments of society including women, children, and marginalized groups can appreciate it, benefit from it, and celebrate it.

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**Alexandra Mustafá PhD**

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The Amazon and the indigenous question in Brazil: a problem of Brazilians or a problem that interests all humanity?

Brazilian society is historically marked by social inequality, authoritarianism, and the induced subordination of the national elite class to the interests of the international bourgeoisie. Those characteristics of Brazilian society are explained by its subordinate position in the context of the international division of labour in relation to the richer and imperialist countries. This begun in the period of colonization of Brazil from the year 1500. Already at that time, the native inhabitants - the indigenous population, the Indians - were expelled from their lands and pushed, more and more, to the interior of the territory.

Portuguese colonization had established a system of territorial occupation in Brazil, inspired by feudalism and called it the "system of hereditary captaincies". In that system, land properties were attributed to Portuguese nobles, who became colonizers and, consequently, landowners. The colonizers, as agents of the Portuguese crown, had the role of exploring all available resources and of "domesticating" the natives by inserting them into the colonial slave system.

The resistance of the indigenous population was immediate in order to maintain their culture and communal way of life, characterized by peaceful coexistence with nature; non-dominion or exploitation relationship with nature; and non-dominance relationship between the individuals that make up the tribes, with the indigenous people decided to go deep into the forests. That was a survival and protection strategy on the part of the Indians, which enabled them to resist and avoid submitting to the slave-based production mode that the Portuguese colonizers were imposing. The Indians who did not manage to escape the domination of the Portuguese were assimilated by the new system of exploitation of labour in a as

subordinates. In a short time, a process of miscegenation of the population was also unleashed. It did not take long for sons and daughters to appear resulting from the relationship between whites people and native Indians. These children later became 'poor and abandoned', as neither the Indians wanted to raise them, nor the Portuguese, as they were deemed to be 'bastards'.

Thus, a population of people excluded from social participation was formed, which was the target of Catholic church interests, which promoted assistance and forced catechesis (DeAnchieta 1933). This was the basic contingent of the formation of what we call in the Brazilian Social Work, the Social Question.

This resistance from the indigenous population was decisive to promote a new scenario in the configuration of Brazilian society: the great majority of the Indians refused to allow themselves to be enslaved. Unable to enslave the Indians, the Portuguese decided to seek other forms of labour exploitation following the mercantilist logic as maximizing exports and restricting imports, and fostering private property regimes. Soon it would be decided to look for vulnerable people in Africa to enslave.

Meanwhile, native culture survived, and a system of collectivist relations was continued, established on solid foundations of communal division/fruition of goods. However, until the present day, legally, the areas inhabited by indigenous peoples were not and still are not recognized as belonging to them. However they are their owners, because they have enjoyed these lands for millennia. However, from the point of view of western jurisdiction (formal law), while native populations have the minimum right to live, the land is nevertheless legally recognized as 'white land'. This can be seen through the comparative analysis between the situation of land ownership in Brazil in the colonial period and that same situation today: before the arrival of the colonizers 100% of the lands in Brazil were occupied by the Indians, today they have only 12.2% of the national territory in their hands, and this possession is conditioned to the authorization of the State for its delimitation as an "indigenous community"(A Republico dos Ruralists) It should also be noted that this struggle for the demarcation of indigenous lands is the subject of intense conflicts, since the large legal landowners are the most tenacious usurpers of the use of land for profit that ensure the power of the agrarian elite in the country. The essential activity of this landowning elite is agribusiness, which occupies about 60% of the land and is predominantly intended for the generation of commodities for export of products that serve the interests of the international market to the detriment of food production for consumption by the local population. Represented in the National Congress by the "Bancada Ruralista" (Ruralist Bench), (Dialogo 2022) agribusiness entrepreneurs, the landowners, are the promoters of land conflicts, even promoting irregular, illegal actions when it comes to guaranteeing their control over the land. These conflicts over land between native Indians and landowners are extremely unequal conflicts because the indigenous peoples do not have either governmental protection to resist, or state-of-the-art technological structure, as the landowners have.

Making a comparative analysis, it can be seen that this is a difference very similar to that between wealthy person in a western country and a poor person in that country. However, the Indians have an awareness that is rare among the poor: it is the awareness of their cultural identity, of their intangible heritage, that gives them a great feeling of self-esteem. But when confronted with the landowners who continue to expel them from their lands, they are often even murdered. The right to claim rights is already regulated by the Brazilian Constitution of 1988, but in practice it is not respected. It is also a customary right, given the historical characteristics of the formation of Brazilian society.

This situation also produces an unprecedented ecological crisis. The Indian is the bearer of irreplaceable anthropological wealth but also its habitat has significance that goes beyond local needs and extends reaching the entire planet Earth, particular because the aforementioned agribusiness impinge and negatively impact this rich ecological environment to promote capitalist wealth with international stakeholders. Thus, the ecological issue of preservation of the Amazon, which is of fundamental interest for survival on the planet, worldwide, is inextricably linked to the capitalist issue of exploitation of natural resources and land tenure by large landowners who threaten the lives of indigenous people, who are, in practice, the "guardians of the forest".



In recent years, the Amazon has become a stage of conflicts between indigenists (activists who defend the rights of native Indians) and those who take advantage of wood, gold, iron, mineral and plant resources in the region. This scenario has become dramatic by the wave of murders that plagues the territory. The month of June 2022 went down in history as a bloody month due to the murder of Indians and their defenders.

The international media reported with great interest the facts that led to the discovery of the murdered Bruno Pereira and the British journalist Dom Phillips, correspondent for The Guardian, in the Rio Javari region (AM), both important indigenists. Bruno was a former employee of FUNAI (Fundacao Nacional do Indio) for 12 years and his action was characterized by fighting illegal mining and the invasion of loggers that threatened the lives of indigenous peoples, especially those more isolated, in the Javari Valley region. He was released from his position because he was seen as a potential enemy of those interested in exploring the area and continued his action as a militant of the indigenist movement to defend indigenous reserves. Therefore, he was an employee who did not support the policy of the federal government, who supported policies for mining and deforestation in the Amazon, making the rules for these activities more flexible. Bruno suffered political persecution within FUNAI precisely for detecting and inspecting the invasion of loggers and prospectors.



Em manifestação, indígenas cobraram proteção á área e pediram justiça para Bruno Pereira e Dom Phillips. Image: Bruno Kelly/Reuters

Dom was a British correspondent for The Guardian and came to Brazil in 2007. He often traveled to the Amazon to report on the environmental crisis and its consequences for indigenous communities and their lands. The journalist met Bruno in 2018, during a report for The Guardian. The pair were part of a 17-day expedition through the Vale do Javari Indigenous Land, one of the largest concentrations of isolated indigenous people in the world, considered "the stage for dispute between criminal factions that stand out for the overlapping of environmental crimes, ranging from deforestation and mining illegal actions related to drug and arms trafficking". The common interest brought the pair together.

Dom and Bruno had been missing since June 5th 2022 and after searches by the Federal Police, their bodies were found, dismembered, on June 15th. Before being killed, Bruno and Dom faced death threats and even armed invaders on the border of an indigenous territory. The English reporter photographed armed men threatening the indigenous people. The men would be linked to Amarildo da Costa de Oliveira, suspected of being the instigator of the crime. The incident took place two days before the disappearance, on the border of an indigenous territory. This appeared to reflect previous incidents; in September 2017, for example, the Federal Public Ministry of Amazonas confirmed the murder of at least 20

indigenous people from an isolated village in Vale do Javari by illegal miners in the municipality of Sao Paulo de Olivenca.

Brazilian society and Brazilian social work are mourning the brutal violence that has become the hallmark in the country against those who defend human and environmental rights. It is worth adding that those that support what they refer to disparagingly as anti-communists in the world has grown in an organized way and its promoters are willing to fight anyone who defends human rights and social rights. In Brazil, the extreme right has grown, supported by this international wave. A hate campaign against the "communists" has been going on and gathering supporters. At the same time, there is a process of apology for weapons coming from the central government itself (Sendado Federal). Along with this, religious fanaticism has grown (Pinheiro 2015), with an anti-communist discourse and enemy of the progress of customs. Consequently, whoever opposes the anti-humanist interests of the capitalists becomes the target of the threats of these new fanatics. The possibility of an escalation of violence in this scenario is real, although it all depends on a series of factors, vulnerable sectors such as favela residents and indigenous people already experience a climate of real violence and fear in their living environments (Sindsprev/rj 2022).

These data mentioned above, which can be greatly expanded with more and more citations, are deeply concerning. For the Social Service, directly in contact with the people and social movements, may need protection if something serious happens in the country. There are precedents whose evidence of the increasing situation in Brazil is very similar. Let us think of the case of Rwanda, in Africa, in 1994, when the conflicts between the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups culminated in the murder of more than 800,000 Tutsis, victims of a paramilitary army, ideologically prepared, with the omission of colonizing and imperialist countries such as Belgium, France (Macron 2022) and the United States (Osservatorio Diritti 2022), which, according to various sources, were aware of the danger of imminent genocide there. Racial hatred between ethnic groups was fierce in Rwanda. The Belgian government is interested in the Region, especially in the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo (Euronews 2022), which has been experiencing a decades-long war whose number of deaths already characterizes that situation as the 'Black Holocaust'. The presence of minerals and ores of great importance for technological advancement, such as Coltan, makes capitalist countries turn a blind eye to the need to give dignity to those people. Further in Brazil, access to firearms by the population, mainly Protestants, is being increasingly encouraged, associated with hatred against leftists and defenders of social and human rights (Marques 2022). The manipulation of people's minds with anti-humanist and anti-communist ideals indicates the creation in the popular imagination of a situation in which one could have to kill people considered evil, against the family, without religion, and so on.

The International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW/AIETS) has as its ethical foundations the defense of human rights in any and all circumstances. When it comes to an attack on human rights in any country, the indignation of social workers around the world is, per se, great. But it becomes even greater when indigenous populations like the Amazon

Indians are affected. For the blamelessness they possess transforms the atrocity against them into the greatest possible aggression against human beings.

Social workers are involved in these contexts where violence against human rights occurs in many countries and may also suffer the impact of these waves of violence. Thus, social work and its representative entities have the role of monitoring, denouncing and in dealing with both the populations that suffer such violence, such as indigenous people, human rights defenders, victims of land conflicts, and so on, and as with social workers who may be at professional risk in these regions. The attitude of scrutiny, support and denunciation can contribute positively to reducing conflicts and protecting social workers who fight for the protection of social and human rights.

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Multi-stakeholders' and youth participation in conflict transformation: insights from marawi siege, philippines

This article is a reflection drawn from praxis of being a social work educator in a state university in the Philippines situated in a conflict-affected area. It emphasizes multi-stakeholders' and youth participation in conflict transformation in a multi-ethnic society. Objectively, this paper aims to talk about the following: Marawi Siege in a nutshell, the ecological determinants of ethnic conflict, and my social work stances on the reflection with regards to the multi-stakeholders' and youth participation in conflict transformation.

The Marawi Siege, in a nutshell:

Mindanao conflict is multi-layered, resulting from a combination of factors, including dispossession of land, relative deprivation, political disenfranchisement, deep-seated and widespread prejudice between diverse groups, power struggles between clans, and the recent rise of violent extremism (Muslim, 2005a). Protracted conflict appears to be an inevitable reality in many communities in the Philippines, particularly in Southern Mindanao. This conflict has often been depicted as a result of historical and ideological friction between tri-people communities (Muslim, Christian, and Indigenous Peoples), although religious and cultural differences have, in fact, only partly shaped the conflict.

The siege began when the Philippine military attempted to capture Isnilon Hapilon, the leader of a southern group loyal to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. However, the soldiers encountered stronger resistance than planned (Hincks, 2017). They attacked the city together with another pro-ISIS brigade called the Maute Group. The group seized Marawi as the location of their intervention. The known Islamic City has been left in ruins, forcing

thousands of people to flee their homes and seek temporary shelter in neighboring cities and municipalities. Everything that transpired during the siege caused a collective trauma to everyone residing in Marawi. According to Pangandaman et al. (2019), the Marawi siege wreaked havoc on the lives of the Meranao people in the Philippines. Indeed, the Marawi conflict was the result of unresolved Mindanao conflict emanating from various socio-economic, political, cultural, and religious conditions of Mindanao, Philippines.

Determinates of ethnic conflict

The socioeconomic conditions in the region such as widespread poverty, marginalization, and othering, unemployment, limited to no access to education, money, and socio-economic inequalities are other underlying causes pushing individuals toward violent extremism, (Muslim, 2005b). These unmet social and economic needs are a deprivation of socioeconomic rights-especially when combined with other factors such as widespread corruption, a weak political unit, and lack of security and justice-and may be exploited by violent extremist groups to claim legitimate demand and to seek alternative solutions in response to such deprivations.

This socioeconomic uncertainty has been a reality for the displaced people of Marawi settling in transitional shelters. This was after four years of supposedly being liberated from the extremist group and receiving millions of donations from the international community. A number of families are still not allowed to return to their homes and rebuild their lives nor has there been any compensation for the damages to their personal properties. This perhaps might be another push factor that aids young people to engage in radicalization and violence.

The lack of representation, as well as misrepresentation, of Muslims in national politics are also one of the factors that provoke the Moro resistance and other radical groups to reject secular governance. This provocation is seen in the off and on, slow-pace, and top-level peace negotiations as well as in the different versions of approaches among political leaders in addressing the Mindanao conflict. This top-down intervention can be a living manifestation of LIBERAL PEACE Strategy and the MUSCULINISTIC intervention in conflict transformation and peacebuilding. This is a local application of the MUSCULAR intervention concept (O'Reilly, 2012). The continuing cycle of violence and conflict is still widespread, affecting the tri-people communities. The region is also plagued with some of the worst development indicators in the Philippines as levels of insecurities are among the lowest levels of development in the country. The gap between the conflict-affected regions and the rest of Mindanao continues to grow, despite the large and growing international aid programs directed to the area.

Impact in social dimension seen in microcosm level;

The said conflict reveals that young people are among the most vulnerable sectors, often as victims of violence. Reports show that Moro youths were also recruited as combatants and many of them were maimed and killed because of the conflict, (Pangandaman et.al, 2019).

Others who were not directly involved were deprived of education, employment, and health care; and were even separated from their families. Further, the expanding breeding ground of radicalization among young people in Marawi now poses an imminent threat with its potential to become a local recruitment center for the Islamic State.

Even in the post-conflict reconstruction in Marawi, young people are still confronted with different challenges. They are excluded from participating in peacebuilding, security mechanism, and other political processes such as the rehabilitation of the city. Youth are left out in many aspects of peacebuilding. Thus, here comes the challenge as to how a social worker should coordinate to the local leaders and even national leaders to fight for the inclusive government which would allow the youth in the policy making process ensuring their right to participate. Hence, right based approach. Also, social work education has its paramount role to mainstream conflict transformation and peacebuilding in the social work curriculum in the Philippines.

