

Women's Activities in Armed Rebellion (WAAR)
Project v1.0 Handbook

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All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF), Myanmar (Burma)

Women were in the ABSDF from the group's establishment (Harriden 2012). One report calculates that 15% of the group's cadres and 10% of its central committee was female (Kolås and Meitei 2019), whereas an earlier estimate suggests that 200 of the group's 2500 members (8%) were women (ABSDF 1994). The ABSDF (1994, n.p) reported:

Since ABSDF was founded, we the women have been taking responsibilities in organising the people, teaching the children of the ethnic groups in the education sector to upgrade their future, as medics taking care for our own members and the villagers' health and social progress, as operators in the communication branch.

Women also worked as cooks, provided men with ammunition, and worked in finance (Kolås 2019). A number of reports, however, underline discrimination against women in the organization; Svensson (2015, 37) relays that “women and men do not have the same roles in ABSDF and that women are given supportive roles, roles that they are able to carry out” (see also Hedström 2013; Kolås and Meitei 2019). Snyder (2008, 54) notes that,

once in the borderlands [along the Thai/Myanmar border where members continued uprising efforts], the male leadership enforced traditional gender roles as the students began to organize an army, the All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF). The women were presented with two options: they could become teachers or medics.

Women had to lobby ABSDF leadership to be allowed to participate in military training (Hedström 2016). There are references to female fighters, though it is unclear when they've been sent to the frontlines (Lwyn 1994; Zar 2014; SFCG n.d., Kolås 2019). Hedström (2016, 68) concludes, “In those cases in which women were accepted into and fulfilled military training, their post-training employment was primarily – although not exclusively – framed as non-combative.”

Hedström (2016, 69-70) quotes a female leader in the ABSDF, who vividly captured the experience of many women in the group:

Even though there were many women representatives in ABSDF, women were never placed in any high positions, and it was difficult for women to be elected to the central committee. Even if women were working, women were only assigned to supporting roles, for example if there is a meeting or seminar the women have to take care of the food, and greet guests and decorate the rooms. These were things that women were asked to do ... “Real” jobs, when women got them, were only like senior staff of information department or officer in organizing department, and people thought that it was not really appropriate for women to become leaders in armed groups.

Such experiences encouraged women in the ABSDF to organize an all-women's group, the Burmese Women's Union (BWU), despite some resistance from ABSDF leadership (Ibid).

According to Harriden (2012, 282-283) the union's founding was in part a response to gender-based discrimination:

The BWU was formed by a group of young female students who had fled to the Thai–Burma border following the 1988 uprising. Many founding members were well-educated Burman women who had held senior positions within the opposition movement, only to lose their status when they moved to the border. One member told me that she had a leading role in the ABSDF inside Burma, but once she arrived in the jungle she was expected to defer to male ABSDF leaders and was no longer allowed to speak in meetings. In response to this reduction in their status, these women decided to form their own organisation to promote women's rights and provide support for Burmese women living in exile. BWU membership is open to all Burmese women “regardless of ethnicity, race, religion, marital status, sexual preference or livelihood.”

The BWU was instrumental in forming the Women's League of Burma, which brought together women's groups affiliated with other ethnically-based armed groups (Harriden 2012). The BWU also organized some “women's empowerment trainings at the Thai-Myanmar border” (Segeberg 2018, 39). There are some reports of autonomy of the BWU from ABSDF; Henry (2008, 12) says, “although the women's group was committed to non-violence, the two organisations maintained some overlapping membership.”

The focus of the BWU has shifted over time. The BWU (n.d., n.p) itself reports,

Up until 1997, the main objective of the BWU was to increase and organize its member base. All wives and daughters of ABSDF soldier[s] were automatically signed up [...] Once we had a firm member base, the leaders began to organize small vocational projects for the new recruits (e.g. crocheting and weaving training) [...] In 1998, the BWU decided that it had a firm enough members base and instead turned its attention to its next aim: building networks with other women's groups in order to create a strong and salient women's movement that bridges ethnic divides.

The BWU also notes that the women's activism produced fear among male leaders “that the women were dividing the movement, and anger with the women for upsetting the gender order” (Ibid).

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All Bodo Students Union (ABSU), India

There are some reports of women's involvement in armed training, though not participation in frontline combat. As Brahma (2016, 214) notes,

In 1989, the ABSU and the VF [Volunteer Force] leaders expressed the desire to train the women in arms. The women too wanted to join arms training and they did it. So, from 1989 onwards, women joined the Volunteer Force but they were not involved in 'direct action'. They were taught to use the rifle for their own safety.

Women actively participated in the ABSU's activities, primarily through outreach work. There are several reports of women (particularly through the women's wing, the All Bodo Women Welfare Association (ABWWA), originally called the All Assam Tribal Women's Welfare Federation (AATWWF)) mobilizing people into the movement, providing first aid to injured ABSU cadre, engaging in public demonstrations in support of ABSU activities, spreading the ABSU's political message, and encouraging people to provide food and shelter to members (The Assam Tribune 2010; Sarmah 2010; Kumar 2013; Basumatary 2018).

As Devi (2016, 126) notes, women were numerically, operationally, and discursively significant:

A large number of Bodo women took part in the protest marches, sit-ins, rallies, cultural vigils and silent marches organized by the ABSU in their quest for self-determination. The women protesters wearing the colorful ethnic Bodo dresses became a poignant sight of these protest rallies. As pointed out by many interview participants, it was a strategic decision by the movement leaders to revive a sense of ethnic identity and pride among the Bodos. Many interview participants also pointed out that by placing women in the front-lines of protest, leaders created a barrier of human shield[s] in front of law enforcement.

The women's wing was involved in outreach and logistical activities. Women in particular were often tasked with cooking for guests. Brahma (2016, 214) goes so far as to say that

Most of the women of Balagaon and Rangalikhata villages of Deborgaon did not get time to listen to their leaders due to such engagements. They had to perform such duties at the back side of the stage. Before any meeting at Deborgaon the ABSU instructed the Deborgaon village council Committee members of AATWWF to take care of everything. Their works ranged from collecting paddy, pulses and vegetables from each house, cleaning them. Cooking for participants as well as guests at home, who could be participating in such meetings, cooking for leaders like Premsing Bramha and Upendranath Bramha.

Additionally, members of the women's wing were required to make monthly financial contributions and to serve as messengers and porters for the organization. Women were also trained as nurses (Brahma 2016). Brahma (2016, 218) notes,

Sometimes [women] also had to accompany the ABSU leaders. Once Asha, Poli, and Nila of Baganbari village of then Barpeta District accompanied Urkhao Basumatory, a leader of the ABSU, from Pub Bangnabari to Salbari village of Barpeta. One member of that team was Chilagang Basumatory. It was a marriage season and they introduced themselves as members of a marriage party and Urkhao as the bridegroom to the policemen at the checkpoints.

Brahma (2016, 214) recalls,

In the executive meeting of the DDC AATWWF, held on 20th July 1989, a decision was taken to distribute aronai to each member of the Bodo Volunteer Force. Accordingly, all village council committees of the AATWWF of Darrang district were directed to weave aronai for the male activists. This was according to an old custom of the Bodos, which desires that the Bodo men going to the war should wear aronai to protect themselves from all evils and to win the battle. The aronai which the Bodo soldiers wore in the battlefield were woven by a close relative such as sisters or wi[ves]. Furthermore, those aronais were woven on the night before they left for the battlefield.

Some women in the AATWWF report being subordinated or discriminated against by men in the ABSU. As one woman recalls,

Earlier, also, in every AATWWF meeting, an ABSU member was always present. ABSU always had the final word. Even in formulating the new Constitution of the BTC [accord], we had to fight for the equal share in designing it... They looked at us just as messengers and did not give us any cadre status (quoted in Basumatary 2018, 70).

There are some reports of women's participation in leadership roles. Brahma (2016, 206-207) notes that "[p]rior to the formation of the AATWWF there were hardly any women in leadership. The AATWWF was the first organization in which a large number of women participated. Among them were educated women in [the] teaching profession" and observes that "[m]ost of the early executive members of AATWWF were either related or known to the ABSU, BPAC, and the BVF leaders."

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Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), Uganda

In 2016, the UN Security Council (2015, 61) estimated that the ADF's membership included between 1,600-2,500 men, women, and children. The Security Council (Ibid) considered women in the ADF to be civilians but noted that "most women and children 13 years and older received military training." A Congo Research Group (2018, 12) report concludes that "[w]omen are often trained to use weapons and accompany men into battle" and "footage obtained by the UN of an ADF training camp showed women with AK-47s participating in training drills, with most of the women wearing hijab." ADF-produced social media videos feature women participating in

attacks, carrying weapons, reading the Qu'ran, and nursing wounded fighters (Congo Research Group 2018).

Reportedly “many attacks were carried out with the participation of the women and children – boys as well as girls – who were accompanying the assailants. According to testimonies from the survivors, while the men were murdering civilians, the women and children looted the houses, and took with them food and livestock that was easy to transport” (MONUSCO 2015, 10).

The Congo Research Group (2018, 18) similarly concludes that “[m]any of the ADF agents used for obtaining supplies, information, and recruits in the region are women [...] They are perceived to be more loyal and less vulnerable to being targeted by security services.” Women are implicated in couriering weapons and goods for the organization, as well as working as nurses, guards, and teachers in women’s ADF camps (Henshaw 2013; Congo Research Group 2018). Women rebels also reportedly did logistic work planning ADF attacks (Mugisa and Kisakye 2007). A 2008 demobilization report speculates that women “were more likely to have performed support-type functions” in the ADF than other groups (ICRS 2008, 15).

There are “few women” in military leadership, “although the wives of ADF commanders have positions of authority within the camps” (Congo Research Group 2018, 18). The UN Security Council lists at least one woman under a section of ADF bodyguards and leaders. The report notes, “[She] is in charge of ii (internal security) for women, in charge of the women prisoners, a military instructor for women, and a nurse” (2015, 54). The report further profiles a woman, designated as a non-military member, who is “in charge of all women in ADF, including prisoners [...] arranges marriages between ADF men and women [...] and is] also part of the group that mediated marriage disputes” (Ibid, 57). There is also reportedly a female “Police Officer for Women” in the organization’s leadership (Congo Research Group 2018, 11).

Reports suggest that the organization forcibly recruited some women and girls, including forcibly marrying women to ADF fighters (Fahey 2015).

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Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL), Democratic Republic of the Congo (Zaire)

According to Weiss (2012, 1), "thousands of Congolese men and women were recruited by the ADFL."

An Amnesty International (1996, 6) report contends that the group forced fleeing persons back through checkpoints "where AFDL fighters, both men and women, checked identity cards and demanded money."

Sources

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Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), Sierra Leone

Mazurana and Carlson (2004) report that 6% of the AFRC fighters (approximately 530) who entered into the Sierra Leonean demobilization program in the late 1990s were women, and they also estimate that there were 1,667 girl soldiers in the AFRC.

MacKenzie (2009) interviews female ex-combatants in Sierra Leone, some of whom were in the AFRC; over 75% of MacKenzie's interviewees report participating in combat. A former AFRC combatant interviewed by Cohen reported, "We would sometimes put women in front when we were attacking villages because they could be the fiercest fighters" (Cohen 2013, 397-398). Another AFRC ex-combatant relayed, "Women fighters were under the influence of drugs so they did not even think about mercy for women being raped" (Cohen 2013, 404).

