

HUMANITY IN CRISES

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR
WAR AND DISPLACEMENT



Editors

Dr. Huma Khan
Dr. Kavya Chandel

Humanity in Crises: The Legal Framework of War and Displacement

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Chapter 2

Gender-Based Violence in Conflict Zones: A Contemporary Analysis

Dr. Syedah Fatima Zahara Jafri¹ & Dr. Sadaf Khan²

Introduction

In times of conflict, the social fabric of communities is torn apart, leaving civilians- particularly women, girls, and marginalized gender identities- vulnerable to targeted acts of violence. Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in conflict zones is not a collateral consequence of war but a deliberate strategy often employed to exert power, inflict terror, and destabilize societies. The contemporary landscape of armed conflicts, whether international wars, civil strife, insurgencies, or localized conflicts, reveals a distressing pattern: gender-based violence has become a weapon of war, used to systematically attack the dignity, bodily autonomy, and socio-political agency of individuals, especially women. This chapter offers a comprehensive analysis of GBV in conflict zones, examining its manifestations, root causes, impacts on survivors and communities, legal frameworks, and strategies for prevention and redress in the 21st century.

Conflict-related sexual violence has reached alarming levels across the globe. According to the United Nations, 2023 saw 3,688 verified cases of conflict-related sexual violence- a staggering 50% increase from the previous year.³ Women and girls constituted 95% of these victims, with 32% being children, and among them, an overwhelming 98% were girls. The brutality is not confined to sexual violence alone; it extends to forced pregnancies, sexual slavery, forced abortions, and other egregious violations. The escalation of such violence is evident in specific regions as well.

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³ United Nations, *Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Report 2023* (2024), para. 15, 27–30, 45–48; Médecins Sans Frontières, *Sexual Violence Survivors Report 2023–2024* (2024), pp. 3–7.

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Dr. Huma Khan is a dedicated academician and legal scholar with over six years of teaching experience in the field of law. She is currently serving as an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Law, Integral University. Her research and academic interests span across contemporary legal issues, with a focus on criminology, International Law, constitutional law, and emerging dimensions of crime in the modern world. Huma Khan holds an LL.B. degree from Lucknow University and completed her LL.M. from Sri Ram Swaroop Memorial University, demonstrating a strong foundation in both the theoretical and practical aspects of law throughout her academic career; Dr. Khan has shown a deep commitment to legal research and scholarship. She has presented papers at numerous national and international conferences, contributing valuable insights into various areas of legal concern. Her scholarly contributions include several research articles and book chapters published in reputed journals and edited volumes, reflecting her engagement with contemporary legal discourse. Demonstrating her leadership and organizational capabilities, she has successfully organized and coordinated various academic events, aimed at enhancing legal awareness and student engagement. She is also the editor of the book titled "Changing Dimensions of Crimes in the 21st Century", which explores the evolving nature of criminal activity and the legal system's response to these changes. Before joining Integral University, she held teaching positions at Ambedkar Law College and Geeta Law College, where she was recognized for her engaging teaching style and her dedication to mentoring students. With her rich academic background, research orientation, and passion for teaching, Huma Khan continues to contribute meaningfully to legal education and scholarship in India.



Dr. Kavya Chandel is a dynamic academite in the field of Legal Academia. She has previously held the position of Assistant Professor (Law) at Sharda University in Greater Noida (UP). Additionally, she has served as an Assistant Professor at Integral University in Lucknow. Furthermore, she was part of Amity and City Academy Law College. With an extensive academic experience spanning five years, she completed her Master's degree in Environmental Law from Hidayatullah National Law University in Raipur, along with a PGDIPR from Rammanohar Lohiya National Law University in Lucknow. Dr. Kavya is a silver medalist in Intellectual Property Rights and possesses a profound passion for environmental issues, which motivated her to pursue a PhD in Environmental Law. She has judged various competitions, including the Second Round Table Conference, moot court competitions, and debate competitions. Dr. Chandel has been interviewed by Lawctopus and TV India, and she has presented research papers at numerous national conferences. She has also moderated international conferences and hosted various events. In addition to her academic pursuits, she has a keen interest in poetry and marathons, having contributed her poetry to Sahitya Ajtak and the Lucknow Literature Festival. She has participated in several marathons throughout the city and is an enthusiastic speaker who doesn't shy away to express her views. Dr. Chandel has delivered guest lectures on Intellectual Property Law, Environmental Law, Sports Laws in India, and the NDPS Act across the country. She hosts and runs a podcast 'Legal Fatum' and has published her research papers in Scopus and international journals.

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