Presence of international actors for MARAWI Reconstruction

Conflict erupted in Marawi City in May 2017 between armed groups and the Philippine government, displacing nearly 360,000 people at its peak. The United States government has committed more than \$63.6 million (Php 3.4 billion) through USAID or the United States Agency for International Development to humanitarian and recovery efforts in and around Marawi. USAID is working to improve the economic and social conditions of internally displaced people in collaboration with the Philippine Government, development organizations, civil society, and the private sector.

World Vision, an international humanitarian organization dedicated to assisting families in overcoming poverty, had a cash-for-work program in Marawi called Bahay Pag-asa, which began in January, providing money as incentives for people who work in community-building activities like farming and construction (World Vision, 2018). It also provided educational and psychosocial support to affected children and their families. Some of the interventions that were made brought by the effects of the conflict include psychosocial care for children.

In partnership with local and international organizations, World Vision was able to implement projects that advance socio-civic engagement and recovery. Through their projects, children were able to play, meet with fellow children, and express themselves through different activities. The spaces are also crucial to address their psychosocial needs while most schools are still not open.

Miwa Kato, UN Women's Asia Pacific Regional Director, visited the Philippines to continue discussions with women affected by the siege and to meet with government, UN and other aid agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on the ground to better understand women's needs and priorities in recovery and preventing the recurrence of conflict and violent extremism in their communities, (Matsuzawa, 2017).

Numerous publications reveal that a large number of locally based NGOs, faith-based organizations, and human rights advocacy groups helped. During the siege, the NGO community was diverse. Some organizations were veterans of the humanitarian field, such as the Ranaw Disaster Response and Rehabilitation Assistance Center (RDRRAC), Maradeca, and Ecosystems Work for Essential Benefits (ECOWEB). Many faith-based organizations - Catholic diocese and Protestant church-arms, for example - as well as relative newcomers among Moro professional and youth groups were also present (Hall & Deinla, 2019). In the consequential talks with fellow humanitarian workers that I have had worked with before, there were narratives that civil society and military engagement were characterized with a somehow lack of coordination rather than collaboration and communication.

The need for multi-stakeholders' and youth involvement in peacebuilding Local peacebuilders and government must also see the importance of consolidating efforts of different institutions and local movements to mitigate radicalization and extremist ideology through the institutionalization of peace education, tri-people studies, and peace journalism in all public and private higher institutions and other platforms in the Philippines. Through this, Muslim and indigenous ethnolinguistic groups and their histories, realities, and shared future will be recognized, which will then support interfaith dialogue and develop respect for one another regardless of religious and socio-cultural diversities.

Indeed, the Marawi conflict is the result of long-standing Moro resistance, which emanates from socioeconomic, political, cultural, and religious exclusion. It is a structural and systemic problem that costs lives, causes displacements, and negatively alters the future of people. To address this, it is necessary to adopt a more grassroots-based, people-centered, and intersectional approach in crafting the peace framework where internally displaced and grassroots communities, religious and community leaders, youth, women, academe, and other stakeholders are key actors in the decision-making process. This is in relevance to the concept of "EMANCIPATORY PEACEBUILDING (Cooper et.al, 2011). In realizing this, social workers continue to advocate its core values of human rights enliven in the essence of participation. In realizing this, social workers must ensure that " no one is left behind" in ensuring collaborative efforts amongst peoples.

De Boeck and Honwana (2005) point out that the youth "are at the center of societal interactions and transformations," but are most of the time "placed at the margins of the public sphere and major political, socio-economic, and cultural processes." They show that in a situation where few of the younger population have access to education, employment, health care, and basic services, it is the younger population that is especially vulnerable to the many ongoing societal challenges.

Furthermore, the pandemic has also underscored huge insecurities and suffering experienced by the youth especially out-of-school and displaced youth in Marawi. This fragile state and multilayer burdens faced by young Moro push them to engage in illegal behavior or worse, extremism, for survival. Young people's well-being in conflict situations is

a deep concern. The youth have been engulfed by various conflicts, and post-conflict situations face circumstances that substantially alter and shape their lives and prospects.

Hence, involving youth and hearing children's voices in conflict transformation and peace building strategies is one of the many doorsteps to respect children's rights and the youth's essential role in nation-building as future leaders. This view as well assumes that young people are competent citizens with a right to participate in the decisions that affect their lives and a responsibility to serve their communities.

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Defending the rights of citizens and movements against political atrocities

It is not always armed conflicts and natural disasters that nullify the voice of the people, the rights of the people, it can also be severe political corruption that affects the voice of the people. The power of a corrupt government can affect the daily lives of millions of people in a country. The year 2022 was a remarkable year for the people of Sri Lanka. The corrupt politicians and family-led politics have shaken up the people of Sri Lanka and Sri Lankans around the world who have raised the call for a change in the system that will bring a better daily life to millions of Sri Lankans. The years 2019, 2020 and 2021 were challenging for the entire globe with the Covid 19 pandemic.

Each nation took their own precautions to combat Covid while ensuring that they followed the global guidelines of WHO. The Government of Sri Lanka and its administration were heard and seen taking action to combat the spread of Covid. It was also heard that the corrupt Sri Lankan government was not accountable for the management of medicines and equipment received from various parties such as donations from various organisations. During the same period, the newly elected President of Sri Lanka, Gotabhaya Rajapakshe (2019 to 2022 July), made a sudden decision to stop the import of chemical fertilizers in agriculture and promised that Sri Lanka would move to organic agriculture. This decision came so quickly that Sri Lankan farmers were not ready to accept this change. Therefore, Sri Lankan farmers started protesting all over the country, leading to a future food crisis in the country. The same government failed to ensure a healthy and safe daily life for the people of Sri Lanka, which led to the people's movement against the government, the executive power of the president and the undemocratic parliament. The geographical place called Galle Face was the main venue where thousands and thousands of Sri Lankans of all generations gathered, while many other protests were organised to raise the voice of the people against the atrocities committed by the government.

March, April, June and July were the toughest and most intense months experienced by the citizens of Sri Lanka as the government began to suppress young people and leaders of

movements against this corrupt government. It tried to suppress the voice of the people with the help of the military by abducting young activists without any legal recourse. While the global news focused on the economic and political crisis in the country, showing the long queues for petrol, food and gas and how people were fighting to remove the government, including the president, many did not notice the political atrocities against those who were vocal in their opposition to the government. The media showed how the citizens of Sri Lanka raised their voices against this political corruption in Sri Lanka and around the world, even though there were instances where many lost their right to speak, their right to protest peacefully and their right to be loud against the undemocratic administration of the country. All military forces, including the Sri Lanka Police, defied the voice of the people and the right to movement by using the power of their uniforms and the orders of their higher authorities. People died while standing in queues for days to get fuel, food and other daily necessities. Schools were closed while the entire economic system was heading towards a crisis from which the Sri Lankan public could see no way out. The Prime Minister resigned, the President resigned, giving the people of Sri Lanka an even more difficult time as the new Prime Minister and the new President were appointed against the will of the people and against the people's right to vote.



Political repression continued, leaving the people of Sri Lanka vulnerable in many ways. Impoverishment increased and continues to trouble many people today as they have lost their daily income. Construction activity has come to a standstill, for which there are two main reasons. Either people lack the necessities, or they cannot afford the necessities because the prices of all goods in the market have increased. As social workers, we unceasingly believe in people's freedom of choice and their voice. This political atrocity abolishes these foundations of social work education and practice. It also abolished the right of citizens to assemble and raise their voices. Social justice had completely disappeared.

Those who spoke out on social media were kidnapped and arrested, they could no longer ask for the support of the media or lawyers to seek support. Many parties, including academics, legal institutions and international organisations such as the Human Rights representative in Sri Lanka, called on the government to end the oppression, but the despotic government did not listen to them. At the time I am writing this article, people's right to expression and right

to movement is still being suppressed in Sri Lanka. The People's Movement was a truly democratic movement in Sri Lanka's political history, in which people with different political, ideological, cultural and social beliefs and orientations came together for a common goal. It was directed against the rotten political order that had prevailed in Sri Lanka for many decades. It was a call to reclaim the promise of democratic politics and demand a new political culture where the political class is accountable to the people who elected them. Social work believes in people power and this people power has been constantly suppressed by the undemocratic government of Sri Lanka. Wiretapping of those who opposed the government and spoke out seriously against it was common during this period.

Why as a social worker I should defend the rights of citizens and movement against political atrocities. As an academic and a student of social work, I believe in the rights of all people. This people's movement that took place in Sri Lanka in 2022 really shows that Sri Lankans are one, without all differences - class, caste, gender, age, religion. The movement has been open to all from the beginning, regardless of race, religion or other identifications and affiliations. Anyone can join the movement, occupy protest sites and find their own way to contribute to the struggle so that they feel part of the movement. The movement does not aim to homogenise, but mobilises people's different subjectivities and ways of expressing their rejection of the regime and creating a responsible political culture.

The internal democracy of these protests shows that ordinary citizens are able to mobilise different means to challenge power more successfully than traditional political parties. Inter-ethnic unity thwarted all attempts by the government to portray and suppress the movement as being led by anti-national and extremist elements, providing a historically unprecedented opportunity for conversations about cultivating an inclusive as opposed to a racist nationalism. The movement is led by the common agenda against the common enemy and the political culture it represents. Inter-ethnic unity thwarted all government attempts to portray and suppress the movement as being led by anti-national and extremist elements, and provided a historically unprecedented opportunity for conversations about cultivating an inclusive as opposed to a racist nationalism. The movement is led by a common agenda against the common enemy and the political culture it represents. Unlike traditional political movements that mobilise people through centralised, pre-planned and tightly regulated political party activities, the civic movement is an open, spontaneously evolving and culturally decentralised space that lacks central leadership. The movement is non-hierarchical, which means that everyone can express their anger, concerns and goals through media such as music, art, cultural rites or comedy. The movement has a clear form and well-defined mechanisms to identify and address undesirable elements and influences inside and outside the protest sites. The People's Movement has developed a concrete agenda for press conferences, protest marches and awareness programmes. These well-planned and meticulously executed actions overwhelmed the state's propaganda and military machinery. It was literally a movement of 'people standing up for people'.

Mutual aid was another progressive feature of the people's movement, this time in Sri Lanka. Awe-inspiring mechanisms of mutual aid enable multi-ethnic cooperation in public places of protest suffering acute economic hardship. In his book, *Mutual Aid: A Factor in Evolution*, anarchist Petr Kropotkin (Kropotkin, 2020) described the social power of mutual aid as an important feature of the movement in Sri Lanka:

"In short, neither the cursing powers of the centralized state nor the teachings of mutual hatred and pitiless struggle which came, adorned with attributes of science, from obliging philosophers and sociologists, could weed out the feeling of human solidarity, deeply logged in [humans] understanding and heart, because it has been nurtured by all preceding evolution. Such solidarity is not simply a means for existence, but it struggles against all conditions unfavorable to people".

He also suggests that "mutual aid breaks down the rigid and iron laws of the state and seeks instead seeks to rebuild society with an infinite number of associations which embrace all aspects of life to take possession of all that is required by humans for life". People were more connected to their own community than to the oppressive political systems. What we can do as social work representatives and what we can learn from the people and how we can defend the rights of the people's voice and movement. I like to quote Vito Flaker in his article on 'Social Work: A Science of Doing' to understand what the role of a social worker is in a society where people expect change for a better everyday life, where people stand up for their political rights. Bill Jordan believes that social work is not necessary to maintain what exists. He also says that social work is not needed where routines are established, where forms have to be filled in, where procedures are set and have to be followed.

Social work is needed where change is needed, where the need is so great that people can no longer cope, where change is taking place and we need support to better manage the process, where change has taken place and we need to learn to live with it, or when there is a possibility that change will occur and we want to prepare for it or prevent it" (Flaker, 2016). Flaker goes on to say that dialogue, to quote Freire, is one of the most important tools in social work. It literally means talking (the matter) through (and thinking it through) (Flaker, 2016). This clearly shows where social workers should stand when people need change and that academics and social work practitioners recognise the right of people to raise their voices for better changes that they deserve. Sri Lankans deserve a better life and they have the right to raise their voices. I conclude my article by emphasising the importance of defending human rights against the political atrocities that disrupt their daily lives. I urge readers to stand up for people's rights and raise their voices against these kinds of corrupt politics around the world that we do not see in the mainstream media.

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Looking back to build the colombian future: there is a future if there is truth - a call for a great peace

I left Colombia 30 years ago because of the fears and distress I faced while working with communities in isolated Colombian regions, where individuals and families confront heavy blows and violence caused by the armed conflict every day. Fortunately, after many years of living in exile, two years ago, I was invited to become involved with the Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition (CCTCNR). Specifically, I have been involved as a member of the Pedagogy Community of Practice (QLVSD – Spanish acronym) to 'make known the Truth for the Non-Repetition' and strengthen democracy according to the mandates of the CCTCNR. This community of practice developed pedagogical tools to work with institutions, communities, and different civil society groups in sharing the truth counted by many and recorded and interpreted in the commission's final report.

The CCTCNR comprises 11 members, who, after 3.5 years of extensive research, released the report in June 2022 that covers the study of the armed conflict between 1985-2020. The final report includes ten thematic issues and more than 13 volumes documenting the work of 500 researchers, more than 30,000 diverse voices of victims and their families, witnesses, perpetrators, and civil society, and the review of 1500 civil society reports and data from 111 databases. There has been significant international support to address the armed conflict, including the United Nations, Pope Francisco, the European Union, its country members, and the US (CCTCNR, 2022, Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition, 2022).

The Colombian armed conflict started in the late 1940s after the dominant political power assassinated a popular leader, Jorge Eliecer Gaitan. This event unleashed the polarization of

Colombian society around the two dominant Colombian ideologies, the liberals, and the conservatives, that have since been the two major political parties the conservatives and the liberals. The assassination of Gaitan started a civil war. It led to the formation of revolutionary groups, recognized as guerrilla groups that have appeared since that time, such as the FARC, ELN, and M-19 (Bonnycastle, 2017). These groups have continued to appear with different purposes, such as guerrilla groups using different ideologies and strategies to control civilians in rural and isolated communities where the presence of the Government is minimal. Other groups, such as the paramilitaries that landowners of large latifundios created, used their militias and weapons to exercise justice and oppress civilians under the excuse of protecting their properties. In addition, the public security forces have also contributed to civilians' human rights violations and suffering. The latest issue is a mixed confusion between ideological, economic, and private interests, terrorism, political corruption, illegal drug production, and market infiltration at various levels, including farmers, local and national Government, and private markets (UN, 2022)



Individuals, families, and civil society have encountered daily fear, lack of trust, weakening cultural and traditional values, and challenging social, political, and economic emergent issues caused by armed conflict violence. Their triggers include abductions, recruitment of children, and sexual and political crimes against women. The armed conflict, whether a result of the guerrillas, paramilitaries, or public security armies, has forced millions to be displaced and many to seek asylum elsewhere as refugees. Such outcomes have affected armed and unarmed Colombians alike (UNHRC, 2022).