In addition to combat, there is evidence that women and girls took on non-combat roles for the group. One of MacKenzie's interviewees reports being conscripted by the AFRC/RUF at age fourteen and fulfilling the following roles: "fighting, gun trafficking, acting as a 'bush wife,' and acting as a spy" (MacKenzie 2009, 251). The AFRC, along with the RUF, often abducted women and girls for the purpose of taking them as "bush wives," (Oosterveld 2021, n.p), sometimes forcing them into sexual slavery (Child Soldiers International 2001; Oosterveld 2021). Women took on multiple roles simultaneously in the organization.

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Ahlul Sunnah wal Jamaa, Nigeria

Women's participation is not verified.

Al-Ittihad al-Islamiya (AIAI), Ethiopia/Somalia

Women's participation is not verified.

Henshaw (2013, 141) concludes that in "AIAI in Ethiopia, rebel commanders encouraged cadres to marry local women in order to establish 'cover' or strengthen their ties to the community. However, there is no indication that the wives were active supporters of the rebel movement or that they even knew their husbands were involved in insurgent activities."

Sources

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Armed Islamic Salvation Front (AIS/FIS), Algeria

Women's participation is not verified.

Women supporting the organization mobilized for it in street protests after its legalization as a political party (Turshen 2002), but it is not clear if women participated in the group during rebellion years. There is also reporting about women's mobilization against the organization, which reportedly included female veterans of the war of liberation (Turshen 2004).

There are vague reports of women's contributions to AIS and FIS, and Zeraoulia (2020) concludes that these women did not consider themselves members of the organization, but rather that they were supporting family members. Zeraoulia notes (2020) in rural areas as well as in urban centers, mothers voluntarily or forcibly decided to cooperate with their sons, brothers, and fathers in the ranks of various armed groups. The role of informant women was crucial in the successful penetration of the AIS and the GIA in the countryside as they provided food and detailed information about what was happening in their localities.

Sources

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Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, Egypt

Women's participation is not verified.

There is a report that during clashes with security forces in Ayn Shams in the later 1980s, when security forces attempted to arrest suspected group members, "not only many young sympathizers but also many ordinary residents sided with the militants, including, according to one witness, elderly women throwing stones from balconies" (Malthaner 2012, 7).

Sources

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Al-Mahdi Army, Iraq

The al-Mahdi Army created all-female brigades, including a security force and reportedly assassination groups (Robertson 2004; Bakier 2006; Henshaw 2016). In 2004, the group released a video of “four cloaked and masked women carrying weapons and with hand grenades around their necks - with [...] unidentified woman reading [a] message: ‘We are a group of Bin al-Huda from the al-Mahdi Army. We will carry out martyrdom operations against the American infidels. We will make it another Vietnam if our leader Seyed Muqtada al-Sadr is hurt’” (Associated Press 2004, n.p). In response to women’s visible participation, Sunnis reacted “by accusing Shiite men of cowardice for making their women face the mujahideen” (Bakier 2006, n.p).

Women in the organization also worked as armed guards at rebel installations and in other non-combat positions, including being escorts for foreign journalists (Halpern 2003; Henshaw 2013).

In 2007, the U.S. military reportedly killed two women members of “an al-Mahdi militia offshoot” in Iraq (Seattle Times 2007, n.p).

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Al-Murabitun, Mali

Women's participation is not verified.

This group is a part of JNIM, which reportedly does include women in its operations (see JNIM).

Al-Qaeda, United States

al-Qaeda pioneered a model of women's recruitment that penetrated into the domestic sphere to reach women from the United States and Europe, as well as the non-Western world. But the group's public stance on the inclusion of women has not always been consistent, and it has changed over time to more actively promote women's participation in violent jihad. Even while women were visible in al-Qaeda's ranks as suicide bombers, leader al-Zawahri claimed in 2008 that the group did not include any, asserting that they only contributed to domestic tasks – a statement which incensed the group's female supporters (CBS 2008). One female supporter recalled,

How many times have I wished I were a man ... When Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahri said there are no women in al Qaeda, he saddened and hurt me, wrote 'Companion of Weapons' [...] I felt that my heart was about to explode in my chest [...] I am powerless (Ibid, n.p).

Despite not always publicizing this role, women participated as fighters in al-Qaeda from the beginning, mostly as suicide bombers (Von Knop 2007; Eggert 2015). There are also reports of women participating in other combatant activities; some female combatants were reported, for instance, as active participants in a "gun battle, which featured small arms fire, hand grenades and close air support strikes from US aircraft" (Browne 2017, n.p).

Aafia Siddiqui was caught with documents on how to attack the Statue of Liberty, as well as other American targets, and she reportedly opened fire on an FBI officer (Hughes 2010). In 2003 it was reported that a woman called Umm Osama was the leader of a female suicide squad that is thought to be affiliated with al-Qaeda (Ibid). According to Bloom (2005, 61):

Also in March 2003, *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* published an interview with a woman calling herself "Um Osama," the alleged leader of the women Mujahideen of Al Qaeda. The Al Qaeda cell claimed to have set up squads of female suicide bombers under orders from Osama bin Laden to target the United States.

American woman Colleen LaRose, known in the media as "Jihad Jane," was arrested prior to attempting to carry out an attack against a Swedish citizen on behalf of the group (Grierr 2010). Al-Qaeda publicly asked Muslim women to participate in violence against the West on behalf of the group for the first time in 2009, via a message posted by al-Zawahri's wife:

The letter described “martyrdom” as an aspiration, and the author asked for women to aid Islam by fighting alongside men. Women should also encourage each other, the letter stated, to “not abstain from this religious obligation.” Differing from al-`Uyayri and al-Qaradawi, however, the letter said that women should have a male guardian during combat activities: “Jihad is *fard `ayn* on every Muslim man and woman, but the way of fighting is not easy for Muslim women for it requires a *mahram*” (Ahmed 2010, 17).

According to Von Knop (2007), the most critical role of women in al-Qaeda is not their participation in suicide bombing, but rather, recruitment – a task accomplished by instrumentalizing the traditional domestic roles of women. In a fatwa issued by Osama bin Laden, he “explains that women are playing an essential role as supporters, facilitators, and promoters in carrying out the Jihad” (Ibid, 405). In another document found on an al-Qaeda message board, an ideological leader of the group

emphasizes the power that women hold over men, reminding them that their role in Jihad is a vital necessity for the entire Muslim ummah. “The reason we address women [...] is our observation that when a woman is convinced of something, no one will spur a man to fulfil it like she will. (...) The saying behind every great man stands a women [sic] was true for Muslim women at these times, behind every great Mujahid stood a women[sic] [...]” (Ibid, 406).

Yusuf al-Uyayri, leader of al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia, “was among the first ideologues to encourage women to join jihad” (al-Shishani 2010, n.p). Al-Qaeda reached women from all over the world using sophisticated internet recruitment and propaganda. The group published a women’s magazine, *al-Khansaa*:

In the past, a Muslim woman was seen as the responsibility of her male relatives. Militant organizations could not recruit women directly without transgressing familial and societal honor codes that require women to seek permission for every action they take outside the family home. To secretly recruit a woman as a suicide bomber or even as a courier of messages and weapons would be seen as an insult to the family’s male honor. Increasingly, this seems to be changing, evident by the al-Khansaa article saying that women need not ask for permission to become a Jihadi, as it is their duty to do so. In fact, al-Khansaa exploits the woman’s traditional role in family and society as mother and nurturer of her children to get women to play a larger role in the Jihad (Von Knop 2007, 407).

Women not only recruited men in their families for the group; through online forums and publications, they also reached women and non-familial men, forming what the group refers to as a ‘sisterhood’ (Von Knop 2007). While not formally a women’s wing, it functioned like one: women utilize their social networks and online recruiting tactics to reach women from across the world.

Women in al-Qaeda contributed to logistical support for the group, opening bank accounts, translating, and bookkeeping (de Leede 2018). In 2020 an American woman was arrested for raising money for al-Qaeda (US Department of Justice 2020).

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Al-Shabaab, Somalia

al-Shabaab women occasionally participate in combat (c.f. Ngono and Duri 2016). For example, in Kenya, three women carried out an attack at the Central Police Station in Mombasa (Badurdeen 2018). Attacks perpetrated by female al-Shabaab combatants are "in the single digits" (International Crisis Group 2019, 13), constituting fewer than 5% of total attacks (Warner and Chapin 2018, page v). In 2015, the Kenyan government identified Rukia Faraj Kufungwa as an al-Shabaab recruiter and fighter responsible for grenade attacks and assassinations (Ndung'u, Salifu, and Sigsworth 2017).

Women were "far more actively involved" in al-Shabaab in "non-combative or indirect roles" than frontline fighting (Ndung'u, Salifu, and Sigsworth 2017, 30). Ndung'u, Salifu and Sigsworth (2017, 30-31) conclude that women "provide the 'invisible infrastructure' for al-Shabaab by enabling, supporting and facilitating violent extremism through a number of roles

and activities.” Female members of the insurgency recruited, fundraised, carried explosives, smuggled weapons, did logistical work to help plan and carry out operations, provided health care, cooked, mended clothing, nursed members, fundraised for the group and gathered firewood (International Crisis Group 2019; Donnelly 2018; Badurdeen 2018; Donnelly 2019; Stern 2019; Stern 2021). Women were also actively involved in the rebels’ intelligence gathering (Ndung’u, Salifu, and Sigsworth 2017; Petrich and Donnelly 2019; International Crisis Group 2019). Al-Shabaab reportedly formed an all-female policing unit (Stern 2016).

At least six women were incarcerated after being convicted of operational support for al-Shabaab. The International Crisis Group (2019, 1) concludes that women’s labor “helped sustain the insurgency.” For example, women played central mobilization roles, going door to door to educate neighborhood women about al-Shabaab and recruit members. They also recruited through al-Shabaab services, like Islamic lessons (Ibid; Donnelly 2018).

Khadija and Harley’s (2019, 252) interviews with al-Shabaab women suggests that many became involved by marrying fighters. They conclude that these women “lead a privileged existence [... and] occasionally participated in Al-Shabaab operations, taking advantage of the lax security that is applied to women to support intelligence gathering and fundraising for the organization.” Many women who joined the group by marrying fighters did so for safety, material reasons, or because they were coerced (Donnelly 2019). Badurdeen (2018) contends that many women who joined the organization voluntarily were driven by material gains, while others were pushed by religious motives. Many in the latter category believe they will be “rewarded by God for the work they perform for the al-Shabaab with regard to the liberation of the Muslim Ummah (Community)” (Ibid, 21).

Women members further advocated for the group’s agenda and raised new generations of fighters. Al-Shabaab’s executive council provided them with an allowance, and some run their own businesses outside of rebel operations (ISS Today 2017).

Stern (2021, 5) suggests that women were a critical part of the organization’s financial and logistical system:

[...] despite its formal ban on women working, research reveals that women are actively involved in al-Shabaab’s financial concerns; running businesses on behalf of the group; moving goods over the borders between al-Shabaab and government territory; and playing a leading role in the group’s fundraising operations. The roles that women play are critical to the group’s survival, helping al-Shabaab to fund – and therefore to sustain – its insurgency.