The colonial history of Colombia has contributed to the dispossession of the culture, spirituality, language, territories, and forms of organization of Indigenous Peoples, Rom, Black, Afro, Raizales, and Palenqueros. Colombia has a long history of enslavement and colonial treatment through policies, laws, systems, and forms of organization that have created a solid social and economic class division that excludes marginalized ethnic groups

and low-income classes from political power and Government. Racism and hierarchies have contributed to elevated levels of human rights violations and the extermination of several Indigenous groups. The CCTCNR report recognizes that “racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia” and their related forms of intolerance are causes that constitute obstacles to peaceful relations between peoples.

Promoting peace in Colombia has been on the agenda of several Colombian presidents with the cooperation of international organizations and diverse countries. However, these efforts have not been consistently developed and supported; therefore, peace is still a dream to be achieved by Colombians. These efforts include the disarmament and reintegration into society of the M-19 guerrilla movement, and the reform of the Colombian Constitution, and ample participation of different actors, sectors, regions, and communities. Other significant efforts are the ‘Victims and Transitional Justice’ law, the inclusion of gender, and the involvement of women as critical actors to re-structure sustainable peace (Sarmiento-Marulanda et al., 2021). In 2016 Colombia adopted the Final Peace Agreement between the Government and the armed group FARC to end the world’s longest civil war. This Peace Agreement created the Integral Peace System between the Government and the FARC, the Victim and disappeared people Search Unit, and the CCTCNR (UNHRC, 2022, Fishow, 2017). The impact of the armed conflict on human life and the poor is evident in the CCTCNR’s final report, which shows the atrocities that have affected the everyday lives of millions of Colombians. Between 1995 to 2018, there were 450,000 homicides. The para-militarism committed 4,237 homicides and the guerrilla groups committed 7,826 homicides of soldiers and police. There were also 50,770 abductions not including extortion and other terrorist attacks. The worse crimes were perpetrated by the public forces that committed 8,208 innocent youth, known as the ‘False Positives’ and 121,786 tortures (1985-2006). Additionally, the drug business has contributed to changing agricultural priorities and increasing violence in urban and rural areas. In 2020 about one million Colombians were forced to leave the country and live in exile (CCTCNR, 2022; DANE, 2022).

There is light and hope for change. The new Colombian leftist President, Gustavo Petro, and Vice-President, Afro-Colombian woman Francia Marquez, have strongly reaffirmed that peace would be a cornerstone of the Government and that it will be a prominent feature of their administration that started on August 7th, 2022 (Hege, 2022).

The GREAT PEACE requires a commitment from Colombians living in the country and those in exile, as well as from international organizations and other countries. The complexity and intricacy of multiple forces and factors exist, including enduring violence against communities, leaders, and former combatants in several departments, multiple origins of illegal armed groups, extreme poverty and insecurity, exclusion and marginalization of ethnic groups. With determination and good governance, it is possible to change the future of Colombia. It is a country with enormous resources that can be used to build the nation. Its human capital, cultural and ecological diversity, extensive natural resources, rivers, oceans,

mountains, valleys, and geographical location generate the changes to achieve the dream of peace.

In a United Nations Report (2022), Jesuit Father Francisco José De Roux, President of the Truth Commission, stressed that Colombia's security apparatus for decades functioned on the premise that security could be "guaranteed by weapons." This premise has resulted in a system that protects structures and armed bureaucracy, not human beings. That must change. Urging the international community to give Colombia "nothing for war," De Roux said that the country wishes to be a "global paradigm of reconciliation" after so much pain and suffering. In the same report, Jineth Casso Piamba, Nasa indigenous woman, community leader, and human rights defender, said negotiations on the peace agreement served as "an act of rebirth" that let people feel that wounds could be healed as "everyone sat calm around the fire listening to the wise words of their elders" (UN, 2022). She called for land-reform policies and implementation of the accord's provisions on gender and ethnicity. She stressed that the State must tackle gender inequality by supporting productive opportunities for women and economically empowering them through education.

President Petro and Vice-president Marquez have configured a new government cabinet, one that unites different political parties to work together for the GREAT PEACE mandate and that will fulfill significant items that were included in the 2016 peace agreement and were neglected by the Government in turn, and that has aggravated the conflict and violence in the last years. In addition, the GREAT PEACE will include new agreements with other insurgent groups and a commitment from Petro and Marquez to implement the CCTCNR recommendations. The Truth Commission has called for the liberation of the symbolic and cultural from the tramps of terror, hate, stigmatization, and untrust. Their appeal is to remove weapons from communities, protect human rights, and put in place institutions that promote the dignity of everyone, community, and ethnic nations. They urge collective democracy, commitment, and responsibility to social and institutional changes and reconciliation.

President Petro, Vice-President Francia Marquez and ministries have asked the legislature to consider several structural changes, including agrarian, health, fiscal, education, and political reforms, and other changes in systems such as education that are working with the system to issue the final report among teachers and students. Petro is leading regional dialogues, including government authorities and civil society, to develop the national plan to realize GREAT PEACE. The Pedagogy Community of Practice has been highly active in Colombia. It has generated a variety of community events, including diverse groups, and using the pedagogy tools that were developed to issue the report and initiate peace processes with women, men, LGBTQ+ groups, youth, children, Elders, and many more at local levels, schools, and universities. This community of practice has members from different professions and sectors, including teachers, social workers, artists, community animators, researchers, and journalists. They are among the thousands of people engaged in this process with the leadership of several organizations that have been part of the CCTCNR.

I would like to invite Colombian and global social workers to visit the website of the CCTCNR final report to learn and find possibilities to contribute to our social work knowledge and experiences to the Colombian GREAT PEACE. The following pictures show the archaeology of the exiled found on the report website (<https://www.comisiondelaverdad.co/colecciones-desde-el-exilio>).



This site includes the stories behind the only objects that Colombians could bring with them whenever they were forced to leave the country. The archeology was the effort of more than 200 Colombians living in 24 countries who contributed with their stories of the armed conflict and their experiences living the memories, fears, truths, and reminiscences of the country we left behind.

Looking back to the past, many of us still ask ourselves, what should I do to contribute to eliminating violence instead of leaving behind all that belongs to us? Writing this report has helped my spiritual, cultural, and emotional return to Colombia. This was the first Truth and Reconciliation Commission that included the exiled voices. It has allowed me to become conscious of my trauma and the reactivation of my Colombian identity. Beyond that, my commitment is to contribute to the GREAT PEACE's pedagogy and promote research and dissemination of the truth of many like me.

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Politics and social work: Building a case for radical social work approaches in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe has been politically independent for over four decades, having gained independence from Great Britain in April 1980 (Government of Zimbabwe, 2022; National Archives of Australia, 2020). Despite its independence, the country struggles on several fronts, largely socio-politically and economically. For almost 40 years, the late Robert Mugabe dominated Zimbabwean politics as the country's political leader. It was only in November 2017 that Mugabe's rule was brought to an abrupt end through a military coup. He was replaced by his faithful political supporter, Emmerson Mnangagwa of the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU – PF) (Fabricius, 2017). Since then, Mnangagwa has proven to be far worse than Mugabe and is notorious for his excessive human rights violations. Mugabe contributed to the destruction of a once adored country and Mnangagwa is continuing the destruction (Burke, 2019; Chacha & Powell, 2018; Moyo, 2018).

More surprising is the deafening silence from Zimbabwean social workers who, admittedly, are operating in especially difficult circumstances (Muchanyerei, 2017). This article will highlight the destructive nature of Zimbabwean politics by focusing on its venomous effects on human lives and livelihoods. The author argues that the horrendous life circumstances in Zimbabwe are unnecessary and quite preventable. A case is made for radical social work practice by challenging Zimbabwean social workers to find their voice and reverse current conditions and trends.

Zimbabwe since 1980

At independence in 1980, Zimbabwe held promise for its citizenry, and many had hoped to live in peace, quiet, and prosperity. It is not an unusual expectation for people who have realised political freedom to have all their basic needs met and to live in a national environment in which their rights and preferences are respected and legally protected. One would assume that Zimbabwe would have by now, achieved its autarky or economic independence especially given the duration of its political independence. The need for economic freedom cannot be overemphasised. Empirical studies point to a very strong correlation between economic freedom and such issues as democracy, poverty alleviation, greater per capita wealth, cleaner environments, and healthier societies. This is particularly true for people who have been condemned to the ravages of poverty and deprivation for decades (The Heritage Foundation, 2022).

Good governance and democratic ideals remain a Herculean challenge in Zimbabwe. The ruling party, ZANU – PF does not tolerate political competition and dissent. This has been evident from the so-called Gukurahundi atrocities that saw the murder of more than 20,000 Ndebele minority by the Zimbabwean government between 1982 and 1987. Alexander (2021) described Gukurahundi as '[a] period of terrible state repression' (p. 763) which characterised the early years of the Zimbabwean nation. For Alexander, what is even more disturbing is the noisy silence surrounding the Gukurahundi atrocities at a time when the perpetrators are still in power, without having been held accountable for such cowardly and dastardly acts.

Even now, ZANU – PF appears to be determined to make the struggle for a free, just, and democratic Zimbabwe infinitely longer, with serious negative ramifications on the lives of ordinary Zimbabweans. Authoritarian tendencies and repression have worsened in Zimbabwe as Mnangagwa continues to maintain militaristic kind of rule (Freedom House, 2021). As Murenje and Porter (2021) observed, Mugabe might have been heavily criticised for flagrant human rights violations but Mnangagwa 'has taken the country in a very retrogressive, oppressive, and anfractuous direction that threatens not only the people's fundamental freedoms but also their very lives. ... it is becoming increasingly evident that the post-Mugabe situation in Zimbabwe has worsened' (p. 43).

The observations by Human Rights Watch (2021) were strikingly similar as they reported about the abduction and torture of at least 70 government critics in 2020. Despite all these violations, the voice of Zimbabwean social workers remained unheard. This is quite unacceptable, particularly in the face of these ugly realities that people are forced to experience in Zimbabwe. Surely, social workers have a legitimate role to play in saving lives, reducing suffering, maintaining the inherent dignity of human beings, and improving living conditions.

In 2000, the Zimbabwean government embarked on a chaotic and extremely violent land reform program that purported to reverse historical imbalances and injustices associated

with land ownership in Zimbabwe. The effects of this noble but ill-conceived program were felt throughout the country as the Zimbabwean economy collapsed, leaving millions of people unemployed and battling against famine and starvation as total agricultural output dropped to its lowest levels (Hammond & Tupy, 2018). The Centre for Public Impact (2017), for instance, noted that the land reform program in Zimbabwe failed to meet its intended outcomes as it 'resulted instead in violence, a lack of legitimacy in land ownership, and a chronic weakening of the country's agricultural infrastructure, all of which have contributed to Zimbabwe's deteriorating social and economic conditions' (para. 2). Gumede (2018) made similar observations suggesting that Zimbabwe was agriculturally self-sufficient before the land reform program. Conversely, Zimbabwe now imports virtually most products due to disrupted food production. Gumede (2018) concluded that the land reform program in Zimbabwe failed remarkably in that it: did not empower the genuine subsistence, small and medium and emerging commercial black farmers. It did not upscale them, give them access to finance, help them to adopt new production methods and diversify their products, or secure markets for them (para. 19).

Likewise, Murenje (2020) noted that a declining Zimbabwean economy had left millions of Zimbabweans poverty-stricken as its economy struggled to provide the much-needed employment opportunities and remuneration. Condemned to a life of endless suffering, many Zimbabweans scarcely had access to food and their savings in financial institutions. Consequently, acute poverty and deprivation contributed to unprecedented emigration patterns from Zimbabwe as citizens sought economic refuge in places they believed could fend them from the poverty and destitution they experienced in Zimbabwe (Aljazeera, 2019; Famine Early Warning Systems Network, 2018; Murenje, 2020).

Several scholars have attributed Zimbabwean migration to South Africa to poor salaries (e.g., de Jager & Musuva, 2016; Madziyire, 2017; Mapepa & Adekoye, 2019; Serumaga-Zake, 2017). It is also estimated that more than three million Zimbabweans have emigrated (Murenje, 2020). Without a doubt, economic instability in Zimbabwe makes it increasingly difficult for needy families to meet their quotidian needs. World Vision (2018) reported that 72 percent of the Zimbabwean population lived in consumption poverty. Further, Zimbabwean workers were reportedly inadequately compensated, going for months without any form of pay due to an ongoing economic crisis. In late 2019, for example, inflation reportedly reached 300 percent, making Zimbabwe notorious for being the worst place to work (Freedom House, 2021). In 2017, a measly 15.5 percent of the workforce had formal employment contracts, and this exposed many workers to abuse and exploitation (Freedom House, 2021). This created high levels of desperation particularly for the 1.6 million orphaned and vulnerable children that World Vision (2018) described as being in dire need of care and protection. Without a doubt, the Zimbabwean situation was so tragic that men, women, and children all engaged in forced begging, agricultural labour, and domestic work in conditions that placed women and girls at risk of sex trafficking (Freedom House, 2021).

Opportunities for radical social work in Zimbabwe

In view of the foregoing, there appears to be overwhelming circumstantial evidence to suggest that Zimbabwe is socio-politically and economically a nation in distress. In other words, Zimbabwe fits the definitional criteria of a nation-state that is dangerously ill and requiring constant attention and supervision. This calls for radical social work approaches. As Rogowski (2020) noted, radical social work 'seeks social justice and social change and has an emancipatory potential' (para. 4). For instance, given social work's roots in human rights and social justice, this author views social and political action as a functional prerequisite needed of social workers to reverse and/or meliorate the hazardous conditions in which Zimbabweans live and work.

The current Zimbabwean situation demands, as it were, the use of hazmat suits due to the level of risk that the current government poses. Through social and political action, Zimbabwean social workers will be demonstrating their commitment to respecting human rights and promoting social justice, all of which is consonant with cardinal social work values (British Association of Social Workers, 2014). Such action is likely to facilitate the meeting of human needs and development of human potential. This might as well result in the empowerment and liberation of the oppressed masses in Zimbabwe. Perchance this explains why Muchanyerei (2017) was quite vociferous in his advocating for more social work visibility in Zimbabwe. He called for vehemence and public denunciations and condemnations of social injustices by Zimbabwean social workers, without fear or favour and regardless of who the perpetrators of rights violations might be. That is a desirable position in modern-day Zimbabwe.

The education and training of social workers remains paramount. Research on strategies that effectively confront unjust leaders is needed. For radical social work approaches to be effective, social workers in Zimbabwe ought to be skilled advocates who are knowledgeable about policy and political systems that have negative effects on their practice. In this sense, social group work could also be expanded as social workers need to work cooperatively and collaboratively with government and nongovernment agencies for advocacy and problem-solving purposes (Muchanyerei, 2017; Palmer, 2010).