Specifically, women were involved in money laundering and converting commodities into cash because they are less likely to be subjected to financial checks than men. Moreover, “the group [is] said to be reliant on women’s fundraising and resource-mobilisation capacities. Al-Shabaab’s women are known to be skilled at convincing others to donate money, goods and jewelry” (Ibid, 6). Women also “rarely” participated in collecting taxes (Ibid, 5).

Of women recruiters, Ndung'u, Salifu and Sigsworth (2017, 31) write,

Respondents viewed women who played a role as recruiters through the lens of two age-old female stereotypes: mother and temptress. Those who used their influence in the home – as the familial ‘custodians of cultural, social and religious values’ – were seen in their domestic roles as mothers and wives; those who recruited in a context external to the home, such as in the refugee camps, were seen as temptresses ‘luring’ young men with false promises.

al-Shabaab also employed civilian women for intelligence gathering by tapping into informant networks. For example, the group partnered with sex workers in Nairobi for intelligence, paying them to “report on ‘pillow talk’ disclosed by” police and government officials in Kenya (Stern 2021, 31; Petrich and Donnelly 2019). Despite their participation, “sex workers involved are not active members of al-Shabaab, but independent entrepreneurs who have monetized a secondary benefit of their sexual liaisons, and al-Shabaab does not seem interested in recruiting or coopting these women into their organization” (Petrich and Donnelly 2019, 1171).

Reportedly,

Al-Shabaab’s leadership does not include women in its command structure, decision-making bodies or fighting force. Nor does the government view women as militants. The authorities have no strategy for addressing women’s role in the group and very rarely target suspected women members for prosecution. In contrast, however, women in the movement view themselves very much as members (International Crisis Group 2019, 7).

Still, one woman reportedly became a commander in the group, after having been forced into its ranks (ISS Today 2017).

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Afar Liberation Front (ALF), Ethiopia

Women's participation is not verified.

Armed People for the Liberation of Rwanda (ALiR/PALiR), Rwanda

According to Linke (2018, 44), "accounts of the percentage of women combatants in ALiR/FDLR in the year 2000 range between 1-2 percent and 10 percent." A 1998 African Rights report (n.p) on the ALiR similarly contends,

All the insurgents we interviewed mentioned the role of women and girls in their ranks. Sub-Lt. Consolée Mukangwije, captured in Nyamutera, Ruhengeri, in June 1998, named several other female ex-FAR who are currently in the insurgents' frontline. Amongst the women infiltrators are: Sub-Lt. Jeanne Mukakinanira, alias 'Aminata', from Kibuye; Sub-Lt. Fabiola Dusabimana from Gisenyi, who operates in sector Charlie and Sub-Lt. Mukamanzi, the wife of Lt. Nizeyimana, alias 'Bigaruk', the commander of sector Delta. She is fighting with her husband and they live with their two children.

A DDR report covering Rwandan armed groups, which includes ALiR, does not identify women in high-ranking leadership positions (Omaar 2008). ALiR's leadership did include a commissioner for gender, but it is not clear if this person is a woman (Ibid).

The African Rights report further concludes that women spirit mediums are "attached to most units as a source of divine inspiration and protection" (African Rights 1998, n.p). Moreover, "women play a vital part in gathering information, feeding and housing the infiltrators" as well as "offering encouragement as spirit mediums" (Ibid, n.p). For example, women participants in a

prayer group accompanied PALiR militants into battle, and some were killed by government forces (Human Rights Watch 2001). Other non-combatants reportedly accompanied fighters into combat in order to carry loot (Ibid).

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Arakan Liberation Party (ALP), Myanmar (Burma)

There is relatively little information on women's participation in the ALP. An estimated that 12% of group 'cadres' are female and there was at least one female leader on the Central/Executive Committee (Kolås and Meiti 2019). There is also a report of a female leader of the ALP also leading a women's group - though it is not clear if it is a women's wing of the organization (AFP 2017). One female leader stated that

most women in the Arakan Liberation Party work in offices, clinics and schools, and spend their time on concerns about education [...] There are very few women who would like to continue with armed struggle. They have very bad experiences of war. Children and women are the worst-affected victims of armed conflict. Most women in this country want peace (quoted in Kolås and Meiti 2019, 103).

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Amal Movement, Lebanon

Estimates of women's participation in Amal vary. For example, Schulze (1998) contends that women made up 30% of Amal, but Holt (1999, 190) concludes that women's participation in the group's activities were "limited." Amal reportedly permitted women to fight on the front-lines sparingly, and only if the "situation [became] desperate" (Ibid, 183). There was at least one female suicide bomber in the group who committed an attack against Israeli soldiers in 1985 (Schulze 1998). Eggert (2017, 16) further notes that women combatants were deployed against Israel when its military invaded South Lebanon in 1978, but she contends that the proportion of female fighters was "probably very low." She concludes that there were "only a small number [of female fighters] in Amal after 1978" (Eggert 2018b, 8). Women in Amal participated almost exclusively in non-combat roles, and women lobbied to play active roles in the organization (Schulze 1998; Shehadeh 1999; Holt 1999; Eggert 2017, 2018a, 2018b).

One Amal member recalled in an interview,

I now lecture to women groups in the movement who ask me why we don't train them to carry arms [...] If we have to carry arms, then of course, we will; otherwise our role is primarily social and educational. When the men were out fighting we were explaining to families and neighbors what was going on [...] We offered them various services and ran special courses for mothers to teach them how to cope with the war situation. We also taught them religion and the place of women in Islam (quoted in Shaaban 1988, 86).

Women in Amal supplied ammunition, worked as lookouts and staged diversions for men to get away from security forces. They smuggled weapons and provisions, often by feigning pregnancy, and cooked and cleaned for fellow members of Amal; they were also involved in intelligence gathering, communications, and administrative support (Holt 1999; Eggert 2018b, writing on Lebanese militias more widely).

Amal included a Women's Affairs Department (WAD) with female leadership (Shaaban 1988). The WAD remained subordinate to the Executive Council (Shulze 1998).

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National Alliance (AN), Chad

Women's participation is not verified.

African National Congress (ANC), South Africa

Women were permitted to join Umkhonto weSizwe (MK), the ANC’s militant wing, but MK reportedly restricted women’s frontline involvement (Geisler 2004; Miller 2009; Axelsson 2013). Women constituted about 20% of the army by 1991 (Axelsson 2013; Hassim 2014), but few participated in combat (Geisler 2004; Axelsson 2013). Most instead took on auxiliary roles. Reports of women’s military training vary—for example, Miller (2009) concludes that only a few high-profile women were trained, while Magadla (2015) interviews MK women who trained abroad in a variety of countries. Thandi Modise (2000), a group commander, similarly notes that when she was trained at MK camps in Angola and Tanzania, approximately 6% and 4% of trainees were women, respectively.

Women were involved in courier work, which some MK women reportedly viewed as undermining their army involvement (Hassim 2014). Axelsson (2013, 169) concludes, “Female cadres contributed significantly through intelligence gathering, community mobilization, smuggling, and transportation of weapons and ammunition, provision of safe housing, goods, and health care.”

MK women faced sexism and other gendered barriers, especially related to motherhood: MK reportedly forbade women cadres from becoming pregnant and forcibly fitted them with IUDs. In some cases, this caused infertility (Miller 2009). The ANC also reportedly exiled some pregnant MK women (Ibid). Women who trained in MK camps reported having to overcome sexist attitudes and to prove that they belonged (Hassim 2004). Some also reported sexual

harassment, though others reject the contention that there was sexual violence during training (Magadla 2015).

The ANC “committed itself to gender equality as a principle of liberation” and operated a large women’s section outside of the army (Hassim 2004, 433). The nature of the women’s machinery is complex and has shifted over time. The ANC accepted women as members in the 1943 Congress and formed the ANC Women’s League (ANCWL) in 1948 (South Africa History Online n.d.). ANCWL was actively involved in anti-apartheid campaigns, cared for and educated children of ANC members in training or in exile, and “establish[ed] child-care facilities” (Hassim 2014, 43). The ANCWL was also actively involved in recruiting members into the ANC, particularly after the ANC returned from exile and the ANCWL was re-launched (Hassim 1991).

The traditionally domestic nature of some of the ANCWL’s work prompted some women to distance themselves from it (Lundin 2019). When the ANC was exiled, the ANCWL suspended its activities and “[i]nstead, women in the ANC were organised from 1969 (following the recommendations of the Morogoro Conference) in a Women’s Section, headed politically by a Women’s Secretariat” (Hassim 2004, 434; South Africa History Online n.d., n.p). Their “key tasks were to mobilise women into active membership of the ANC and to mobilise material and political support internationally” (Hassim 2004, 435; South Africa History Online n.d., n.p).

An important difference between the ANCWL and the Women’s Section is that the former was more independent and autonomous than the latter. According to Hassim, “The Women’s Section repeatedly requested greater autonomy in decision-making, although it was prepared to concede broad policy decisions to the NEC” (Hassim 2004, 446). Furthermore, “[a]ll women in the ANC in exile were automatically members of the Women’s Section (unlike the Women’s League prior to the ANC’s banning, to which women in the ANC applied for membership” (Hassim 2004, 435). Through these organizations, women were able to rise to leadership positions (c.f. Collison 2017).

There was reportedly tension between the women’s organizations and the women in the MK:

a gulf seemed to exist between the Women’s Section and women in the military, with the Women’s Section playing almost no role in providing political direction to women cadres. Visits by the Women’s Section to the camps tended to focus on the immediate social welfare needs of women cadres, rather than on the strategic issues of the role women cadres could play if deployed inside South Africa (Hassim 2014, 88).

Still, women were held back in some high-ranking positions. Magadla (2015, 394) suggests that “women were under-represented in positions of leadership and authority in MK, and this was true too in the parent body (ANC) more broadly.” For example, the Revolutionary Council, which governed communication between cadres and the broader movement, never had more than one woman member (Ibid). Women in command positions were rare (Ibid).

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Arakan National Liberation Party (ANLP), Myanmar (Burma)

Women's participation is not verified.

Ansar al-Islam, Iraq

Ansar al-Islam, previously called Ansar al-Sunnah, recruited and employed women suicide bombers (Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security n.d.; Myers 2009). In 2009, "Iraqi security forces detained Samira Jassim, who admitted to recruiting, indoctrinating, and training eighty women of whom twenty-eight actually carried out suicide bombings" for the group (Narozhna and Knight 2016, 91). In one suspected Ansar al-Islam attack, a female suicide bomber killed more than 30 people (Roggio 2009).

At least one woman interested in participating in Islamist terrorist attacks was in contact with Ansar al-Islam members in an Internet chatroom where extremists met (von Knop 2007). Reportedly, the organization “also widely uses women to exchange messages among its cells’ members in Iraq” and relied on women to recruit other women into the group (Khelghat-Doost 2019, 861).

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Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, Egypt/Israel

Women's participation is not verified.

Ansar Dine, Mali

Women's participation is not verified.

Ansarallah, Yemen

Women and girls were present in Ansarallah in both combatant and noncombatant roles. Apparently, “[y]oung school and university girl students are recruited at a center run by a female relative of Abdul-Malik Badreddin al-Houthi, the top leader of the Houthi militia. She would report to the center only when a new batch of women recruits finish training and are ready to be deployed to practise training” (Future for Advanced Research and Studies 2017, n.p). Some

young women “were exposed to sexual violence or forced into marriage as part of their recruitment” (i24 News 2020, n.p). There are also reports of Ansarallah abducting women and girls (Albawaba 2019).