Conclusion

The Zimbabwean condition remains tragic. There is sufficient fertility to embrace radical social work approaches to facilitate equal access to essential resources and opportunities meant to meet basic human needs. The role of social workers in this regard cannot be overstated. Nonetheless, sustainable change and development in Zimbabwe calls for articulate and knowledgeable social work advocates who work cooperatively and collaboratively with others and who pay close attention to the importance of education and training and research in their practice. Without Zimbabwean social workers taking the

suggested actions, social workers will be mere instruments of the presiding government who will perpetuate the injustice.

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Georgian Association of Social Workers' Response to the Ukraine crisis

This article aims to highlight the role of the professional association (Georgian Association of Social Workers - GASW) in organizing humanitarian support for people affected by the Ukrainian War. Georgian social workers empowered their colleagues by initiating various social support activities including online platform for coordinating assistance, organizing conference meetings to develop social workers' skills in working with refugees. This article highlights the critical importance of social work profession and social workers who have a central role in practice and research with war affected populations.

Introduction

On 24 February 2022 the Russian invasion was ordered by Vladimir Putin as a major escalation of the Russia-Ukraine war that started earlier in 2014. This forced many Ukrainian people to flee their homes seeking safety, support and assistance from neighbouring and other countries. With no border between Georgia and Ukraine, most of the arriving Ukrainians have fled besieged Mariupol and Kherson eastward into Russia before crossing Georgia's mountain border. Having made this perilous journey, they arrive with escape stories of appalling humiliation and tragedy (ASB-Georgia, 2022). One of the reason for Ukrainians to come to Georgia is that there are very close connections between these two countries as both countries are striving for NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) cooperation and the European Union (EU) and their main enemy is the Russian

Federation. In particular, the Russian government occupied 20% of Georgian territories after the 2008 war. In early March of 2022 Georgia applied for EU membership, together with Ukraine and Moldova.

Ukrainian refugees are welcomed and supported in Georgia by the government and citizens of Georgia as well as various non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Among them is the Georgian Association of Social Workers (GASW). GASW was founded by the first western educated social workers in 2004 with the aim to underpin the development of the profession in the country on all three levels: micro, mezo and macro (Sadzaglishvili, 2018).

The Georgian Association of Social Workers (GASW) is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in Georgia, over 600 members. GASW has been playing a key role in developing social work practice, education and a regulatory framework in Georgia. GASW is a part of the global social work professional community. GASW was established in 2004 by the first group of American-educated social workers. GASW was created as a local Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) to support the continued development of the profession within Georgia. Besides providing professional expertise and support to the Government of Georgia, social service providers and social workers, GASW is active for establishing a strong educational framework based on recognized professional standards.

In relation to support Ukrainian refugees, the aim of GASW is to find support for the Ukrainian people during the crisis. Historically, social activism, solidarity and the fight for social justice have been an integral part of the social work profession and underpins the practice of Georgian social workers. As a response to the Ukrainian crisis and the influx of fleeing refugees, Georgian social workers came up with an initiative to support and empower the Ukrainian friends. For this purpose, a special online platform via Facebook - Group - was created as a means of Georgian social workers sharing information and initiatives to support the people displaced by the war. The group was joined by about 200 social workers and has carried out a range of activities under the leadership of GASW, as a direct response to the needs of citizens in the Ukraine and the displaced Ukrainian people arriving in Georgia.

GASW has constant communication with the Embassy of Ukraine, from which it received information about the needs of the people living in Ukraine, and accordingly carried out charitable activities and mobilized items and facilities. As a direct response to the urgent needs of citizens in the Ukraine, GASW has supported a Blood Bank to mobilize blood donation for wounded children and others in Ukraine. GASW has mobilized volunteer social workers and students and organized humanitarian support for Ukraine. In particular, humanitarian aid has been sent to the Ukraine on a number of occasions: including clothes, non-perishable food, sweets, toys for children (including developmental toys), medicines, hygiene items, special medicines for cancer patients. GASW has cooperated with the Oncology Organization in Georgia, which aims to support children with oncological diseases, and in consultation with them mobilized special medicines and medical facilities for children with oncological diseases. These projects, identified as priorities by the Ukraine, have

ensured that support is targeted and directly relevant to the needs and priorities of those people remaining in the Ukraine.

Supporting displaced Ukrainian citizens arriving in Georgia has also been a focus of the work of the GASW. GASW has created a database of services that offer various services to Ukrainians living / arriving in Georgia. The database has been shared with various affiliates and organizations. In order to better coordinate services, GASW held a webinar where all organizations presented their services to Ukrainians to share information and support each other's understanding. At the meeting, a social worker from Mariupol, a city in south east Ukraine besieged by Russian forces shared her experience of being forced to flee her country together with her school age son and other family members. Here is her story:

"I have a terrible story. My husband's parents apartment was completely crushed and burned. My university where I studied and worked was destroyed. Almost nothing survived in the city, in a city with a population of 450 thousand, according to the modest estimates, 20 000 citizens died, hundreds of children from 0 to 1 yaers old died. The city was under a total siege without food, water, light, gas and heating when it was -12 degree below zero. The city was under constant bombardment, which could not be counted, only minutes of silence... By a great miracle and with God's help, my family managed to get out of the city under shelling for more than 21 days of the war, without a single corridor, without any help, the chances of being saved were 50/50, many were not so lucky and their lives ended due to the fault of the Russian Federation"

Social work has a critical role to play in supporting families during times of crisis and living through the experiences of war and internal displacement. The issues they present are immediate, ongoing and complex; they have far reaching implications for social work. As Boccagni and Righard suggest (2020: 375): Social workers, as a part of their institutional and professional mandate, have played a central and mixed role in addressing the needs, rights and claims of asylum seekers, refugees and other displaced persons. To support and extend social works and other understanding, GASW in collaboration with Ilia State University, situated in Tbilisi, capital of Georgia, held a conference on April 12, 2022, entitled "Social Work to Support Children in Crisis" that was dedicated to the International Day of Social Work on March 15 and April 12 - the International Day of Children Living and Working on the Streets. The aim of the conference was to raise awareness about the situation of children in crisis, war-affected and street children.

Within the Conference several online events were planned, mainly in the Georgian language; however there were also guest speakers holding seminars/trainings in English to provide an opportunity for our Ukrainian colleagues to participate. A specific example was the seminar "Learning to Work with Victims of Trauma: Lessons from Georgia and Ukraine for Georgian and Ukrainian Social Workers" was organized by Professor James Decker from California State University, an international consultant for master's and doctoral programs in social work at Ilia State University. Dr. Decker outlined the historical background and parallels of the Russian- Georgian and Russian -Ukraine war and ways of implementation of social work practice in the developing countries to address the needs of disaster affected refugees and trauma victims. This provided a directive that war and displacement form a lasting impact on children's physical, social and psychological functioning (Denov and Shevell 2018). These children have fears of being injured or killed, being displaced and more than likely never being allowed to return to their homes, increasing the impact of this disaster. Early intervention related to potential Post Traumatic Stress Disorder PTSD could be reduced through, for example, the use of play therapy and mindfulness (Decker, Brown & Tapia, 2017). The participants of the conference were actively involved and learned strategies of how to work with survivors of armed conflict and deal with the children who may experience traumatic stress, psychological symptoms, distress, or other behavioral health issues related to the disaster of war.

The social work profession has its historical origins in the support of war victims. In particular, refugees, who are forced migrants, are one of the most powerless classes of persons who are characterized by disruption, loss and the need to rebuild networks and support (Denov and Shevell 2018). Traditional approaches for helping victims include enabling them to overcome "unresolved grief" by using cognitive-behavioral interventions to confront distressing trauma-related memories and reminders, ventilate accumulated aggression, etc. These steps are understood to facilitate habituation and successful emotional processing of the trauma memory (Kazlauskas et al., 2016).

Somewhat complementary to this, the paradigm of empowerment and inclusion recognizes that displacement violates human ecology, causes deprivation and social exclusion, and increases the risk of violence and the emergence of a psychological "catch of dependency." Therefore, longterm intervention strategies should be employed with refugees (Kang, 2013). In addition, these interventions anticipate that services for refugees are multileveled (individual assistance, connection with the community and advocacy, participation in collective political actions) and focused on recovering the relationship between a person and his or her surrounding social systems (Semigina & Gusak, 2015; Kang, 2013).

Our approach is to apply differential remedial interventions. Psychological rehabilitation should be aimed at developing skills and internal psycho-social resources in refugees. Focus from an ecological perspective should be afforded concomitantly, meaning that involvement of the people themselves in securing and applying environmental resources must occur. Social workers and other clinical and "helping" personnel must bring flexibility to the gamut

of their interactions with refugees, and politicians and other structural actors must find the courage to more fully embrace a “person centered” perspective in conceptualizing policies and programs that more authentically meet the needs of the refugees (Sadzaglishvili and Scharf, 2018). Trauma, distress and recovery has to have focus on the context and culture of the experience (Denov and Shevell 2018).

As a profession and discipline, social works has a central role in practice and research with war affected populations. For us, the fight for human rights and for social justice is the foundation of the profession. The Georgian Association of Social Workers call on colleagues in Russia and across the globe to raise their voices against the injustice experienced by Ukrainian citizens and displaced citizens, to support Ukraine and to fight for justice!

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What can social work do to reduce violent conflict in Nigeria?

With its values firmly rooted in ideals of social cohesion, integration, and solidarity, social work is strongly oriented toward peacebuilding and reconciliation in Nigeria, where longstanding violent conflict, driven by ethnoreligious differences, has hampered social development. This article asks ‘what can social workers do to reduce violent conflict in Nigeria?’ How can social workers contribute to peacebuilding and social solidarity in communities riven with conflict?

Social work and peacebuilding

The literature on peacebuilding highlights the importance of context, where local actors provide leadership and envision social change and justice (Neufeldt et al., 2020). Roelofs (2020) referred to this ‘local turn’ donors have seized upon, emphasising the inclusion of local actors, with local knowledge and connections, to make peacebuilding interventions context-sensitive. She contests this turn that originated with USAID’s push to localise its interfaith peace-building efforts in northern Nigeria, noting the fractiousness of Muslim-Christian relations and ‘limits to how far local partners can successfully leverage these ideas in the context of unequal power relations’ (p. 373). The two essential components of local peacebuilding initiatives are community participation and local ownership of solutions, concepts with which social workers are most familiar. By definition, peacebuilding involves searching for non-violent solutions.

As Akande et al. (2022) noted, small, local community projects could provide useful settings for the careful examination and resolution of conflict-related issues and the knowledge gained could influence other communities and lead to large-scale projects over time. Also familiar to social workers is the use of creative arts-based interventions, long used in conscientising Nigerians for peace-building processes (Essien, 2020), especially Nigerian theatrical productions. Noting the strong links between art and culture, Essien’s (2020)

study found arts-based cultural tools, such as rituals, theatre, music, dance, literature, and poetry were highly effective in peacebuilding and women were more receptive to them than men. This brief introduction highlights a role for social workers in local community work projects focused on context-sensitive conflict-resolution using group-based dialogical, cultural, or arts-based interventions. Before examining what social workers can do, we highlight the dimensions of ongoing violent conflict in Nigeria, a country of multiple ethnoreligious diversities artificially created as a single nation through British north-south unification in 1914. As Siollun (2021) observed, though artists, poets, writers, and sculptors tried to forge a common national cultural identity, 'it was difficult to build patriotism and emotional loyalty to a country created by a foreign invader and inhabited by people whose prior loyalties had never extended beyond their family, village or kingdom' (p. 325). Nigeria's predominantly Muslim north and Christian south collectively contain 250 ethnic identities.

Dimensions of violent conflict in Nigeria

Adegbami and Adeoye's (2021) insightful analysis highlighted the central role violent conflict played and its impact on development in Nigeria to the extent that the government's inability to quell violent groups and instil peace and security has led to a loss of trust in political leaders and labels like failed state. They discussed the interacting reasons for, and causes of, 60 years of ongoing post-independence violent conflicts hampering development, including insurgencies, armed banditry, and hostage-taking; farmers-herders' disputes; poverty, inequality, and unemployment; ethnoreligious diversity and religious extremism; failure of the social contract; and culture of impunity among public officers. Ushie (2013) added resource wealth, especially in the oil-rich Niger Delta. These violent conflicts damaged people's livelihoods, welfare, and health, especially in conflict-affected areas. They had led to increases in the number of people with disabilities, displaced people, children engaged in armed conflict, out-of-school children, and people with mental illness. Additionally, they exacerbated older people's wellbeing and violence against women and children. They had also discouraged local and foreign investment with dire consequences for economic and social development.

What can social work practitioners do?

Social workers' humanitarian values orient them toward supporting peace-building processes that engage warring parties in conflict resolution by listening to their grievances (Tanyi et al., 2021). Ajibo et al. (2018) highlight that social workers are constantly mediating conflicts in their everyday practice, identifying and analysing underlying interests, engaging in dialogue, and listening to the conflicting parties' proposed solutions. Their skills of accessing or linking people to resources is part of this process. On a broader level, social workers engage in policy interventions, as in the herdsmen-farmer conflicts, where inadequate national policies and interventions were partially responsible for land disputes (Ajibo et al., 2018).

Through their professional associations, social workers can mobilise support for peacebuilding initiatives. They can preserve human rights and advocate for social justice by aligning with organisations promoting peace. Neufeldt et al.'s (2020) case study of the 2001-2008 Jos conflict provides information on how social workers might have aligned themselves with faith-based organisations involved in peacebuilding activities, including training and workshops, dialogue and mediation, relief distribution, advocacy, and legal assistance.

Most important is a dialogical approach, or what Habermas (1987) called communicative action, where all parties in the conflict have their say in expressing their grievances and contributing to problem solution. Communicative action occurs when people reach agreement on goals and actions. For Habermas, social order cannot exist without it; the dialogical processes through which people reach consensual understanding strengthens social integration and solidarity. For Blaug (1995), communicative action becomes embedded in social work through increased user involvement and participation, networking, action learning, and peer support. As Houston (2009) observed, taking Habermas's idea of communicative action seriously makes communication the focal point of social work (and peacebuilding) activities. We know we are on this path when we continuously strive to understand another person's perspective, difficult as this may be, and build on this understanding to achieve consensus with points of view that differ from our own, and with which we might disagree. It requires that we reason and talk our way through tension and difference to reach mutual understanding and agreement. Communicative action 'reinforces the considerable agency of local actors in peacebuilding' (Neufeldt et al., 2020, p. 14).

What can social work educators do?

The global definition of social work claims that the principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility, and respect for diversities guide social work in promoting social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people (IASSW/IFSW, 2014). By implication, social work education prepares practitioners committed to these principles and provides the knowledge, practice frameworks, and skills that enable them to foster collaboration and engage in collective action to change unjust social conditions and structures that prevent the fulfilment of human rights. In Nigeria, the most pressing factors hampering social cohesion and human wellbeing contribute to, and result from, ongoing violent conflicts. To respond to this situation, in the first instance, social work education would need a much greater focus on local contexts and curriculum content on the factors leading to, and exacerbating, conflict, in an educational context that encourages discussion and debate, with educators modelling skills and behaviour oriented toward consensual understanding. In a social environment rife with ethnoreligious differences and tensions, social work students need practice frameworks that foster social cohesion and transformative change, on the one hand, and promote peacebuilding and reconciliation, on the other.

Most importantly, however, they need new knowledge with readings lists of articles by Nigerian and other African scholars, who have studied the historical and contemporary factors contributing to, and exacerbating, conflict and hampering social development. There is a rich knowledge reservoir on which to draw, with the reference list for this article, providing a few of these. They also need to learn theories that expand their minds and open up new perspectives, possibilities, and understandings. The example we provide of Habermas' communicative action is one such theory. Learning about and understanding different theoretical approaches to peacebuilding would enrich students' knowledge.

Neufeldt et al. (2020) provides a useful overview of the theoretical origins of, and influences on, peacebuilding theories. Perhaps best known to African social work scholars is Paulo Freire's (1971) pedagogy of the oppressed, a conflict-oriented critical theory of 'transformation and peacebuilding ... rooted within local and relational contexts' (Neufeldt et al., 2020, p. 2). Alongside transformative theories like Freire's are liberal peace theories drawn from political science and international relations with a focus on post-conflict state building. Though Habermas is a critical theorist, his theory of communicative action, like liberal peace theories, has a democratising ethos, wherein the goal is social harmony and consensus building. Liberal peace theories come from an outsider perspective and inform international interventions that, though they emphasise local participation, do not necessarily involve local agency. In other words, as in representative democracies, they seek local groups and organisations that represent the interests of local communities involved in conflicts, not necessarily those involved in the conflict themselves. Combining these is a third hybrid theory of international-local engagement (Neufeldt et al., 2020).

Theories that promote harmony, solidarity, and nation building are consistent with the Nigerian National Universities Commission's (2007) benchmark curriculum standards for social work. They could be part of stand-alone courses on social work and peacebuilding or inform any courses that involve the study of social problems, because conflict affects every client group with which social workers engage. It affects women on an interpersonal, community, and policy level. It affects children, whose education it constantly disrupts. Resultantly Nigeria has the world's largest out-of-school population. It is a major cause of Nigeria's large displaced and trafficked population with older people, women, and children most affected. Social work students need to learn to deal with conflict at all levels by developing skills and strategies of communication, relationship building, negotiation, mediation, and advocacy.

To tease out issues relating to social justice, like violent conflict and human rights violations, educators need to engage in curriculum development workshops, where they discuss ways of incorporating these themes into their courses and teaching strategies and skills to address violence, conflict, and oppression at all levels of engagement (Onalu et al., 2021). Courses need to include diverse social work theories, models, methods, and perspectives that inform understanding of social justice, such as rights-based approaches that emphasise the importance of human rights observance, the policies ratified by Nigeria in this regard, how

they inform local policy in various areas, and the models they suggest, like anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practice. Feminist theory provides an understanding of women's inequality and oppression and suggests practices that promote their inclusion and consider their voices. Structural theory promotes an understanding of the way social institutions and practices discriminate against women, children, and minorities. They promote understanding of stigma and discrimination as practices embedded in the system, due to cultural and religious understandings of mental health, disabilities, and epilepsy, for example. All these theories emphasise the importance of context and the role of race, gender, ethnicity, class, religion, and ethnicity play in shaping people's understanding and behaviour. Addressing violent conflict requires complex understanding of these intersecting factors and the way in which they place individuals and communities at odds with one another.

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Women between political and social violence in the context of settler colonialism: A Social Work Perspective.

Social work has ethical standards that aim to enhance well-being and promote change in the social and political structures that oppress and cause injustice to the most vulnerable groups. In some contexts, where justice is absent, the goals of social work are minimized to individual intervention, humanitarian aid, services, and crisis intervention. The focus becomes on alleviating the symptoms of oppression rather than changing the social and political structures that produce injustice.

For over 74 years, Palestine has been under a settler colonial regime combined with continuous waves of violence, which resulted in hundreds of thousands of men and women being abused by the aforementioned regime. Women were the most affected party by systematic colonial policies. They were subject to direct oppression and discrimination, including imprisonment, killing, and sexual abuse (Alissa & Beck, 2020). Furthermore, and further increasing the discrimination against women, the colonizers empowered the patriarchal structure of the society, which already discriminated against women.

Under these multiple layers of oppression against Palestinian women, social workers confront an ethical dilemma regarding which discourse to adopt: the liberation discourse to dismantle the oppression's political and social structure or the limited role of individual interventions or services that will not actively contribute to the steadfastness of women and society. This article deals with three key issues: 1) The history of colonial violence, including sexual violence against women in Palestine; 2) The colonial structure and its role in strengthening the patriarchal structure as a form of feminist oppression; 3) Social work as a liberation discourse and practice.

History of colonial violence, including sexual violence against Palestinian women

Since the Nakba in 1948, women have been targeted by all forms of violence, including medical neglect torture, detention, and sexual violence (Shalhoub-Kevorkian, et al.2014). In 1967, the rest of Palestinian land was occupied, and since then, 16 thousand women have been detained and tortured. In 2015, 200 women were detained (Al-Araby al-Jaded, 2020). Currently, there are 23 women detained in Israeli prisons, including a girl who has not reached the age of 18 (Addameer Foundation for Prisoner Care and Human Rights, 2022). Rape and sexual violence are considered core components of the ideology of Israeli settlers. Based on this ideology, they considered women of "others" (non-Israel's) available for their men, which permitted them to commit sexual crimes against Palestinian women during and after the Nakba.

Amnesty International reported the story of a 24-year-old woman from the Nablus area who was forced to strip naked on the main street while still giving birth after soldiers from the Hawara checkpoint near the city of Nablus on the northern side of the West Bank killed her husband and wounded her father-in-law. Ms. Maysoon, the women in question, says that what makes the experience even more difficult is the humiliation she felt when the Israeli soldiers forced her to strip naked in front of passersby and her father-in-law.

Another example of the policy of controlling the life and death of Palestinians is the detaining of the dead body of the persons who were killed during resistance actions by the Israelis, whether they are men or women. Occupation forces often detain their bodies either in refrigerators or in a particular cemetery called the "cemetery of numbers" often until the completion of the period of "administrative detention." This act prevents family members from having normal mourning for the loss of loved ones.



These methods are meant to punish Palestinians even after their deaths and to collectively punish their families. Daher-Nashif (2016) argued that Israel uses necropolitics and biopolitics to control the death and life of Palestinians. The colonizer determines when, where, and how the colonized dies.

The settler colonial regime empowered the patriarchal structure in Palestinian society

Using collective measures of oppression against the entire Palestinian society reproduces waves of social and familial violence by imposing systematic political violence against husbands, fathers, and brothers. The kinds of violence include arrest, torture, and denial of free movement to reach the workplace. This causes frustration that manifests as social and familial violence, in which women are the most vulnerable group to the effects of this violence due to the patriarchal structure of society. This empowerment of the patriarchal structure of society by the regime increases the discrimination against women (Abu Bakr, Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Oweida, & Dabit, 2004). On the other hand, Seniora (2003) mentioned other ways of maintaining the patriarchal structure of society. She refers to Israel's exploitation of the prevailing concepts of gender and honor in society to oppress Palestinian women and their political activity, causing them social isolation and social ostracism. In the eighties of the last century, the bodies of Palestinian women were exploited to create collaborators with the occupation to suppress the Intifada and resistance and to create a state of distrust and suspicion among the resistance fighters, not to mention the shame that befalls the collaborators and their families.

Furthermore, the occupation promoted the idea that the motives behind Palestinian women's involvement in resisting the occupation are to escape social pressure and wash away their shame for committing a sexual act. Najem (2011) showed that the negative view of women subjected to arrest led to the suffering of the captive women from poor economic conditions and prevented them from obtaining a job, which exacerbated their social and economic problems. Borrowing from Frantz Fanon, "violence within colonial societies increases as the violence of the colonizers' increases, and the two forms of violence overlap, balance, and share, which makes it difficult to separate them, just as in our Palestinian reality, where the overlap between colonial political violence and social violence is so continuous that it is impossible to separate them."

Social work as a liberation discourse and practice

From the beginning of the occupation in Palestine and during the two uprisings (Intifada) until today, social workers have reacted to renewed waves of political violence by adopting a crisis management intervention model. They mostly provide psychosocial support on an individual and group basis. This approach was criticized by a group of social workers and other mental health practitioners due to the limitations of this role. They argued that the

ethical standards of social work aim to enhance well-being, promote social justice, and enable the steadfastness of societies suffering from oppression.

Additionally, some Palestinian feminist social workers reviewed the theories and practices of their domain critically. They argued that social workers should adopt the discourse of liberating the oppressed and to meet the aims and ethical standards of social work (Shalhoup-Kovirkian, Wahba, & Alissa, 2022). This discourse means that social workers and social work institutions should view women's social liberation as part of Palestine's national liberation.

Also, liberating social work has more challenges due to the lack of emancipatory-oriented educational curricula, as most curricula have a Western source. As for intervention models and direct practices, they are also often culturally insensitive, so they meet with societal rejection, especially some programs that tackle feminist issues.

One example relates to the initiative taken by some women's institutions. They drafted the family protection laws 15 years ago. So far, the law has not been approved by successive Palestinian governments, which has exacerbated the crimes of social violence and honor killings due to the absence of legal deterrence. This proposal was met with numerous criticisms because it was not implemented due to a lack of societal referendum or collective societal debate, making it easy to dismiss and accuse it of being a Western product or violating Islamic law (Shareea).

Conclusion

In a settler colonial context, such as in Palestine, multiple levels of political violence led to social oppression against women. Social work should consider adopting a critical and liberating discourse that admits the right of oppressed people to dismantle the colonial regime and patriarchal structure of society. To achieve this, social workers and feminist movements worldwide should provide support and solidarity. Furthermore, different actors, including social workers, social work institutions, and academics, should consider the uniqueness of the Palestinian context, which will prevent conflicts with the customs and values of the society to avoided been rejected. This must be done to enhance the capacity and impact of social work in this context rather than abandon its fundamental principles and ethical values.

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Contributions that social workers can make in the postwar era

The Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict entered the history of the 20th century as one of the most tragic conflicts, its consequences had a serious impact on the fate of millions of Azerbaijanis. This conflict, which started in the late 1980s with Armenia's open territorial claims to the historical lands of Azerbaijan and provocations on ethnic grounds with terrorist acts, resulted in military aggression against Azerbaijan.

The Armenians represented by the leadership of the Soviet Union, the leadership of the Armenian SSR and the Armenian diaspora abroad took advantage of the weakening of the central government of the USSR in the late 1980s to separate the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO), which was established in 1923 within the Azerbaijan SSR, and became the Armenian SSR. have taken purposeful action for its integration.

At the end of 1987, the process of brutal deportation of Azerbaijanis from their historical lands began in the Gafan district of the Armenian SSR. In 1988-1989, Azerbaijanis living in different cities and regions of Armenia faced the same fate. More than 250,000 Azerbaijanis living in Armenia were forcibly expelled from their historical lands, 216 of them were brutally murdered, and 1154 were injured. They were forced to seek refuge in Azerbaijan to save their lives from Armenian violence.

Azerbaijanis lived compactly in the territory of Armenia until 1988. However, unlike Armenians living in the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, the Soviet authorities did not grant autonomous status within the Armenian SSR to the compactly populated areas of the Azerbaijanis.

In 1905-1906, 1918-1920, and 1948-1953, Azerbaijanis were purposefully displaced and deported from the territory of present-day Armenia. Only in 1948-1953, more than 150 thousand Azerbaijanis were forcibly deported from their historical homes in the territory of the Armenian SSR. At that time, some of them, especially the elderly and babies, died because they could not endure the harsh conditions of relocation, sharp climate change, physical shocks and spiritual suffering.

On February 13, 1988, the first demonstration of Armenians regarding the Karabakh issue was held in the central city of Khankendi (Stepanakert at that time). From February 16 to March 2, various rallies were organized in NKAO. On February 20, Armenian-born deputies of the Council of People's Deputies of NKAO voted in favor of the proposal to join the province to the Armenian SSR (Azerbaijani and other nationalities deputies did not participate in the meeting). On February 21, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union issued a decision "On the events of Nagorno-Karabakh", and in this document, the decision of the Provincial Council was called an action "instigated by nationalist elements". Nevertheless, on February 22, near Askaran settlement located on the Khankendi-Aghdam highway, Armenians opened fire on peaceful Azerbaijani demonstrators who protested against the above-mentioned decision of the Council of People's Deputies of the NKAO. As a result, two young Azerbaijanis were martyred. At the beginning of March, the "Karabakh" organization, which aims to unite Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia, started operating in Yerevan without hindrance, while the "KrunK" organization started operating in Khankendi.

"KrunK" organization started operating in Khankendi. On June 14, the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian SSR adopted a decision on the "incorporation" of NKAO into the Armenian SSR. In protest, the Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijan SSR reconfirmed the NKAO as part of the Azerbaijan SSR on June 17. On July 18, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR made a decision that it was impossible to change the national-territorial division of the Azerbaijan SSR and the Armenian SSR. With this, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR defended the principle of territorial integrity of the republics, guided by the relevant provision established in the Constitution of the USSR (Article 78).

The activity of the Special Management Committee (SEC, January 12 - November 28, 1989) created by the decision of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR ended in failure. On December 1, 1989, the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian SSR adopted a decision "On the unification of the Armenian SSR and Nagorno-Karabakh". On January 9, 1990, the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian SSR included the socio-economic development plan of the Armenian SSR in the plan of the Armenian SSR for 1990. On May 20, 1990, the election of the deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian SSR from the NKAO was held in the NKAO. The decisions of the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian SSR clearly revealed the aggressive nature of Armenia.

As a result of the victory of the Armenian National Movement in the parliamentary elections held in Armenia in May 1990, the extreme nationalist and chauvinist forces that propagated the war came to power in the republic. This accelerated their aggressive war. Yerevan focused all its efforts on the creation of unofficial military units and their arming, preferring to solve the problem by force in accordance with its goals.

On September 2, 1991, the so-called "Nagorno-Karabakh Republic" ("NKR") was declared within the boundaries of the NKAO and the Shaumyan (village) district of the Azerbaijan SSR, and a "referendum" was held on December 10. It was clear that Armenia, taking into

account the prospect of the collapse of the USSR, is trying to implement its activities according to a special plan in order to pretend that it is not a party to the conflict and thereby confuse the international opinion. As a response to this, on November 23, 1991, the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Azerbaijan canceled the autonomous status of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Until now, Armenia, which had openly voiced its territorial claims, started military operations against Azerbaijan without declaring war. Thus, the conflict entered a new "hot stage". During the military campaign, the armed forces of Armenia ruthlessly killed the peaceful Azerbaijani population in the regions and cities they occupied without making any distinction between military and civilians. Azerbaijanis were subjected to ethnic cleansing and genocide. The military and political leadership of Armenia committed systematic and mass massacre and genocide of civilians in the village of Meshali in Askera, the villages of Malibeyli and Gushchular in Shushan, the village of Garadagli in Khojaven, the city of Khojaly, the village of Agdaban in Kalbajar and to destroy, and to break the resistance of the remaining part and to rid the region of them by physically killed a part of the Azerbaijani civilian population living in Nagorno-Karabakh.