Female members of Ansarallah took on two primary roles: storming houses and suppressing demonstrations (Abdullah al-Tamimi 2018). Ansarallah also had an all-female police battalion, Zinabiyat, who supported Ansarallah’s militias by helping them maintain control over local populations, for example by raiding homes (Ibid). The battalion was specifically designated to police Yemeni women (Abo Alarasar 2020). According to al-Eryani (2020, n.p),

The Houthis have used their Zinabiyat elements – terrorist formations designated for the oppression of women – in cooperation with a number of principals and deputy principals. They ordered the educators to carry out field tours aimed at attracting girls by exploiting the poverty of their families amid promises of cash payments and food aid. The girls were taken to special centers for what are called “cultural courses,” where they were exposed to brainwashing, and then taken for military training in the use of light and medium weapons.

The Zinabiyat is implicated in the abuse of prisoners, including sexual assault and torture (US Department of State 2020).

Women and girls also reportedly took on other non-combat roles, such as “medics, recruiters, informants and spies” (i24 News 2020, n.p). Women supporting Ansarallah held a rally where they marched in full burqas holding machine guns (Middle East Monitor 2016). According to a UN Security Council report (2019, 6), women and girls are recruiters:

In 2018, the United Nations verified the recruitment and use by the Houthis of 16 girls between the ages of 14 and 17, which was the first time since the establishment of the country task force in Yemen in 2013 that such information was verified. Their main role was to mobilize and recruit other girls and encourage women and girls to send the male members of their families to the battlefield and support the fighters with money and prayers. Girls have also been seen carrying arms and sticks with the Houthi slogan and, in two separate incidents, the girls entered schools and encouraged the female students to support fighters and forced them to repeat the Houthi slogans.

According to al-Halaly and Carvajal (2021, n.p), “[M]en and women serve not only as the leaders of armed forces across Houthi-held territory, but also as the face of Ansar Allah, the strong-arm prosecuting dissent, often reaching far into the virtual world of social media.”

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Anti-Balaka, Central African Republic

Women were the minority of fighters in the anti-Balaka but participated in both combat and non-combat roles (Vinograd 2017). Vinograd (2017) notes that women joined voluntarily, in addition to being forcibly recruited into the group. There are also reports of the rebels using child soldiers, including girls (Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations 2018).

According to Conciliation Resources (2020, 5),

[anti-Balaka] [l]eaders were reported as exclusively male, and rank-and-file fighters extensively so. The majority of women took up non-combatant support roles. The youngest women we listened to had a ritual role in preparing food or ‘fetishes’ (combat ‘equipment’ which included amulets, clothing and ways of styling their hair). However, a minority of female respondents were involved in combat, suggesting that gender roles were not absolute.

This report also noted that some women exercised agency within the group’s ranks.

The disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) program in the Central African Republic, which included combatants from both the Seleka and the anti-Balaka, included female combatants: reportedly 737 of the 4979 ex-combatants, or roughly 15%, were female (Erthal Abdenur and Kuele 2017).

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Arab Political and Cultural Organization (APCO), Iran

Women's participation is not verified.

Alliance of Patriots for a Free and Sovereign Congo (APCLS), Democratic Republic of the Congo

Reports suggest that women participated in the APCLS in non-combat roles. Bouvy (2014, n.p) interviews APCLS members in DR Congo, including one uniformed female participant who identifies herself as a "rations provider" collecting flour and provisions. The "rations provider" contends that "she and a friend are the only two women at the Nyabiondo military post," and Bouvy concludes that "[t]here are not many women who belong to the APCLS" (Bouvy 2014, n.p). Women also reportedly worked as cooks and "house girl[s]" (MONUSCO 2015, 17).

Other women report being forced as civilians to contribute to the group. As one woman recalls,

Women obeyed [to food collection] because we didn't have it any other way. We had no choice. For example there was this time that the APCLS needed some wood to make a fire. The soldiers asked one of the mamas [carrying wood from her farm], but she refused. The APCLS soldier took a branch and hit her on the head. She fell down when he hit her (Suarez 2017, 182).

There are also reports of girl soldiers in the APCLS (Richards 2014; Ortiz 2018). One girl soldier contends that she served as a cook, and then became a soldier once more fighters were needed (Ortiz 2018). Another states that she joined the organization at age 13 because of pressure from

friends, and that when she returned home, she was shunned by her family (Ibid). A girl ex-combatant interviewed in a MONUSCO (2015, 17) report joined the organization “to escape her abusive stepmother.”

Writing on girl soldiers, the MONUSCO (2015, 9) report explains,

Only seven girls were documented by MONUSCO and its partners as having been associated with Alliance des Patriotes pour un Congo Libre et Souverain (APCLS) during the reporting period, out of a total of 178 children formerly associated with APCLS interviewed. Some boys formerly associated with APCLS declared that there were no girls in the group, but twenty of the boys interviewed reported the presence of at least 65 girls associated with APCLS who were “married” to adult combatants, while others reported the use of girls as cooks and combatants. A 15 year old boy who spent more than a year in the APCLS as a combatant explained that he belonged to a group of 240 combatants with at least 20 girls under the age of 18.

Sources

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Azerbaijani Popular Front (APF/PFA), Azerbaijan

The APF’s founding group reportedly includes a female member, Leyla Yunus (Altstadt 2003; de Waal 2003). The group also included a women’s wing: according to Tohidi (2004, 37), “The D. Alieva Society for the Protection of Women’s Rights initially emerged as the women’s wing of the Popular Front of Azerbaijan and up to 1995 engaged actively in nationalist politics with no clear gender perspective.” Tohidi (1999, 95) also argues that “the Association in Defense of Women’s Rights represent[ed] the Popular Front of Azerbaijan” and “in reality function[ed] as the women’s win[g]” for the political side of the organization (see also Heyat 2002).

According to survivor testimony, there were two women in military uniforms at the APF headquarters and one “severely bea[t]” an Armenian woman brought in and tortured by APF members (Human Rights Watch/Helsinki 1992, 43).

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Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), Yemen

Evidence suggests that women are active in AQAP in combatant and noncombatant roles, primarily suicide bombing and recruitment. According to Ahmed (2010), AQAP reportedly trained women as suicide bombers to attack Western countries. Yemeni authorities arrested a female student attempting to mail a bomb to synagogues in Chicago, who is thought to have been operating under AQAP direction (Chick 2010). Asia Siddiqui, arrested in 2015 alongside Noelle Velentzas for attempted construction of a bomb in the US, had contact with and supported AQAP, including writing a poem for their magazine (Reuters 2019).

According to U.S. military personnel, women were also among the AQAP fighters who “ran to pre-established positions as though they had trained to be ready and trained to be combatants [...]” (Raddatz and Martinez 2017, n.p). Hayla al-Qasir, arrested in 2010, reportedly trained women soldiers and funded jihadist operations (Lahoud 2014). This is interesting as most jihadist groups typically confine women to the more “feminized” (Page et al. 2011, 160) combatant role of suicide bombing.

AQAP targeted women in its recruitment efforts. Ahmed (2010, 14) notes, “A May 2010 magazine published by AQAP, Sada alMalahim, includes an article by the wife of AQAP’s second-in-command, Said al-Shihri, calling on women to join the jihad in Yemen.” Al-Tabaa (2015, 7-8) further explains that AQAP has a magazine dedicated to women:

In recent years, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) realized that its propaganda efforts had not really addressed the Muslim woman. As a result, AQAP closed the gap in its communication efforts to reach as many Muslims as possible with its message; AQAP developed a propaganda campaign specifically geared towards Muslim women. In order to cater to Muslim women, AQAP had to use a different propaganda strategy to attract women to be active participants in its cause. Ironically, AQAP turned to American advertisement approaches, which target specific demographics. The most recent digital media publication geared towards Muslim women, is a magazine with “glossy” pages similar to American magazines such as Cosmopolitan and Elle. The magazine Al-Shamikhah “the majestic woman,” launched in March 2011, is published by the Women’s Media Bureau in the Arabian Peninsula.

Al-Tabaa’s analysis (2015) suggests that Al-Shamikhah primarily intended to activate Muslim women as recruiters, funders, and general supporters of the group.

According to Page et al. (2011, 161), the group made clear that women are unfit for “positions of leadership.”

Sources

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Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Algeria

Warner, Chapin, and Weiss (2020, IV) conclude, “Unlike other African jihadi groups, there are no known instances of AQIM deploying a female suicide bomber.” However, one report suggests that group tried to use a female suicide bomber in a September 2008 attack on Algerian military barracks (Mostarom 2009). Some news reports also suggest that women participated in a 2016 AQIM hotel siege, where security forces reportedly killed two female attackers (Ngono and Duri 2016; Foster and Strange 2016).

In 2016, AQIM released women prisoners due to an al- Qaeda directive “not to involve women in the war” (Barak 2016, n.p). Reportedly marriage between AQIM fighters and local women is used to help embed AQIM within local communities (Abatan 2018).

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Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Front (ARDUF), Ethiopia

Women's participation is not verified.

Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS/UIC), Somalia

Women's participation is not verified.

A United States’ Department of State Cable reports that was a female representative of ARS: “Minister Abdisalam also extended a salute to all Somali women, calling ARS representative Asha Hagi Elmi, who recently won an international award for her work to advance the cause of Somali women. He called her ‘a model for peace and justice in Somalia’” (US Embassy Djibouti 2008, n.p). Elmi signed the peace agreement between the ARS and government, but as a representative of the Sixth Clan, a women’s collective she started, along with heads of Somalia’s five clans (all men) (UN Women 2012; Onditi and Odera 2021).

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Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), Philippines

Female participants in Abu Sayyaf reportedly work as fundraisers, organizers, spies for bombing attacks, logisticians, facilitators for foreign fighters' travel to the Philippines, and weapons procurers (Dacanay 2005, UN Security Council 2018; Santos and Dizon 2019; AP 2019). Women arrested or publicly identified for their involvement with the organization are family members of male Abu Sayyaf fighters (Ibid).

Reports indicate that women suicide bombers have perpetrated attacks for Abu Sayyaf on at least two occasions (Manila Standard Today 2019; AFP 2020; Al Jazeera 2020). Security forces suggest that some of these women were also wives or other family members of male Abu Sayyaf and Daesh fighters (Al Jazeera 2020).

Jadoon et al. (2020) identify nine women in ASG arrested or otherwise identified between 2015 and 2017. While they could not determine roles for four cases, they determined that one was a suicide attacker and four were facilitators, fundraisers, or otherwise non-combatants (private communication with Jadoon).

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North Mali Tuareg Alliance for Change (ATNMC), Mali

Women's participation is not verified.

All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF), India

Women participated in the ATTF, though the nature of their contributions is not immediately clear. Incident monitors identify women cadres being militarily trained. Female cadres have surrendered to security forces with weapons and ammunition (SATP n.d.) According to the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP n.d., n.p),

ATTF ‘chief’ Ranjit Debbarma had visited the training camps of women cadres and in a speech told them that their job would be not only to fight SFs [security forces] but lay “honey-traps” for leaders of the rival National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT).