On the night of February 25-26, 1992, Armenia committed genocide against the Azerbaijani population in Khojaly. As a result, 613 civilians were killed, including 106 women and 63 children. "Justice for Khojaly!" 23 states of the United States, the Scottish Parliament of Great Britain, the House of Peoples of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the National Assembly of Djibouti, the Foreign Relations Committee of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Parliament, the Upper House of the National Assembly of Afghanistan, the National Congress of Honduras, the Representatives of Indonesia The First Committee of the House of Representatives, the Senate of the National Assembly of Jordan, the Second Constitutional Committee of the Colombian Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Second Committee of the House of Representatives, the Congress of Guatemala, the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Chamber of Deputies of the General Congress of Mexico, the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Senate of Pakistan, the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs of the National Assembly, the Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the National Assembly of Panama, the Chamber of Deputies of the National Congress of Paraguay, the Congress of Peru, the National Council of Slovenia, the National Assembly of Sudan It was recognized as genocide against Azerbaijanis by the Affairs Committee. In addition, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Turkic Council have identified this tragedy as genocide.

On May 12, 1994, an agreement was reached on a ceasefire. Until now, as a result of the military aggression of Armenia, 20 percent of the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan - the city of Khankendi, Khojaly, Shusha, Lachin, Khojavand, Kalbajar, Aghdam, Fuzuli, Jabrayil, Gubadli, Zangilan districts, as well as 13 villages of Tartar district, 7 villages of Gazakh district, and a village of Sadarak district of Nakhchivan was occupied by the Armenian army.

As a result of Armenia's aggression, more than 1 million Azerbaijanis became refugees and internally displaced persons, more than 20 thousand Azerbaijanis were killed during military operations, and more than 50 thousand people were disabled.

The further fate of 3,890 Azerbaijanis, including 71 children, 267 women, and 326 elderly people, who went missing as a result of the First Karabakh War, as well as 872 people identified as prisoners and hostages (as of December 1, 2020), is unknown. In 1988-1993, in total, 900 settlements, 150 thousand houses, 7 thousand public buildings, 693 schools, 855 kindergartens, 695 medical institutions, 927 libraries, 44 temples, 9 mosques, 473 historical monuments, palaces and museums were built in Karabakh. 40 thousand museum exhibits, 6 thousand industrial and agricultural enterprises, 160 bridges and other infrastructure facilities were destroyed.

The Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, which has become a source of serious threat to international peace and security due to its interstate nature, has caused serious discussions within international organizations, and a number of important documents on the problem have been adopted. On April 30, 1993, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution No. 822 demanding the immediate withdrawal of Armenian troops from the Kalbajar region of Azerbaijan and other occupied territories.

On July 29, 1993, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution No. 853 demanding the complete, immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian troops from the Aghdam region of Azerbaijan and other occupied territories.

On October 14, 1993, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution No. 874, which demanded the withdrawal of Armenian troops from the most recently occupied territories in accordance with the timetable of the OSCE Minsk Group.

On November 11, 1993, the UN Security Council adopted resolution No. 884. The resolution condemned the occupation of Zangilan region and Horadiz settlement, the attack on the civilian population and the bombing of the territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan and demanded the withdrawal of the occupying forces from Zangilan region and Horadiz settlement and other recently occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Acting as the main guarantor of international peace and security, these resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council in connection with the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict defined the legal basis of the political process for resolving the conflict based on the norms and principles of international law. The resolutions condemned the occupation of Azerbaijani territories, emphasized the inadmissibility of occupying territories through the use of force, reaffirmed the territorial integrity, sovereignty and inviolability of Azerbaijan's borders, that Nagorno-Karabakh is an integral part of Azerbaijan, and the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces from all occupied territories of Azerbaijan was requested.

In the resolution "Situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan" adopted by the UN General Assembly on September 7, 2006 regarding the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, the fires caused by Armenia in the occupied territories were condemned. The resolution of the same name adopted by the UN General Assembly on March 14, 2008 covered the legal, political and humanitarian aspects of the conflict and reaffirmed the principles of its resolution. These principles include respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian troops from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, the right of people forcibly displaced from the occupied territories to return to their native lands, the provision of conditions for coexistence of both communities within Azerbaijan, and as a result of the occupation of the territories stressed the illegality of the created situation.

The conflict has been discussed many times within the framework of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The organization, guided by the principles and norms of international law, announced that Azerbaijan was subjected to military aggression. In 1993, the resolution adopted at the 21st meeting of the organization's foreign ministers held in Karachi, Pakistan condemned the Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan, demanded the immediate withdrawal of Armenian troops from all occupied territories, urged Armenia to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and resolve the conflict peacefully and justly and called for a solution.

In 1994, another resolution on Nagorno-Karabakh was adopted at the 7th Summit meeting of the heads of state and government of the OIC countries in Casablanca, Morocco. In that resolution, the fact that 20 percent of Azerbaijan's territories were occupied by Armenia was sharply condemned and concern was expressed over the fact that more than one million Azerbaijanis became refugees and internally displaced persons. Referring to the known four resolutions of the UN Security Council, the mentioned document demanded the immediate withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from all the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, and the actions against civilians as a result of Armenia's aggression against Azerbaijan were assessed as a crime against humanity.

In the Final Document adopted at the 16th Summit meeting of the heads of state and government of the countries that are members of the Non-Aligned Movement in Tehran in 2012, the importance of resolving the conflict within the territorial integrity, sovereignty and internationally recognized borders of the Republic of Azerbaijan was emphasized. In the Final Document adopted at the 17th Summit meeting of the heads of state and government of the member countries of the Non-Aligned Movement in Margarita Island of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in 2016, despite the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council, it was regretted that the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan remained unresolved, and the conflict was a violation of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan. support for its solution was expressed.

Resolution No. 1416 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) adopted on January 25, 2005 "On the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict regulated by the OSCE

Minsk Group" confirmed the occupation of Azerbaijani territories, expressed concern about ethnic cleansing in these territories, and the call was made by UN Security Council to comply with resolutions 822, 853, 874 and 884 and to withdraw troops from the occupied territories. The organization also confirmed the right of internally displaced persons to return to their lands and stressed the inadmissibility of the occupation of the territory of a member state by another member state.

The decision of PACE on January 26, 2016 about the fall of the Sarsang Reservoir, built on the Tartar River in 1976 to provide irrigation water to 100,000 hectares of land in the 6 regions of Azerbaijan, as a result of the occupation, and residents being deprived of irrigation water. The resolution "Inhabitants of the border regions of Azerbaijan were deliberately deprived of water" demanded the withdrawal of Armenian troops from the mentioned region, the deliberate creation of an artificial ecological crisis was assessed as "ecological aggression", and at the same time, the occupation of a part of Azerbaijan's territory by Armenia was once again confirmed. The decision of the European Court of Human Rights on June 16, 2015 regarding the case "Chiragov and others against Armenia" confirmed that Armenia is occupying Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding regions.

In a statement issued on November 9, 1993, the European Union called for the withdrawal of troops from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and expressed its support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan. In the joint declaration adopted at the Eastern Partnership Summit of the European Union held in Brussels on November 24, 2017, the European Union supported the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of all partners.

The "Partnership Priorities" document initialed between Azerbaijan and the European Union in 2018 also expressed support for Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, independence, sovereignty and inviolability of internationally recognized borders. Territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Azerbaijan were supported in the final documents of the NATO Summit meetings, including the 2012 Chicago, 2014 Cardiff, 2016 Warsaw, 2018 Brussels declarations.

In addition, in 1995, when the heads of CIS member states signed the Memorandum on maintaining peace and stability in the Commonwealth of Independent States, Armenia refused to accept the 7th and 8th paragraphs of that document. Those clauses state that "Member States... shall take measures to prevent any manifestations of separatism, nationalism, chauvinism and fascism in their territories", as well as "not to support separatist movements and separatist regimes in the territory of other member states, ... undertake not to provide economic, financial, military and other assistance".

On August 5, 2019, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan made a speech in Khankendi with the statement "Karabakh is a part of Armenia and a point". Before that, Armenia realized the international political, legal and moral responsibility of the policy of military occupation and annexation, and tried to cover up the policy of occupation and show it as the

right of the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh to self-determination. This statement of N. Pashinyan clearly showed that the real goal of Armenia is aggression. By calling for the annexation of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, Armenia violated the norms and principles of international law, the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, and showed disrespect to the international community, especially to the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group, which is responsible for resolving the conflict through negotiations. On October 3, 2019, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev responded to N. Pashinyan's statement during his speech at the 16th annual meeting of the "Valday" International Discussion Club: "...the statement is word for word: 'Karabakh is a part of Armenia, period'. First, to put it mildly, this is a lie. Both Aran and Nagorno-Karabakh are recognized by the world as an integral part of Azerbaijan. Armenia itself does not recognize this illegal institution. Karabakh is the historical, ancient land of Azerbaijan. Thus, Karabakh is Azerbaijan and an exclamation mark.

Also, on February 15, 2020, a panel discussion was held between the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and the Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan within the framework of the Munich Security Conference. During the discussions, the President of Azerbaijan once again brought to the attention of the international community the rightful position of Azerbaijan regarding the conflict and destroyed Armenia's policy of aggression and false claims with arguments based on historical facts and international law.

The so-called "elections" organized in the occupied lands of Azerbaijan in March 2020 became another provocation. Those "elections", like the previous ones, were not recognized by the international community, any international organization, the state, on the contrary, they were sharply condemned and rejected.

In July 2020, Armenia committed another military provocation to the Tovuz district of the state border with Azerbaijan. The purpose of the provocation was to create a new source of tension in the region, to put the issue of the occupation of Azerbaijani territories by Armenia on the back burner, to involve third countries in the conflict and to damage the strategic infrastructure of Azerbaijan. As a result, a group of Azerbaijani soldiers, including high-ranking officers, and one civilian were martyred. The Azerbaijani Army dealt a crushing blow to the enemy and gave him a worthy response.

In August 2020, Armenia resorted to another military provocation and sent a sabotage group to Azerbaijan in order to commit terrorist acts. However, on August 23, 2020, that group was neutralized, its leader was detained, and thus the next sabotage plan did not take place. Armenia's adoption of an aggressive and offensive military doctrine and national security strategy, the creation of armed civilian volunteer units in Armenia that will take part in military operations against Azerbaijan, the call of the Minister of Defense of Armenia for a "new war for new territories", the visit of the officials of this country to the major cities of Azerbaijan and threats to attack important civil infrastructure, Armenia's recruitment of mercenaries and terrorists from different countries, supplying large quantities of weapons, etc. He clearly demonstrated that Armenia is preparing for a new war against Azerbaijan.

On September 21, 2020, the President of Azerbaijan, Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, Ilham Aliyev, during his speech at the High-Level Meeting dedicated to the 75th anniversary of the UN within the framework of the 75th Session of the UN General Assembly, stated that aggressive rhetoric and provocations indicate that Armenia is preparing for new aggression against Azerbaijan. shows: "We invite the UN and the international community to prevent Armenia from further military aggression. The military and political leadership of Armenia is responsible for the provocations and the escalation of tension. The Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict should be resolved within the framework of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and on the basis of UN Security Council resolutions."

On September 24, 2020, during his speech at the general debates of the 75th session of the UN General Assembly, the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev once again declared that Armenia is preparing for a new war against Azerbaijan.

On September 25, 2020, the President of Azerbaijan, while welcoming the European Union's special representative for the South Caucasus, noted once again that the intelligence information of the Azerbaijani side shows that very serious military preparations are underway in Armenia against Azerbaijan, and their military forces are concentrated on the contact line and the state border. : "If they attack us, they will regret it. I just want you to know this and convey this message to the European Commission and see what the European Commission can do to stop the new provocations of the aggressor."

Unfortunately, no practical steps were taken by the world community to put an end to Armenia's successive provocations and new war plans. Emboldened by this, on September 27, 2020, Armenia attacked the positions of the Azerbaijani Army from several directions, using heavy artillery to fire heavily at residential areas.

In response to Armenia's next attempt at military aggression, the Azerbaijani Army launched a counter-offensive operation and as a result of the 44-day long Patriotic War, it succeeded in destroying the Armenian army, bringing them to their knees, and liberating the occupied territories. The "Iron Fist" operation carried out by the victorious Azerbaijani Army under the leadership of the Supreme Commander, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, was written in golden letters in the history of the Azerbaijani people, and resulted in the surrender of Armenia, which turned occupation and glorification of Nazism into a state policy. On November 10, 2020, the "Statement of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and the President of the Russian Federation" was accepted and Armenia signed the act of capitulation. Thus, the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict was ended, and Azerbaijan regained its territorial integrity.

We all know that the Second Karabakh War, which lasted from September 27 to November 10, 2020, ended with the restoration of Azerbaijan's internationally recognized borders. The restoration of the country's territorial integrity was remembered as a demonstration of the supremacy of international law and national-moral values for our state. As it is known, the material and cultural resources of our occupied territories have been looted and destroyed

for nearly thirty years. So far, the calculations in this direction show that the damage caused by Armenia to Azerbaijan is measured in billions of dollars. Thus, in the UN Development Program prepared in 2000, the damage caused by the occupation was expressed as close to 54 billion dollars.

The war is over and the period of peace building has begun. It is well known to conflict experts that the conflict is considered over when the parties choose the transfer path from conflict relations to economic, social and political cooperation relations. Of course, this process is a painful process. However, immediately after the end of the war, Azerbaijan offered the other party a way of cooperation, peace building, and peaceful coexistence and stated the need for the support of the international community for this.



This photo symbolizes the Declaration of November 10, 2020 signed by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and the President of the Russian Federation - regarding the agreement on the ceasefire

In his speech at the international conference on "Development and cooperation" held at ADA University on April 29, 2022, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev once again emphasized that "We accept the Armenians living in Karabakh as our citizens. We

hope that they will soon understand that they have all the rights and security guarantees as citizens of Azerbaijan. Unlike Armenia, Azerbaijan is a country where representatives of numerous national minorities live, all of them live in peace and tranquility in our country. Representatives of the Armenian people have also lived in Azerbaijan and they have never encountered any problems. Therefore, Azerbaijan-phobia propaganda should be stopped in Armenia."

Restoring and reviving territories freed from occupation is one of the main tasks facing the state of Azerbaijan. After the Patriotic War, fundamental steps were taken in the direction of the restoration of territories freed from occupation and the implementation of sustainable settlement. Thus, for the purpose of solving the socio-economic, humanitarian, organizational issues arising from the implementation of the provisions stipulated in the Declaration signed on November 10, 2020, as well as coordinating activities in this field, in the territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan freed from occupation, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan The Coordination Headquarters was established by the order of Ilham Aliyev dated November 24, 2020.