According to Henshaw (2016, 50), the ATTF

confessed to using female cadres for prostitution, human trafficking and the making/distributing of pornographic films to raise money for the organization. While some of the women involved in these projects were allegedly kidnapped and used as forced labor, women who voluntarily joined these organizations also reported being asked to take part in these operations.

Women report escaping from ATTF camps and abusive treatment (SATP n.d.)

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Autonomous Province of Western Bosnia, Bosnia Herzegovina

Women's participation is not verified.

Baloch Ittehad, Pakistan

Women's participation is not verified.

Bandera Roja, Venezuela

Women were reportedly involved in Bandera Roja from the organization's inception (Spronk and Webber 2010; Ciccariello-Maher 2013). For example, Lidice Navas, a former Bandera Roja fighter, recalls, "I was a militant and founder of the Bandera Roja guerrilla movement in 1976" (quoted in Spronk and Webber 2010, n.p). Ciccariello-Maher (2013, 39) concludes that "many women participated directly in guerilla warfare" in Venezuela, though he does not specifically reference Bandera Roja. Some women were trained in combat and carried out coup attempts in the 1990s (Martinez, Fox, and Farrell 2010; Ciccariello-Maher 2013). Bandera Roja was reportedly organized through mixed-gender Tactical Combat Units that included "six or seven men and women" (Research Directorate 1989, n.p).

Other women Bandera Roja participants participated in political and support roles (Motta 2013).

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Bundu dia Mayala (BDK), Democratic Republic of the Congo

BDK is a religious movement that included women members. Covington-Ward (2015, 187) recalls attending a BDK event where women members were “highly recognizable” in “BDK head coverings.” She further notes, “The women in BDK don’t wear pants, makeup, or hair extensions or wigs” (Ibid, 199). Still, Covington-Ward (Ibid, 202) concludes that men were “definitely in the majority” of the BDK church service she attended. There were several women’s civil society organizations facilitating a peaceful end to the conflict, and they “provided training in peaceful conflict resolution for women BDK members since they recognised the fact that women have a great role to play in peace initiatives” (Kulungu 2007, 18).

Though women’s contributions are not fully verified here, women performed security jobs—in uniform—for BDK events “not only to maintain order, but also [...] to warn of possible attacks by government and police forces” (Covington-Ward 2015, 190).

In 2017, armed BDK members broke leader Ne Muanda Nsemi out of prison, along with 50 others. This jailbreak included women— a “city official told AFP that the women's section was empty, without mentioning how many inmates were detained there” (DW 2017, n.p). In 2020, police fired indiscriminately into a house where “dozens of BDK members, including women and children” had gathered (Human Rights Watch 2020, n.p)

BDK reportedly operates a “Women and family Division” (Kulungu 2007, 18).

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Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement (BIFM), Philippines

Women's participation is not verified.

Jadoon et al. (2020) identify one woman associated with the BIFM but note that it is specifically Abu Torayfe's IS-linked faction separate from the broader movement.

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Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), Pakistan

Women's participation is not verified.

Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF), Pakistan

Women's participation is not verified.

Manchanda and Bose (2015, 78) remark of Baloch groups generally, "Baloch women are also said to be participating in the armed struggle though there is very limited information about their numbers and nature of involvement." Four Baloch women were arrested on terrorism charges, though BLF is never specifically mentioned in coverage of these arrests (Human Rights Council of Balochistan 2019).

Women have protested against the arrest and detention of BLF members and for the rights of Balochistan (Shams 2014; Baloch 2021). A woman is the chairperson of the Baloch Student Organization-Azad, the founder of which is now a BLF commander (Hussain 2014; Palet 2014). It does not appear, however, that BSO-Azad is associated with or considered to be a part of BLF.

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Beik Mon Army (BMA), Myanmar (Burma)

Women's participation is not verified.

Boko Haram, Nigeria

Boko Haram (also called Jama'tu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (JAS)) incorporated “women in violent warfare” (Bryson and Bukarti 2018, 3). The group kidnapped women and deploy them as “cooks, slaves, and even suicide bombers” (Guilbert 2016, n.p). But women not only joined the group through force or coercion, but some women also joined the group voluntarily (International Crisis Group 2016; Matfess 2017) or due to extreme poverty (Curry 2016). Some women have joined the group “to find a husband” (Abatan 2021, n.p) or have chosen to join with men in their families. Others, meanwhile, have joined to escape arranged marriages (International Crisis Group 2019). According to a report by the International Crisis Group (2019, 10), “Many women in Nigeria’s north east, where patriarchy runs deep and under-development is acute, saw in Boko Haram a means of access to education (in the form of Quranic teaching), public space (during religious gatherings), and both general and reproductive medical care, sometimes for the first time.” Women have ensured the group’s survival through facilitating “extremists’ integration into communities” (Abatan 2021, n.p).

Boko Haram is well known for abducting and forcibly recruiting women, but women also joined the organization voluntarily because “participation in the insurgency could often be used to improve a woman’s quality of life” (Matfess 2017, 101). Matfess (2017, 6) concludes that “[m]any women married willingly into the group.” In Okech’s (2021, 8), interviews with women associated with Boko Haram, one contends, “Most women that join Boko Haram from the Gwoza community joined for economic benefits.” Another concludes, “I feel that a lot of people, not just women, were very interested in the economic benefits that the group provided at the time; [sic] because many people felt that they were going to gain in terms of monetary benefits. Let us not forget that at a time the group were offering financial loans to people” (quoted in Ibid).

Boko Haram additionally employed women widely as suicide bombers (Allotey-Pappoe and Agyeiwaa Lamptey 2019; Thomas 2021). In 2017, at least 56% of Boko Haram bombers were female (Warner and Matfess 2017). Women bombers offered the organization tactical and strategic advantages because security forces are less likely to suspect women as attackers and because women blend into civilian-heavy settings (Pearson 2018). The group employed women volunteers but also forces women and girls to be suicide bombers (Ibid; Allotey-Pappoe and Agyeiwaa Lamptey 2019; Okech 2021).

While the group did not otherwise rely heavily on women in frontline fighting positions, some women associated with the group report being trained to use guns and other weapons (Matfess 2017). As in many conflicts, Nigerian security forces appear to mythologize women fighters, with one noting, “They are not many, but they are there... the women fighters are even more dangerous than the men fighters” because they appear fearless (quoted in Matfess 2017, 131).

Women most often participated in non-combat roles, including couriering, financing, cooking, domestic labor, propaganda, and intelligence gathering and smuggling weapons (FATF 2013; Matfess 2017, 2018; Ladbury et al. 2016; Oriola 2017; International Crisis Group 2019). The UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (UN CTED) (2016, 14-15) concludes that “Boko Haram has sought out women to carry out logistical tasks, such as the smuggling of arms and munitions and the passing of information, the assumption being that they can pass checkpoints and avoid house inspections more easily than their male counterparts.”

One woman associated with Boko Haram contends,

Let’s not forget that some women had important roles in the camp, others served as recruiters and even were trained to preach these ideologies to other women to make it as appealing as possible. These women who are part of this group go further to convince their relatives especially their husbands to join Boko Haram. It depends what kind of role you can play, sometimes some were informants within and outside the camp (quoted in Okech 2021, 11).

Indeed, Ladbury et al. (2016, 10) conclude,

Some women do become converts and supporters, but evidence indicates that they are a minority. Within JAS camps and controlled areas, young women appeared to have gained status by carrying out the roles they were assigned: by undertaking tasks (for example recruitment of other girls and women, burning down homes) or by becoming teachers and preachers to other women.

Security forces have arrested female Boko Haram members smuggling rifles and ammunition under hijabs, as well as identified women informants. The organization reportedly pays “between \$30 and \$312 per mission” for women weapons carriers (UN CTED, 14). In 2014, the Nigerian government arrested women Boko Haram recruiters (Ibid; BBC 2014).

Women in the insurgency are also educators. Boko Haram invests in religious education and provides regular Qur’anic lessons to both voluntarily and forcibly recruited members (Ladbury et al. 2016). Female Boko Haram members teach some of these courses (Matfess 2017). Nagarajan (2015, n.p) contends, “Part of the responsibilities of active senior female JAS fighters is to oversee the integration of newly abducted women into camp life.”

There are also reports of a “female wing” in Boko Haram, which reportedly engaged in recruitment of other women and spying for the rebels (Chothia 2014, n.p). Nagarajan (2015, n.p)

similarly concludes that women are “active participants” in Boko Haram, and that the group includes a “women’s wing [...] made up of women and girls who chose to join or were forced to do so after being abducted. Although coercion is at play through the use of drugs, indoctrination and fear, at least some of these women are active agents who have chosen to join the sect.”

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Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA), Papua New Guinea

Women were given leadership positions in the BRA's bush camps, "carrying out administrative and law and order work in the villages" (Zale 2004, 49). Women also "planned small training programs, or served as teachers, medical officers, nursing aides and agricultural officers" (Ibid, 49). According to Havini (2004, 70), "Some women became 'mamas' for people who were trapped at long distances from their own communities"; one such woman was even selected by the BRA to attend peace talks in New Zealand.

Other women also provided significant auxiliary support to the BRA, though their 'membership' status within the organization is not clear. Saovana-Spriggs (2007, 132) concludes,

There are no clear accounts of women who directly assisted war efforts in Bougainville though one could argue that, through their normal roles and responsibilities towards their families, women were assisting their husbands and sons who had joined the BRA and BRF. In Buka the security forces were often provided with home-grown foods such as sweet potatoes, taro, and vegetables; these were placed along the Buka highway for the security forces to collect. Seeing this, other women especially in Central Bougainville, could see no difference in feeding their husbands and sons who became hardcore BRA.

There is no verified evidence that women took on combatant roles in BRA, although Charlesworth (2008) cites an instance in which a group of women acted as decoys for the BRA by getting Papua New Guinean (PNG) soldiers to play volleyball with them so that BRA soldiers could attack.

Despite some resistance from men, women were able to participate in the political affairs of the BRA via their cultural roles, chiefly through Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom (BWPF). Garasu (2013, 29) claims that BWPF represented "women from BRA or BIG," though Saovana-Spriggs (2007, 189) says they were "closely associated" with the political wing of BRA. One member of BWPF recalls, "When we produced our position paper it was agreed that the purpose of BWPF was to enable women's perspectives on the impacts of the war to be known nation-wide and internationally. BWPF was a vehicle for women to reclaim and maintain their traditional roles in decision-making and peacemaking" (quoted in Sirivi 2004a, 140). The organization campaigned on behalf of human rights and environmental justice and engaged with the UN (Dikaung 2004). Eventually, BWPF expanded to incorporate preexisting women's

groups in Bougainville (Sirivi 2004b). BWPF also worked with BRA leaders in reconciliation efforts within Bougainville society (Sirivi 2004c, 175):

Our mothering instinct, to nurture and protect human life, saw us calling for no more deaths. While we were one with our leaders in the struggle for our destiny, we also cajoled them not to lead Bougainville in the way of destruction. We said, “We do not carry guns like you men in the jungle, but we are the ones who cry over our dead. The pain we feel for our land is like the pain we feel when we give birth. But we have no more tears left! Please find another way to restore our dignity and to save our society.” Our leaders, in their own wisdom, soon heeded our cries. They began to look for other ways to resolve the conflict, instead of “by the barrel of the gun.”

Despite the major role women played in the peace process through women’s groups, Charlesworth (2008) asserts that women have struggled to maintain equal political power in the aftermath of the conflict (see also Saovana-Spriggs 2007; Garasu 2013).

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Baloch Republican Army (BRA), Pakistan

There is little available information about women's participation in the BRA. Manchanda and Bose (2015, 78) remark of Baloch groups generally, "Baloch women are also said to be participating in the armed struggle though there is very limited information about their numbers and nature of involvement."

According to Manchanda and Bose (2015), the BRA claims to have a women's wing. A woman claiming to be a spokesperson for the BRA women's wing took responsibility for an attack in Quetta (Shahid 2009; SATP n.d.). According to SATP (n.d., n.p),

Two shops were destroyed and a shop owner injured when the women's wing of the Baloch Republican Army (BRA) bombed a shop on the Mezan Chowk in Quetta, capital of Balochistan, on June 16, Daily Times reported. The blast occurred shortly after a woman wearing a veil left the shop. "She must've left explosives in the shop," said the juice shop owner. The women's wing of the BRA claimed responsibility for the blast. "We accept responsibility for the bomb blast," said Gohar, spokeswoman of the women's wing of the BRA, in telephone calls to several newspaper offices. She claimed to have personally put the explosives in the shop. "More such attacks would be carried in the future," she warned.

Sources

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Clandestine Communist Organization (CCO), Malaysia

Women participated in the CCO (also called the North Kalimantan Communist Party (NKCP) or the Sarawak Communist Organization (SCO)) during the communist insurgency in Malaysia. Reports suggest that women performed front-line and auxiliary roles, often joining with their husbands or family members and making up the minority of participants. For example, Eilenberg (2012, 133) notes that the

rebels were a mix of mostly young men and women, often husband and wife, fighting side by side. Their prolonged stays in the border region often cut off from supply lines in Sarawak meant that many of the units began making camps that were more permanent. Here they engaged in the cultivation of rice and vegetables in garden plots [...] Female communist rebels were known as *Pasukan Amoy...Amoy* [Chinese-girl] troops among the locals.

Ooi (2009, 396) similarly suggests that members were “mainly young Chinese men and some women” who trained in the jungle. Former women rebels say that they worked in a wide range of roles, participating as combatants and in logistical support positions as midwives, and that they joined because of an ideological commitment to communism (Chan and Wong 2011). A 1973 CIA memorandum notes that a college-educated “female terrorist” with the group was killed in combat (2).

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Revolutionary Democratic Council (CDR), Chad

Women's participation is not verified.

Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, Russia (Soviet Union)

Women have been most visible in the Chechen rebellion as suicide bombers. According to Struckman (2006, 338), “of the 23 suicide attacks in and around Chechnya since the first in 2000, 68% were identified as carried out by women.” Female bombers “detonated explosives virtually every month from 2008 to 2010, and their attacks averaged 21 deaths, in comparison to the men’s implosions, which averaged 13 deaths” (Rajan 2011, 202). One report explains,

Several dozen female suicide bombers - virtually unstoppable by law enforcers who still stick to an obsolete profile of a terrorist as of a young dark-complexioned male - have performed extremely well in terms of affecting the

public sentiment in Russia, compared with the overall decade-long war in Chechnya where thousands civilians and soldiers perished [sic] without, indeed, instilling serious public fears about the Russian government's ability to protect its citizens. In what could arguably be called a new “innovation” in suicide bombing, Chechen rebels have begun including their “black widows” in larger commandos for more complex missions, like the latest hostage-taking raid in Beslan (Abdullaev n.d., n.p).

Chechen women made headlines when they were involved in a massive hostage-taking at a Russian theater in 2002 (Baker and Glasser 2002). Women were eventually allowed to join the “Warriors cadre” of the Chechen forces as a result of their changing social status following their role in suicide bombing (Rajan 2011, 202). Speckhard and Akhmedova (2006, 72) contend female suicide bombers typically received little training, if any at all, “and that once the ideology is adopted it is simply a matter of equipping the woman with a bomb and sending her to her target.”

Rajan (2011, 202) notes that prior to their participation as suicide bombers, women “initially served in more supportive roles, as spokespersons, running peace marches, and providing food and medical aid to Chechen rebels, paralleling Chechen cultural attitudes toward women’s social roles.” In 2001, a woman was arrested for providing medical care to Chechen rebels:

Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) officials have arrested an unnamed woman in Gudermes for providing medical assistance to supporters of Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov, ITAR-TASS reported on 24 September. The FSB agents claimed to have found documentation at her home proving she participated in the January 1996 attack by Salman Raduev on the Dagestan town of Kizlyar (Radio Free Europe 2001, n.p.)

Beyond the innovation of suicide bombing, it appears that women’s inclusion in the Chechen rebellion continues to be limited by gender roles. According to Speckhard and Akhmedova (2006, 72),

In terms of power structure Chechen terror organizations are male-run, with women serving in subservient and traditional roles: cooking, cleaning, bandaging the wounded, nursing, and so on, although three female bombers did break out of these defined roles: one learned to shoot guns and drive, and another set of sisters learned to explode grenades, plant landmines, and shoot guns.

This suggests that suicide bombing is thought as more suitable for women than other types of combat roles. One woman reports being involved in recruitment for the group (Murphy 2004).

While studies often focus on the loss of family members as a major cause behind women’s recruitment into the Chechen rebellion (Speckhard and Akhmedova 2006; Toto 2015), some women may have been forcefully recruited: “It has been reported that the women who are a part of the all-female sector of the Chechen Rebels were victims of *zombification*, meaning they were

coerced, drugged, kidnapped, raped, or intimidated into following orders from the Chechen Rebels” (Paul 2019, 53).

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Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA), Mali

Women participated in a variety of roles in the CMA (also known as National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA)). While there is sparse empirical evidence of women’s participation in combat roles, the group does portray both men and women as combatants in their propaganda (Lackenbauer, Tham Lindell, and Ingerstad 2015). A photographer captured photos of MNLA soldiers which show women handling and posing with guns (Bouda n.d). The MNLA Coordinator for Diplomatic Action in Europe, Mossa Ag Attaher, also called “on the freedom fighters, men and women, to join the resisters within the MNLA” (quoted in Barducci 2012, 13).

Women “seem to have been essential” in recruiting combatants for the group (Lackenbauer, Tham Lindell, and Ingerstad 2015, 43). Women have also provided economic aid and fulfilled logistical and intelligence roles (Bellal, Bongard, and Heffes 2021; Lackenbauer, Tham Lindell, and Ingerstad 2015).

There is also evidence of women’s participation in leadership roles. The MNLA had a “consultative council” made up of “traditional and religious leaders, cadres and women” (Bellal,

Bongard, and Heffes 2021, 10). One source claims that “female MNLA leaders” led marches against the *mujahideen*’s application of *shari’a* law (Lecocq et al. 2013, 352). According to an interview, women are present in the group’s “revolutionary council” and police force (Bellal, Bongard, and Heffes 2021, 25).

In 2012, the MNLA official website listed a woman as Chargé of Women Advancement, of Child Care, and of Family (Barducci 2012). According to a report by Bellal, Bongard, and Heffes (2021, 25),

Contrary to many other ANSAs [armed non-state actors] operating in Mali, the MNLA has a number of women in leadership positions. The example of Nina Walet Intallou, the MNLA’s former women’s president, is illustrative in this respect. She was a member of the MNLA Executive Committee and held several important positions, including being a member of the MNLA delegation to the Algiers peace negotiations.

Advisory group Independent Diplomat claims to work alongside the group’s “female representatives” in increasing women’s roles in carrying out the Algiers Accord (Independent Diplomat n.d., n.p). However, the MNLA had “very few” women participating in the Algiers peace process from 2014-2015, though these women were “visibly present” (Lackenbauer, Tham Lindell, and Ingerstad 2015, 43) in these negotiations (Le Monde 2012).

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National Council for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD/CNDD-FDD), Burundi

Women played an active role in the CNDD-FDD, though reportedly in low numbers. There is limited available information about women's participation in the CNDD, the Forces for the Defense of Democracy (FDD)'s political wing. One report that notes that 32 of the 645 CNDD members demobilized (~5%) were female and that 469 of the 6914 CNDD-FDD members demobilized (~7%) were female (Boshoff 2005). Nindorera (2012) concludes that women composed less than 5% of the CNDD-FDD and did not participate in 'High Command' positions. Similarly, according to Daley (2008), women constituted 8% of demobilized combatants associated with the CNDD-FDD. Jones (2013, 266) contends that "many women actively participated in the civil war as both battle-field combatants (although the exact numbers are hardly known, with estimates ranging from 494 to 1200 [...]) and auxiliary support roles."

Women were involved in communications and intelligence work (Mazurana 2004), as weapons suppliers and as violence inciters (Daley 2008). Women affiliated with the group reported frustration about being "assigned duties beneath their educational level" (Nindorera 2012, 16). There are also reports of girls working as porters (Pauls 2020; Dilworth 2006).

Women organized into a women's league affiliated with the CNDD-FDD (Nindorera 2012; Jones 2013). Jones (2013, 264) notes,

The CNDD-FDD also put in place a women's league, called Abakenyererugamba, while they were a rebel movement. This group, like the youth league, was to act as a leadership and steering committee for women members of the party, and especially, to provide a voice for women's issues during the war and in subsequent planning for the future.

The group also conducted outreach with the civilian population (Ibid). Although the role of the women's group was limited during the civil war, the movement nonetheless planned a healthy inclusion of the women's group into politics, and the Abakenyererugamba was involved in post-conflict planning as early as 2003.

Women could rise to both political and military leadership positions within the organization (Mazurana 2004). There was at least one female leader, Alice Nzomukunda, associated with the organization (Jones 2013). Still, women's ranks within the CNDD-FDD reportedly affected their experiences in the organization; lower ranked women who may have been conscripted into the group reported sexual harassment (Seckinelgin, Bigirumwami, and Morris 2011). Mazurana (2004) also suggests that women's participation was often greeted with disapproval by their families and that the women in the rebel group tried to advance women's interests within the organization.

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National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP), Democratic Republic of the Congo (Zaire)

Houngbedji, Grace, and Brooks (2012, 4) conclude that “many” women “have fought alongside men in non-state armed groups such as Mai Mai, M23 or the CNDP.”

The CNDP also forcibly recruits girl soldiers, though MONUSCO does not include the group on its list of organizations in the DR Congo that “systematically” recruit girls (MONUSCO 2015, 1).

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Council of National Liberation (CNL), Democratic Republic of the Congo (Zaire)

Women's participation is not verified.

Andrée Gerbillat Blouin, a female activist from the Central African Republic, reportedly “had access to important Conseil National de Libération documents, proving that she was an insider and a supporter of the rebellion” (Bouwer 2010, 203).

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National Council for Recovery (CNR), Chad

Women's participation is not verified.

Cobras, Republic of Congo

Women's participation is not verified.

Cocoyes, Republic of Congo

Women's participation is not verified.