In addition, the Karabakh Revival Fund was established as a public entity on the basis of the decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev dated January 4, 2021, in order to provide a modern and decent life for sustainable settlement in the liberated territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and to carry out construction-restoration and improvement works in all areas.

At the same time, according to the decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev dated December 8, 2020, disabled servicemen and members of the families of those who died in connection with the protection of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan, while performing their official duties in the territories liberated from occupation, as well as after the end of military operations "YASHAT" Foundation was established in order to provide additional support to the measures implemented by the state in the field of social protection to the employees of the state bodies whose disabilities were determined as a result of his participation in the elimination of the consequences, or to the family members of the deceased employees, in order to form a transparent, effective and accessible platform. We—social workers—believe that it is extremely important for social workers to cooperate with these institutions and support their activities.

As we know, one of the main goals of the recovery and reconstruction process is the return of IDPs to their homes. In order to effectively organize the return, it is very important to predict the potential of repatriation as accurately as possible, and for this to study the wishes, intentions and proposals of the internally displaced persons. The President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, said about this during his speech at the conference dedicated to the results of 2020 held in video format on January 6: "I recently instructed the Presidential Administration that surveys should be conducted among the displaced people, their intentions should be learned in order to return to their ancestral lands. Do you have thoughts of going or not? Let us know and we'll have to do our own remediation. I am sure that the

absolute majority of the former settlers will return to their native lands with great enthusiasm. The state will do everything in its power to achieve this." As it can be seen, in this speech, the president attaches great importance to the public opinion regarding the settlement and the large-scale settlement in Karabakh, and considers public participation in this direction appropriate. For this purpose, according to the order of the head of state, the relevant institutions will conduct sociological surveys among the internally displaced persons. One of such studies is the "Working Group on Academic and Educational Issues" of the Inter-Administrative Center under the "Coordinating Headquarters for the Centralized Resolution of Issues in the Occupied Territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan" established by the order of the head of state, conducting systematic research involving local and foreign experts.

It is such an approach that leads to the assumption that when the settlement is implemented, the wishes of the internally displaced persons will be taken into account, and all the settlements will be improved and will be given to the owners of their historical motherlands. Every person wishes to return to his ancestral homeland with the nostalgia of his childhood and youth memories, rural community lifestyle. This motivation has a deep socio-psychological weight in the Great Return (repatriation of internally displaced people that leave their homeland 30 years before because of Armenian aggression). Therefore, in surveys conducted among internally displaced persons, quite a large number of respondents unequivocally state that they want to return to their ancestral homeland.

A working mechanism for the creation of new jobs with decent wages, especially jobs suitable for young people, and comprehensive promotion of their entrepreneurial activity in the liberated territories from occupation is envisaged. It is planned to implement large-scale self-employment projects related to the entrepreneurial activity and employment of young people and to ensure the support of relevant international organizations, as well as the expansion of international cooperation and their participation in international programs and projects.

The document "Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for socio-economic development" approved by the decree of the President of Azerbaijan Mr. Ilham Aliyev on February 2, 2021 opens up new opportunities in terms of defining the country's long-term sustainable development goals and implementing reforms based on specific programs. On the basis of national priorities, the government is tasked with implementing reforms, projects and measures in 5 important directions: 1) sustainable, increasingly competitive economy; 2) a society that is dynamic, inclusive and based on ideas of social justice; 3) competitive human capital and space for modern innovations; 4) a large return to the territories freed from occupation; 5) clean environment and "green growth" country.

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, identified the clearance of landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) from occupied territories as one of the priority issues in terms of ensuring security, as well as the "Great Return" program. This necessity is conditioned by the fact that Armenia has mined not only the areas close to the contact line,

but also all the districts and cities, roads, residential buildings and strategic heights in the territories it has occupied for nearly 30 years, in violation of international legal norms.{6}

Although Azerbaijan has repeatedly demanded a map of the mined areas, the Armenian side, which shows a destructive position, does not behave consistently and honestly in this process. This shows that the aggressor country is insincere towards the regional initiatives aimed at the restoration of communications, mutual trust, and the formation of an environment of peace and security.

We hope that the Great Return process will be carried out with high quality indicators, and we will witness the honorable and decent resettlement of internally displaced persons. Every citizen of Azerbaijan has the opportunity to contribute to the great process of repatriation to the territories freed from occupation. In this direction, along with employees working in the sphere of social service and social work, students studying social work and service have a great potential to act as volunteers. First of all, it would be appropriate to use their potential in the direction of conducting social work among the population that will return to their homeland. Social field specialists should come up with social initiatives related to settlement and present relevant social projects. Conducting social work with the population to be repatriated, communities, proposing social projects for decent settlement, proposing models in line with inclusive requirements for the smart city, smart village project, mobilizing the potential of social dialogue among the population of regions free from occupation for peaceful coexistence of communities, employment coming up with projects for the social service sector that will present its potential is one of the important and honorable tasks facing the social workers of Azerbaijan.

At the same time, it is appropriate to establish social service, social work and Agency for Sustainable and Operational Social Security(DOST) centers in liberated territories in order to take care of the concerns of the citizens to be repatriated, to help them overcome the social difficulties they may face during settlement and adaptation to the new environment, development of encouraging social circles and other social projects, development of innovative projects and initiatives by social workers to achieve the repatriation of the population on all demographic indicators during settlement are necessary and mandatory tasks. Studying the post-war social work experience of the countries of Europe and West, and bringing advanced experience to Azerbaijan should be one of the tasks facing the country's social workers. We believe that in the post-war period, social workers will honor their responsibilities and their contributions will make us proud as one of the glorious pages of the history of social work in Azerbaijan.

Summary

In the presented article, the tasks faced by social workers in the post-war period were discussed in detail, and it was stated that the international experience in this field should be studied, and the contribution should be made to the process by using the most advanced experience.

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Growing up in a Conflict Zone: Identity and Captivity for Muslim Children in Kashmir

Growing up as a Muslim minority child in contemporary India can entail a complex process of navigating between religious and national identities, which are often placed antagonistic to each other. Communal and historical discourses around 'othering' of Islam has resulted in posing Muslims as a threat to Indian nationhood, security and culture. In the state of Kashmir, which is the only Muslim majority state in India, this socio-political dynamics of 'othering' has resulted in a long drawn territorial conflict and dispute in the region.

However, it is often forgotten that inter-group dispute and bigotry which emerges out of deep-rooted stereotypes can also manifest its adversities in the lives of young Muslims and can result in multi-layered alienation and discrimination for them. Kashmiri children and youth, parallel to their adult counterparts, have been constant witnesses to violence, army surveillance, coercive infringement of fundamental rights and freedom of civilians in the state. Being born and growing up in a long-drawn conflict zone has been researched to have adverse psycho-social and negative mental health effects on young minds.

Based within a child-rights context, this study positioned young Muslim children from Kashmir as primary social actors in the research. It aimed to give voice to a child-centric experience of growing up in a conflict zone, while negotiating between religious identity and national identity. Using participant-led semi-structured interviews, data was collected from 36 Muslim children (N = 36), 14 – 18 years, sampled in the state of Kashmir. Narratives of children participants suggest that due to bigoted territorial conflict in the state, Kashmiri Muslim children feel a sense of alienation from concepts of national polity and citizenship and live in constant fear of expressing their 'minority' identity.

Kashmir: Identities in Conflict

The antagonism between Hindus and Muslims in India can be traced back to before 1947 when the country received independence from the British imperial rule. British India was divided into a Hindu-majority India and a Muslim-majority Pakistan. Partitioning of the country triggered mass migrations, deadly riots, gruesome communal violence between Hindus and Muslims (Khalidi, 1995). Even after the partition, not all Muslims migrated to Pakistan and Muslims remained a sizeable minority group in independent India, making up around 10% of the population in 1951 (Khalidi, 1995). As Indo-Pak animosities prevailed, Muslims in India have often been suspected of manifesting loyalties towards Pakistan. A high-level committee report on conditions of social, educational and economic status of the Muslim community detailed on how Muslims in India face problems relating to security, identity and equity (Sachar, 2006). The report revealed that Muslims carry the constant burden of being labelled as anti-nationals, terrorist or secret sympathizers, agents or spies of Pakistan.

Contextualized amidst post-colonial animus between Hindu-Muslims in India, historical evidences exhibit the intergenerational mind-set of the Hindu religious-majority towards Muslims to be that of suspicion, fear, hostility, discrimination and exclusion (Khalidi, 1995). Communal discourses around 'othering' of Islam demonstrate Muslims as a threat to Indian nationhood, security and culture. In the state of Kashmir, with a majority of 68.31% Muslim population, this socio-political dynamics of 'othering' has resulted in a lengthy territorial conflict in the region (Kazi, 2008).

Following the partition of India in 1947, Kashmir has been a divided state between Pakistan and India. For more than seven decades, both countries have claimed their nation-building right over Kashmir which resulted in a long drawn territorial conflict in the state (Fazili, 2011). In an environment of perpetual political strife, people from Kashmir have often stated that they are not associated with any country. Further, they do not even consider Kashmir to be a part of any country and demand their right to secession and self-determination (Kazi, 2008). They strive for their own autonomous nationhood and independent (azad) Kashmiri Muslim identity. Pro-separatist movements have been suppressed through state-wide detainments, house-arrests and internet /phone connectivity blackouts (Kazi, 2008).

The struggle for a separate Kashmiri Muslim identity, has led to years of insurgency and bloodshed in the state. With an aim to 'control' the insurgents, Kashmir has seen heavy deployment of personnel from the army, special forces, and paramilitary units. In this military backed 'democracy', there has been negligible public accountability of gross human rights violations inflicted on Kashmiri civilian population (Amnesty International, 2015).

Kashmiri children and youth, parallel to their adult counterparts, have been constant witnesses to violence, army surveillance, coercive infringement of fundamental rights and freedom of civilians in the state. Being born and growing up in a long-drawn conflict zone has

been researched to have adverse psycho-social and negative mental health effects on young minds (Amnesty International, 2015).

Objectives and Methods

A small study was undertaken to highlight the voices of young people to better understand the effect of the interaction between religious and national identity formation on Muslim boys, growing up in a conflict zone, amidst secessionist demands for a free (azad) Kashmir. Using a child participatory methodological approach, focus group discussions were conducted with 36 boys (N=36) attending a senior secondary school in Srinagar, Kashmir. Group discussions were structured around the topic of “*What are your experiences of growing up in a conflict zone?*”

Growing up in a Conflict Zone

Empirical evidence from Kashmir have reported how democracy, citizenship and nationality are being comprised in this state at different levels. Kashmiri residents are denied basic civil rights of freedom of speech, assembly, travelling within and outside the state, registration and investigation of civilian complaints. In the name of national security, Kashmiri people are subjected to unlawful harassment, unexplainable home searches, stopping/checking of vehicles, arbitrary arrests, detention, attacks and killings (Fazili, 2011). Victims of violence are often not able to report cases to the national judiciary as they face threats and intimidation (Amnesty International, 2015).

Group discussions from research participants in the study were indicative of how children and youth growing up in Kashmir are constant witnesses to these coercive infringement of fundamental rights and freedom of civilians in the state. An overarching sense of group alienation from the nation state was deciphered from the narratives of the participants. The young boys in the study have seen their friends, family and acquaintances being labelled as ‘terrorist’ and being subjected to constant suspicion, surveillance, imprisonment, disappearance, and midnight raids. Since all the participants were teenage boys, several of them had been victims to such incidents themselves.

“I have been searched by army men so many times without any reason. I try not to make eye-contact with them while walking on the street...its best not to go out alone...”

- Participant, 16 years

With on-going conflict on streets, schools, hospitals, markets and playgrounds remain closed for weeks at an end. In their foundational years, children are subjected to a lack of security, education, medicines, food, nutrition and recreation (Fazili, 2011). Participants narrated how even when schools reopen, parents fear sending their children outside.

"I am often absent from school because my father says that my safety is more important than education... it effects my studies and I get bad marks, especially in Maths."

- Participant, 15 years

"...there is often a curfew outside. Playgrounds become army camps and are filled with soldiers."

- Participant, 14 years



Growing up as Participants in Inter-Generational Conflict

It has been theorized that when children are raised in conflict zones, their ego-identity formation gets centralized around that conflict. Higher inter-group conflict can result in higher intra-group solidarity. Day-to-day survival through conflict and violence takes place when members of one group stick together and collectively abide by the practices and values of their own 'in-group'. The 'out-group' is seen to be posing a constant threat, real or symbolic. Identity formations which take place around such territorial conflicts are often resistant to change and are carried forward from one generation to another (Sherif & Sherif, 1953).

“The government thinks Muslims are bombers and they do not trust ‘us’. But even ‘we’ do not trust them.”

- Participant, 17 years

In this case, there has been an age-old conflict between military forces claiming political authority over the state and Kashmiris seeking an independent identity of their own. The army, media and governance was seen as a Hindu ‘outgroup’ for the Muslim Kashmiri ‘ingroup’ population. It was observed that identity salience of children in the study was framed around their Kashmiri Muslim identity, which stood distinctly antagonistic to an Indian Hindu identity.

“We feel safe within our Muslim community in Kashmir...it is not safe to go outside Kashmir”

- Participant, 15 years

Narratives of participants of the study suggested how being born and growing up in a long-drawn conflict zone, and their experiences of discrimination and prejudice, resulted in alienation from the polity and citizenship. Following their ancestral secessionist demands, young minds of Kashmir also believed in an autonomous (azad) Muslim Kashmiri identity which is independent from their national identity.

Social Work Response to Child-Based Religious Discrimination

Conflict has shaped the identities of young Muslims in Kashmir. Their experience of discrimination and oppression has impacted on the individual’s identity, it undermines their confidence and self-esteem, making them feel, isolated and marginalised.



Social workers have a clear role to support them to challenge and mitigate these adverse effects with the aim to build holistic, safe, inclusive and mutually respectful communities. These identity issues are complex and multi-layered, however as a starting point, the given model may support social workers, educationalists and other professionals, to visualise, discuss and put in place preliminary actions to support young people, particularly those growing up in conflict zones.

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Armed conflicts in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo

The current world is shaken and surprises us in a negative way. It is a world agitated by all kinds of troubles, sensitive to cause stress and trauma. Armed conflicts, wars and disasters that affect people in different parts of the world, cause terrible destruction and affect the lives of human beings in all its dimensions. The consequences of these human and natural atrocities do not spare anyone; that is why the leaders of the victim states and regions are in a perpetual search for solutions to the situation in a particular, regional or international way.

In this contribution we focus on the Democratic Republic of Congo, which is one of the countries seriously affected by armed conflicts and natural disasters in the Central African region. The Democratic Republic of Congo is a vast country located in the centre of Africa and surrounded by nine countries at its borders including Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Angola, the Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, Zambia and South Sudan. A large country rich in minerals, fauna and flora, Congo is victim of complicity and atrocities at the local, regional and international level. The East of the country is the region that has been affected by grave and recurrent armed conflict for decades (International Crisis Group, 2020) and has already caused enormous human and material damage. These long-lasting armed conflicts have embarked the population, especially children, into a situation of serious vulnerability in different ways (Mels et al., 2009).