Counterrevolutionaries (Contras), Nicaragua

The Contras’ struggle to overthrow the Sandinista government drew women into armed conflict in combat, leadership, and auxiliary roles. Women composed between 7 and 15.6% of Contras combatants and 10% of fighters killed in action (Brown 2001; Kampwirth 2001). Many women

Comandos killed in combat are widely recognized among Contra supporters as particularly heroic fighters (Brown 2001). For example, Brown (2001, 109-110) recalls:

Maritza Zeledón, “Daysi,” joined the Resistance in January 1983 as a combatant [...] though trained as a paramedic, whenever her task force went into battle, Daysi would lay aside her medical kit and join the fray as an infantry combatant, AK-47 in hand, returning to her kit to treat the wounded when necessary... Daysi was fatally wounded by an incoming round of 105 mm artillery during a firefight at Cerro El Guapional in Jinotega. To honor her service and her heroism, her comrades in arms renamed their unit the Maritza Zeledón Task Force.

In her interviews with Contra women, Kampwirth (2001, 100) notes that they “typically described relations with male guerrillas as being characterized by a lot of respect, claiming that they were treated like other soldiers.” However, other Contra women recall sexism and misogyny – and some cases, violence (including sexual violence) – within the ranks (Ibid; Capelli 2017 García, Cottam, and Baltodano 2019). There were also racial and geographic differences in women’s experiences: Mestizo members “from the Pacific Coast” were trained in camps with men, while indigenous participants from other areas trained in gender segregated facilities (García, Cottam, and Baltodano 2019, 97). Though there were gender-segregated training facilities, there were not reports of gender-segregated units or all-female organizations associated with the Contras.

Female “representation within the ranks of Contra support workers was considerably larger, at least 39% of those demobilized at the war’s end in 1990 were women” (Kampwirth 2001, 80). When the daughters of combatants are included in the calculations, the number rises to nearly 60% (Ibid). Women worked as messengers, medics, radio operators, infiltrators, cooks, message and supply couriers, logistics coordinators, recruiters, and they ran safe houses for Contra fighters (Ibid, Cupples 2006; Meráz García, Cottam, and Baltodano 2019). They played a “crucial role” as couriers and members of a “clandestine *comaraca* [territorial region] committee” (Brown 2001, 112). Women composed approximately 50% of Contra courier networks as Brown (2001, 112) identified: “women were often preferred as *correos* [couriers] over men because they tended to attract less attention, could move more freely, and were not subject to conscription.” The Contras reportedly also deployed women members as “bait” to “lure the enemy” into ambushes (Meráz García, Cottam, and Baltodano 2019, 97).

Sources suggest that women were restricted from prominent leadership positions. No woman ever became an official member of the Council of Regional Commanders nor commanded a task force (Brown 2001). However, women did serve at lower levels as platoon commanders (De Pauw 2014). García, Cottam, and Baltodano (2019, 97) conclude: “The roles played by female combatants included commander roles by women... who operated in the same way as male commanders and would attend meetings [...] and manage their own troops made up of male and female soldiers.” Moreover, women reportedly held an enormous amount of influence in clandestine, couriating networks. Brown (2001, 112) contends that “close to 20% of *jefes de correos*, or chiefs of correo networks [courier networks], were female [...] of the names I found

of clandestine committee heads, 15% were female.” Women were also political leaders (Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 1999; Luciak 2002).

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Communist Party of Arakan (CPA), Myanmar (Burma)

Women's participation is not verified.

Communist Party of Burma (CPB), Myanmar (Burma)

There is evidence of women’s participation in the Communist Party of Burma (CPB), both as combatants and in non-combat roles. The references to ‘communist women’ in this period can sometimes blur whether these women belonged to specific communist organizations. Other than taking up arms, communist women wrote articles for the party journal and helped mobilize support for their cause and rural and urban populations; at least one woman was involved in “translating and decoding wire messages,” though it is unclear if this was during or after conflict

(Than 2013, 148). Than (2013) also notes that all communist party factions recruited women for many roles, including cooking and fighting.

Some women in the Burmese army “became the activists in the underground movements of the Communist Party of Burma against the Anti-Fascist People’s Freedom League and the Burma Socialist Programme Party regime in the post independence period” (Tun, Ring and Hlainget 2019, 7). There are also reports of “communist women” birthing children in the jungle and that “some even took their children with them into combat” (Harriden 2012, 159). Furthermore, the need to care for children is cited as one of the reasons for attrition in women’s participation in the group: “When forced to choose between supporting the party and providing security and stability for their children, many women chose to surrender and return to their homes” (Ibid, 159). Harriden (2012, 159) further notes that “Communist women were expected to balance their political and maternal roles and to raise their children to carry on the revolution.” Indeed, “although some female communists took up combat roles alongside their male comrades, their primary responsibility was still caring, for both children and combatants” (Ibid, 307).

Harriden’s (2012, 159-160) account underscores the role that family ties played in many women’s participation in the CPB:

in 1960, the wives of several prominent White Flag communist leaders surrendered to government forces. They included Daw Khin Gyi, wife of CPB Politbureau leader Thakin Than Myaing, and Daw Hla May, wife of the second-most senior CPB leader Hamendranath Goshal (yebaw Ba Tin). Daw Hnin May, the wife of Red Flag leader Thakin Soe, was arrested and imprisoned, although their daughter, Ni Ni Soe, remained in the jungle with her father for several more years.

Than (2010, 140) notes that “Communist women did not enjoy senior positions in the party: it was almost as if women did not expect to reach such positions.” Still, there appear to be exceptions: for example, Hla Kyaw Za rose to a position of leadership on the Party’s central committee (Soe 2013) and there was a female cadre represented at peace talks in 1963 (Lintner 2020).

There is evidence of all-women’s groups associated with the CPB. The Tavoy District Women’s Union (TDWU) “went underground with the CPB in 1948 and joined the communist rebellion against the AFPFL government” (Harriden 2012, 278). Furthermore, “the objectives of the Burma Women Congress reflected the policies of the communist party;” this group “was involved in distributing free clothing to those who could not afford clothes, supporting women who took part in sport, eradicating prostitution, and punishing men who took mistresses: it pressed for equal job opportunities for the married and single, and for maternity leave” (Than 2010, 151-152). Women were able to rise to positions of leadership in this group. The organization sought to have representation throughout the country (Than 2013).

Several accounts of women in Burma underscore how gender became a social cleavage between competing political movements (Harriden 2012, Than 2010). Harriden (2012, 159) notes that “life in the underground communist movement was arduous and the image of hardened women

revolutionaries traipsing through the jungle stood in stark contrast to the image of female AFPFL supporters who confined themselves to social work and fundraising. It seemed entirely fitting that communist women were known as arzani ('brave or daring ones')." Those opposed to the CPB attempted to portray the group as exploiting women (Ibid), a claim that has some backing given the reports that women suffered sexual abuse in the underground (Than 2010) and the fact that the rebels' gender egalitarianism was not reflected in the distribution of labor (Harriden 2012).

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Communist Party of Burma - Red Flag faction (CPB-RF), Myanmar (Burma)

Women's participation is not verified.

Communist Party of India – Maoist (CPI-M), India

CPI-Maoist formed in 2004 when the People's War Group (PWG) and Maoist Communist Centre (CPP) merged, bringing women cadre with them. Women may have composed up to 60% of the group, taking on more public roles than they did in previous iterations of the struggle (Bandyopadhyay 2008; Parashar 2016).

Female CPI-Maoist members fought on the front-line: all-women armed groups, including one called '*Lal Dasta*' (Red Brigade) carried out particularly audacious attacks (Parashar 2016). There was an all-women ambush team commanded by women members (Saksena 2018). Women compose at least 25% of Maoist cadre in some areas (Shekawat and Saksena 2015), and in 2020, CPI-Maoist released a list of 22 'martyred' women killed by security forces the previous

year (Kaiser 2020). Roy (2010) estimates that women composed 45% of the PLGA, the CPI-M's armed wing.

Women also made up a substantial non-combat base for the organization, working as logisticians and cultural activists (Ibid). Women are involved as couriers, spies, nurses, propagandists, cooks, and in other non-combat positions (Shekawat and Saksena 2015). Shekawat and Saxena (2015, 121) conclude that women were “preferred as couriers of messages, money, arms, and ammunition.” Women often took on both front-line and auxiliary jobs (Ibid).

However, while CPI-Maoists advanced women's equality as a key part of their platform, Parashar (2016, 46) argues that this “does not translate into a larger presence of women in the decision-making authority.” Women did take up leadership roles, but not at the same rates as other positions in CPI-Maoist. Women reportedly “earn leadership positions on a limited basis,” though in at least one area women commanders and deputy commanders out-number men (Shekawat and Saksena 2015). There was at least one woman on the Central Command/Committee (Maitra 2012; Bhattacharya 2021).

The Krantikari Adivasi Mahila Sangathan (KAMS), a political organization with 90,000-100,000 members, was reportedly CPI-M's women's wing (Roy 2011). Kumbamu (2019, 236) concludes that “KAMS is the biggest, most active, and dynamic women's organization in the entire country.” The organization focuses on outreach concerning women's equality in law and labor and other issues primarily affecting women (Roy 2010). However, Lata (2019, 34) contends,

CPI (ML) Party Unity merged with CPI (ML) People's War in 1998 retaining the name CPI (ML) People's War. In 2004, it merged with MCC to be finally named as the Communist Party of India (Maoist). After the merger, its women organisation retained the name [Nari Mukti Sangh] NMS.

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Communist Party of India – Marxist-Leninist (CPI-ML), India

According to Kamra (2014, 222), when CPI-ML formed in 1969, “[y]oung men and women from colleges across the country went into the countryside ‘to become declassed’ and awaken the peasantry to their revolutionary roles.”

Women in the CPI-ML trained as nurses to treat injured fighters, carried documents, and provided food and shelter for militants (Kamra 2014). Women whose partners died in combat also took on a symbolic role; as one former participant recalls, “my role at that time was to inspire others as a martyr’s wife” (quoted in Ibid, 223).

CPI-ML reportedly lacked a “formal space for women,” and former participants describe how initially “middle-class women were assigned only minor or secondary roles by leadership” during rebel years (Kamra 2014, 222). Still, women’s organizations did develop, including the All India Progressive Women’s Association (AIPWA). Women composed the AIPWA’s leadership, and some AIPWA leaders are also part of CPI-ML’s politburo. The CPI-ML organized a mass association called Nari Mukti Sangharsh Samiti (NMSS). According to Lata (2019, 34), “the NMSS and NMS were formed by the Communist Party of India (Marxism Leninism) Party Unity in 1987 and Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) in 1989 respectively, which were the two Naxalite groups in undivided Bihar prominent in the landless peasant struggle.” Women made up NMSS leadership. The NMSS reportedly operated its own judicial system:

Urmila said that pitai ke dar se sab gunda log theek ho jata tha (the fear of physical punishment kept the lumpens under control). She shared with amusement the instances of many Jan Adalats (an alternative judicial system of Naxalites) conducted by NMSS in which the perpetrators were punished. In one of the cases in Machchil village of Makhdumpur block a man who lived with a woman for years and had a child refused to marry her. When the woman approached NMSS, a Jan Adalat was called and it was

decided that the man could not claim his innocence on the ground that it was not out of wedlock. The woman can claim all rights of a wife and the man has all obligations towards her as a husband. She emphasised that they used to undertake regular follow up of the decision and focus on the condition of women. In another instance in Machchil village a woman was harassed by an upper caste man after which the Jan Adalat was called and the culprit was beaten with slippers by the complainant woman. Urmila said that women from twelve villages participated in this. In Bhusainchank in Jehanabad, a woman was gang raped after which the Jan Adalat was called. Urmila said that in such instances NMSS called the Jan Adalat on its own. The rape survivor beat the rapist with slippers (Lata 2019, 9).