Context of armed conflicts in Ituri

Our contribution focuses particularly on Ituri. Located in the North-East of Congo, the Province of Ituri shares its borders with Uganda and the Republic of South Sudan and internally Ituri is linked to three other provinces, including North Kivu, Haut-Uélé and Tshopo. Ituri is comprised of five Territories (ARU, MAHAGI, DJUGU, IRUMU and MAMBASA), all affected by the armed conflicts as well as the Province of North Kivu.



Province of Ituri Democratic Republic of Congo / Democratic Republic of Congo

Ituri is one of the main mining regions of Congo with gold mines, oil, waters and forests, the reserve for Okapis fauna. However, it has been seriously affected by war for several decades, with a devastating ongoing impact until today (Vircoulon, 2021)



Some of the natural resources of Democratic Republic of Congo

The impact of armed conflicts on human life in Ituri

Since 1997, the province of Ituri has experienced an increase and persistence in hostilities caused by multiple armed groups scattered throughout the region. Every day, the population is victim to new types of violence that constitutes real risk factors to its overall well-being.

The civil population are victims of violence and human rights violations in all forms. The mass killings have reached an extreme level of atrocity using all forms of weapons (guns, machetes, spears, knives, etc). The inhumane treatment of innocent people (even babies) has reached an unimaginable level (mutilation, decapitation, disembowelling of pregnant women, banning the burial of corpses). Several families are grieved by the killing of family members and relatives in the most atrocious way.

The region experienced a dark period of Hema-Lendu ethnic conflict between 1999 and 2006, causing approximately 50.000 deaths and about 500.000 of displaced people (Thierry Vircoulon, 2005), and now sexual violence is used as a weapon of war in order to hurt and weaken the opposite group. Women and girls, including children, are victims of sexual violence and are exposed to the risks of death and rape as they go to fetch water and firewood over long distances in isolated and dangerous environments to ensure the survival of their families. Children, especially girls, are obliged to work hard and take on great responsibilities when their parents are killed or when the parents are away to search for means for their survival. Another impact is the unavailability of education and healthcare for children due to the destruction of the public infrastructures such as hospitals and schools. All these are the source of trauma, destabilization and migration of people. Massive and repeated displacements from one locality to another to fly these atrocities and seek peace have become the most frequent activity experienced all the time. Several large camps have been formed and scattered throughout Ituri Province, yet in one camp there are around 10,000 people.



Pictures of some camps in Bunia city



There are big camps set up here and there, there is still a need for more camps because of the increasing number of people coming from the afflicted neighbouring villages and other unsecured camps where the attacks are still made by the rebels. Therefore, many families are separated, and relatives are spread during attacks.

Bunia (capital of Ituri province) and some localities in the region are saturated with displaced people living in inhumane and vulnerable conditions (lack of primary needs such as food, clothing, primary health care, safety, etc.). There is a high number of orphans, widows and people who have been mutilated and living with painful physical wounds and scars. Among these serious consequences, there is the alarming increase of street children who are victims of exclusion and stigmatization, lack of schooling and the risk of severe physical problems, amongst other negative consequences (Coghlan et al., 2006).

Specific situations of children and youth

With regard to children, many of them are either orphans or separated from their parents, homeless, wandering and begging in the streets. A high incidence of infant deaths and severe malnutrition are observed in camps due to the precarious living conditions. Some of these children have even watched how their parents were killed causing several symptoms of mental trauma. School activities are disrupted and interrupted in the localities that are frequently attacked and affected by atrocities. In camps for displaced people, there are many adolescent girls who are mothers, pregnant or married by force. The lack of care facilities and programs for children and youth predisposes them to the street life and to many other risks that affect their rights and their future. A serious problem of child protection and

education is observed. These thousands of children are deprived of their most fundamental rights and childhood.

Young people are not spared from the consequences of these persistent armed conflicts in Congo. Many minors are recruited willingly or by force and used by armed groups to commit all kinds of crimes and violence. Thousands of young people have lost their lives, others are victims of various forms of violence. Being displaced in new areas and without occupation, most of them fall into the trap of alcohol and drugs which leads them to violence, so most of these young people end up in jail. This condition of life leads them also to creates hatred and the feeling of revenge.

The systemic responses

Regarding the training and social work practices, we note that in the Democratic Republic of Congo there is only one public Institution that train social workers needed by the State for the various departments of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Humanitarian Action and National Solidarity. This is the “Institut National du Travail Social”, created and located in Kinshasa by Ministerial Order No. 175/CAB/MIN/AFF.SAH.SN/2013 of 28/01/2013 as part of the implementation of the Law on Child Protection.

In order to respond to the need of social assistance despite the insufficient number of social workers, various national and international humanitarian Organizations, including some training centers, try to do practical training to their employees, who work as social workers to assist vulnerable people affected by the armed conflicts and others disasters. The national education also includes a social techniques program in secondary school that trains social work technicians who help people, after additional capacity building in social work orientation.

Despite the intervention of all these organizations, the needs are enormous, because the atrocities continue and new needs appear and reappear. Some areas are difficult to reach due to insecurity. Witnessing everything that is happening, we admit that the consequences of armed conflicts are burdens on the people, so we took the initiative to support people and communities weakened by the persistent war. This is done through psychosocial activities in camps, helping displaced people to minimize the impact of the psychological trauma they have experienced and to overcome the daily challenges.

To ensure complementarity we offer the support as a multidisciplinary team including psychologist, social workers, community therapy facilitators, etc. The psychosocial intervention is composed of individual psychotherapy for systematic support, group psychotherapy for people with common problems such as girl-mothers, teenagers, widows, street children. The members meet once a week to exchange their experiences and to support each other in relation to the common problems. Psycho-education sessions are also organized for the community members on their feelings and emotions about the traumatic events they have experienced.

The social workers offer support by listening to vulnerable people in order to identify their needs for orientation to different professional structures for an appropriated care. These are cases of unaccompanied children who need protection, children separated from their parents because of war or other reasons. Some children are chased away because they are accused of being witches, girls are chased away or married because they became pregnant. In these cases, social workers intervene by facilitating family reintegration or mediation between parents and children. In these camps there are also a huge number of women and girl victims of sexual violence, as well as minors who are pregnant or have babies. There are also people living with physical wounds due to the war, mutilated people, malnourished children, people living with chronic diseases. All these people are accompanied and referred by social workers to medical centers or other structures for appropriate care. Some children may need to be placed in special centers or transitional foster families to ensure their protection and safety. There are also cases of old poor people living alone or taking care of their orphaned grandchildren. In our team, social workers also conduct psycho-education and community awareness sessions on certain key topics relevant to the identified needs, such as domestic violence, drugs and alcoholism, peace, childcare and education. They help identify the source of stress, build coping skills and provide guidance to find effective solutions to the clients' problems. They also spend time consulting other professionals, such as teachers, doctors, and others involved in a specific case.

To conclude, armed conflicts have persisted in the East of Congo (Ituri) for several years, causing enormous damage. Despite the national and international military intervention to force peace, the situation is getting worse. Unfortunately, the number of qualified workers is very limited compared to the needs and most of workers are volunteers, doing unpaid work. Therefore, we would like to take opportunity through our contribution to this article to formulate the recommendation about the need of several training institutions for social workers.

We have the impression that the press and media do not sufficiently report about the armed conflicts situation that happens in Ituri. The situation remains unknown to many people both at the regional and international level. We plead for peace, the respect of human rights, dignity and equality for all, judgement of all those who are guilty of crime against humanity in Eastern Congo and in the province of Ituri in particular.

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Layers of conflict: Teaching a multicultural Jewish-Arab seminar in Israel

A few years ago, when I was teaching a first-year field work seminar, a female student whom I shall refer to by the alias of Nur was doing her fieldwork practice in a residential care facility for elderly people. Nur was an Arab student from the Bedouin community, wearing traditional Muslim clothing and hijab, and her fieldwork was with the Jewish population. At one of the meetings, she described an event that had taken place the previous day. One of the resident senior citizens was celebrating her birthday, and the staff brought her a cake. Nur was asked by one of the employees to bring a knife from the kitchen to cut the cake. As she was walking back from the kitchen to the lobby, she noticed that everybody, staff and residents, were staring at her with terrified looks. She suddenly realized that people seeing her holding a knife might be thinking of her as a terrorist, and she was shocked. She went back to the kitchen and burst into tears.



This article describes my experiences as a social work educator in multicultural Jewish-Arab fieldwork seminars at the School of Social Work, Sapir Academic College, Israel.

Sapir Academic College is a public college in southern Israel, located close to the Gaza border, on the Israeli side. The region where the college is located is frequently exposed to rocket and missile attacks from

the Gaza Strip. The rockets shot by Islamic movements (Hamas and Jihad) result in counter-attacks by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) in Gaza.

The student body at the college represents the multicultural variety of Israel, and it includes both Jewish (85%) and Arab (15%) students, as well as other segments of the population: religious and secular, immigrants and natives, and varied socio-economic backgrounds. In this multicultural Jewish-Arab setting the Israeli-Palestine conflict is present both internally and externally: inside the classroom and in the external environment, as the outside tensions continually intrude into the classroom (Alhuzail, 2021).



Amir Terkel, Sapir Academic College PR

A fieldwork seminar is a relatively small class (about 15 participating students) taught in the School of Social Work every year during the three years of BSW studies. At meetings, the students present cases and dilemmas from their fieldwork training and receive feedback from classmates and the lecturer. Subsequently, they reflect on their experiences and conceptualize them with the help of academic and professional literature. All this helps develop their professional identity.

The small and relatively intimate setting of the seminar allows for a more personal group dialogue than in other classes. Therefore, the multicultural environment and the tensions it creates are reflected more strongly in the seminar than in other college settings. The students share information about their personal lives and also ask personal questions about each other's families, culture, and beliefs. For example, during the Ramadan fast, which lasts for a month, Muslim students fast all day and eat only after sundown. Every year, the Jewish students are curious and ask the Muslim students questions about the fast, such as, "Why do

you fast?" "Do you really not eat and drink all day long?" "How do you manage to study and do your fieldwork training without eating or drinking?" "What do you eat at night?" Etc.

During the seminar, the students discuss the cases of their service users and share professional dilemmas with their peers. This is also an opportunity for students to become exposed to each other's culture. For example, a Jewish student shared a dilemma regarding a woman in her early 20s cohabitating with her older boyfriend who has a criminal record, worrying whether his home was a safe environment for her client. The Arab students were curious about premarital shared living, which is not customary in their culture, and asked many questions about it. The discussion moved from the client to a discussion of the students themselves, as some of the Jewish students indicated that they were also living with their partners, and some of the Arab students mentioned that they are pressured by their families to get married.

When a Jewish student presented a case of a family whose electricity was cut because of a debt to the electrical company, a lively discussion ensued about how to help the client. Suddenly, a Bedouin student commented: "I don't understand why you are all so upset, in the village where I do my training, there is no electricity at all..." She was referring to an unrecognized settlement that is not authorized by the government and therefore the residents have no access to basic utilities. Her comment started a dialogue about unrecognized villages in Israel, which most Jewish students were unaware of. (For further information on social work in unrecognized Bedouin villages, see, for example, Alhuzail & Ibrahim, (2021)

As these examples illustrate, the discrepancy between the cultures and the experiences of the students is often discussed in the classroom. But when the external conflict intensifies, the escalation in terror attacks is also felt in our classroom and the internal conflict between the groups becomes more apparent.

Going back to the story of Nur and the knife from the beginning of the article- After sharing this event with the group, there was a moment of tense silence, after which a lively discussion ensued. A few of the students were sympathetic to Nur, acknowledging how awful she must have felt, and sought to comfort her. Others admitted that they felt conflicted because they sympathized with her pain but they also identified with the people who were scared when they saw her with the knife. The fear of terror attacks is very real and present in Israeli reality, and some of the students had been themselves victims or were personally acquainted with victims of terror. It was an open dialog, and both sides expressed their emotions in a respectful manner around this sensitive subject.

Our complex reality is most prominent at times of rocket attacks from Gaza. During periods of escalation and extensive shooting, the rockets from Gaza strike both Jewish and Arab populations in southern Israel. At our seminar sessions, students often share their feelings about the attacks, about being scared and traumatized. At one of these sessions that took place after a week of repeated attacks, most of the students opened up and spoke about how

scared they felt. Two Jewish students were absent because they had been drafted into army reserves of the IDF, and their friends talked about them, expressing concern for their wellbeing. The Arab students were quiet during the conversation and appeared uncomfortable. After the session ended, an Arab student approached me privately. She confided that she and her family all felt very scared during the attacks because they had no shelter against the rockets. I asked her why she chose not to share her feelings in class, and she said that she did not feel comfortable because she was Arab and thought that her Jewish classmates would not be tolerant of her feelings about the attacks.

In the past year, there was another escalation in terror attacks involving knife stabbings and shooting. After a day on which several terror attacks against Jewish people took place, a few Jewish students approached me that they were worried about going to their fieldwork training the following day. It would require them to take a bus and walk through crowded places, and they were terrified. I related to their feelings because I also experienced such fears in crowded places. The Arab students also contacted me and shared similar feelings because there had been cases of counter-attacks against Arabs by Jewish terrorists. I acknowledged the feelings of vulnerability and fear on both sides, but I instructed all the students to continue their routine and attend their fieldwork normally, and I reminded them that our service-users were also scared and needed their support. The feelings the students expressed may indicate the presence of a "shared traumatic reality," a term that refers to situations when the helping professionals are exposed to the same ongoing traumatic reality as their clients. Because of their lack of training, knowledge, and clinical experience, social work students may be even more vulnerable to trauma than qualified workers (Nuttman-Shwartz & Dekel, 2009).

I cited only a few examples of the complex and conflictual reality we experience in our college, both as a reflection of the external Israeli-Palestinian conflict and as a result of the shared multicultural environment in the classroom and the interaction between these two circles. My teaching experience as a social work educator in a shared Jewish-Arab environment, despite its complexity, usually has produced a sense of hope and faith in the possibility for a shared society. Our multicultural college community often creates opportunities for conflict as well as for dialogue and for bridging gaps. As social work educators and agents of change, I believe that it is our mission to promote a shared and inclusive society by modeling mutual respect and dialogue. We must set an example for our students and show them that there is another way: we can look each other in the eye, hear each other's experiences and pain, acknowledge it, and make room for it. This dialogue may lead to change. We must strive for conflict resolution and peace-building, starting from our multicultural classrooms and our local shared communities, moving from there to larger circles. This is the path we must choose if we want to contribute to a better future.

I want to finish with four lines from the song "There must be another way," performed together by the Jewish singer Noa and the Arab singer Mira Awad:

And when I cry, I cry for both of us

My pain has no name

And when I cry, I cry to the merciless sky and say:

There must be another way

(Lyrics by Achinoam Nini (Noa), Gil Dor & Mira Awad)

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