CPI-ML also reportedly gave “ideological” support and established relationships with other women’s organizations, including The Karbi Women’s Association and the Boro Women’s movement (Mahanta 1998, 46).

As a political party today, the CPI-ML lists women as members of their Central Committee. The 2018 party conference included establishing a ‘Gender Sensitization & Justice Cell’ with women as the chairperson and members (Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation n.d.). In 2018, the organization held a camp for women activists in the party, including those working in outreach, labor, in student fronts, and in the women’s wing (Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation 2008).

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Communist Party of India-Marxist-Leninist-Janashakti Faction (CPI-ML-J), India

Naxalite women participated in the CPI-ML-J as armed combatants. In several incidents, security forces exchanged fire with, killed, or arrested women cadres (SATP n.d.; Indo-Asian News Service 2005; The Hindu 2003, 2007, 2008). Reports do not assess the extent of women's participation, nor their involvement in auxiliary roles.

In 2004, women's organizations met with CPI-Maoist and CPI-ML-J to discuss "a lack of representation of women in the higher ranks of their political structure and leadership" (The Hindu 2004). However, women may hold lower ranking leadership roles. In 2015, a "Group Commander" surrendered after security forces put a bounty on her for capture (Business Standard 2015).

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Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace (CPJP), Central African Republic

Women's participation is not verified.

Communist Party of Nepal – Maoist (CPN-M), Nepal

According to Dahal (2015), out of 17, 502 ex-combatants CPN-M members demobilized after the war, 3,356 (19%) were women, but this did not include women who worked only in support roles (Yadav 2016). About 39% of combatants in regroupment camps after the formal conflict's end were women (Ogura 2009). CPN-M similarly claimed that women made up 40% of the organization (Yadav 2016). Women reportedly participated in the group's first military action in 1996, but it is not clear if women were founding members of the organization (Ogura 2008).

Women joined the organization on all fronts, fighting in active combat, mobilizing civilian support, working as recruiters, working as couriers, health workers, spies, radio operations, and even policymakers (Ibid; Gates and Roy 2016). They were particularly prolific spies and mobilizers, because security forces did not expect them to be part of the rebellion and they were able to access private homes and other spaces to solicit supporters (Gonzalez-Perez 2008).

Female members joined the United Front (the support base) and the party (the political wing), in addition to the People's Liberation Army (PLA, the militant wing) (Dahal 2015). Reportedly, "every village [had] a revolutionary women's organisation" (South Asia Terrorism Portal 2017, n.p) and every military formation had to include at least 2 women (Yami 2021, 124). CPN-M also mobilized the All Nepal Women's Association (Revolutionary) to "organize grassroots campaigns" in support of gender equality and the organization's platform (Lohani-Chase 2014, 30). ANWA-R programs have included "preventing child marriages and polygamy, and banning the practice of menstruating women sleep in cowsheds, as well as anti-domestic violence, drunkenness and liquor campaigns" (Tamang 2009,74). In other sources this group is referred to as CPN-M's "Women's Front" (Ogura 2008, 41). In addition to ANWA-R, there was also the "women's department," which is under the direct control of the Central Party (Tamang 2009, 75). Furthermore, there are all-female military units, including "women platoons, women squad teams, women militia teams functioning in the field" (Parvati 2003, n.p) Comrade Parvati was a leader in the CPN-M). Henshaw (2013, 2) describes women's "presence in leadership and combat roles" as "widespread."

Women made up at least 10% of the Central Committee and other political positions (SATP 2017); they also participated as commanders and in high military ranks (Dahal 2015). The CPN-M operated a Women's Front, for which Secretary General was a leadership position held by women, and women were Brigade Commissioners in the PLA (Ogura 2008). Still, women were not part of the peace negotiations at the end of the conflict (Lohani-Chase 2014). Furthermore, though the CPN-M espoused gender-egalitarianism, there was reportedly significant discrimination within the rebels' ranks (Pettigrew and Shneiderman 2004) -- so much so that "in 2002–2003, the women's department of the CPN-M conducted a survey which among other things found that of the women interviewed, 74.56% stated that gender discrimination was 'normally present' while 3.66% said it was 'excessively present' (Tamang 2009, 75).

It is worth noting that women's participation in the CPN-M as fighters was incorporated into the rebels' propaganda efforts. Pettigrew and Shneiderman (2004, 1) note: "Striking photos of young, gun-toting guerrilla women are prominently displayed on the "official" Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) website, and distributed from New York to London to Peru in materials produced by the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM). These images are apparently intended to serve as evidence of the movement's egalitarianism and "empowering" effects for Nepali women" (Ibid).

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Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army (CPP/NPA), Philippines

Women in the CPP/NPA participated in all roles. One report concludes that women students and "all cadre," primarily from middle class backgrounds, "were expected to conduct political work among the masses and among themselves" and that "household chores were rotated, assignments going to men and women alike" (Aquino 1994b, 598). Many women fought in combat: Chapman (1998) concludes that 10% of some companies were women; in 2015, security forces killed 15 NPA combatants and 40% were women; in 2018, 214 ex-rebels surrendered and 15% were women (though not all self-identified as combatants) (Jones 1989; Sankey 2018; Times News Service 2017; Felongco 2018). NPA popular messaging and images also include women (Jopson 2009).

In 1989, the NPA created a women's brigade consisting of 34 women; it was reportedly very efficient (Witeck 2000). There were also "Women's Committees" organized by the Carrio Organization committees in NPA controlled territory; the initial idea for a women's bureau

within the CPP was “overtaken by the arrest” of key leaders in 1974-1976 (Aquino 1994a, 39). There are also reports that mass associations have internal women’s committees (Madula 2015). “Most” women work in non-combat roles, particularly in “social investigation and organizing” where units “tended to be more than 50% women” (Witeck 2000, 11) as well as in the finance and medical departments, “in line with Philippine lowland Christian culture in which women hold the purse strings and provide medical care” (Rutten 2018, 343).

Women cooked, gathered food, did mobilization work, were couriers of messages and food supply and served as lookouts (Jones 1989; Cinco 2019; Araja 2019). Women’s Committees within the NPA and underground women’s networks “solicited and received financial and other kinds of support from sympathizers and above-ground workers” (Witeck 2000, 10). Women were also medics, they grew food for the NPA, and they organized protests (Directorate of Intelligence 1985). Female CPP and NPA members reportedly wrote and produced mass publications, including *Liberation* and the Free Philippines News Service (Witeck 2000).

Some women report being recruited out of school or because they had family members in the NPA. And while “few” women act as NPA leaders currently (Sankey 2018), there were at least two women in contemporary leadership, both of whom were captured by security forces (Xinhua News Agency 2017; Araja, 2019). There are reports of women NPA squad leaders in the 1970s (Witeck 2000). On the political side, the CPP operates a Women’s Bureau; Witeck (2000, 11) concludes that in the early 1990s, 30% of “leadership positions within the party and other bodies were held by women.”

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Communist Party of Thailand (CPT), Thailand

According to Sinnott (2014, 19):

Documents [...] confirmed that communist groups in training in Thailand typically contained a sizeable minority of women. Donald Mitchell (1967) interviewed six communists who had surrendered to the Thai authorities. According to these interviews, women accounted for approximately one-fourth to nearly one-half of the insurgents in training.

Baird (2021) demonstrates that Hmong women (and men) took up arms for the CPT in the 1970s. For example, one woman “became a female CPT soldier in 1969. Later, she received more than 10 days of basic training to become a field nurse for the company to which she was attached. She also studied basic literacy when she was a soldier, something that was not an option for most Hmong women before aligning with the CPT” (Ibid, 179). Pholsena and Promphakping (2021, 10) similarly conclude that some women were “revolutionary foot soldier[s]” and “female fighter[s].” Further, Ettinger (2007, 674) mentions that one male member of the group “fell in love with a much younger woman who was an armed insurgent,” and their application for marriage was approved by the CPT.

Women involved in political organizing for women’s liberation and leftism – particularly as students - joined the CPT in the 1970s (Morell and Samudavanija 1979). Women studied to be doctors and nurses with the CPT (Baird 2021). For example, Baird (2021, 176-178) recalls:

In another case, Lia Sae Her, known as Comrade Dao, a Hmong woman from Phetchabun Province, reported that, when she went to study to be a doctor in China at a military

college, there were 43 students from Thailand in her group. Three were Hmong women, four were women from northeastern Thailand, four were women from central Thailand and the remaining 32 were men from various parts of Thailand. These students lived and worked where they studied near Dali, in Yunnan Province [...] For instance, one Hmong woman, named Song Xiong, explained that what initially caught her attention when the CPT started recruiting in Mae Jarim District, Nan Province—where she came from—was that women had the right to an education, something that the Thai government was not providing in her area at the time.

Women also worked on the CPT's radio station (Ibid) and were volunteers with the political side of the organization (Sinnott 2014). The CPT reportedly did not include a women's organization (Omvedt 1986).

Wedel (1982, 2) names specific women as "leaders" within the CPT, but is not clear if this refers to thought leaders or women in leadership positions.

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Coordination of the Armed Resistance (CRA), Niger

Women's participation is not verified.

Croatian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Herzeg-Bosnia), Bosnia-Herzegovina

Women participated on the front-line in Herzeg-Bosnia's armed forces, the Croatian Defence Council (HVO). For example, female members of the HVO were sentenced for violent crimes committed against civilians, including torture and sexual violence (Prusina 2018).

Sources

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Committee of National Revival for Peace and Democracy (CSNPD), Chad

Women's participation is not verified.

There are no explicit references to women's participation in the CSNPD, however Debos (2016) notes that women were involved in non-combat positions in a number of the southern rebel groups. She writes: "In the first half of the 1980s, the entire south was plunged into warfare. Entire villages fled into the bush. Young men and boys were quickly trained to use weapons, while the women and girls took care of the combatants and took over delicate operations such as intelligence" (Debos 2016, 61). She notes of conflict in Chad in general:

As far as rebellions are concerned, the first rebellion of Chad, known as the Frolinat, did not enrol women as combatants, although there were a few exceptions. In the 1980s, the armed groups in the south relied on the work of the women who lived in the bush with the male combatants, but few women actually bore arms. As for more recent rebellions, few women were enlisted as combatants. Women are, however, active participants even when they do not wield a rifle. Many women lived in the rear bases of the rebellions or hid out in the bush and shared the daily lives of the fighters. They could then provide food, care, and information on enemy troop movements. Some of them were sexually exploited. In Chad, as in many other contexts, there is a 'sexual division of revolutionary labour'. The tasks assigned to women are undervalued; their role is rendered invisible. While men in arms are dependent on women both inside and outside the military, the contribution of women has not been acknowledged. Moreover, the participation of women in the rebellion is often stigmatised. In the post-war period, they win scant reward for the part they played in the war. Armed

violence is a practical occupation that is not just carried out by men; it is also viewed as essentially masculine (Ibid, 12).

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Darfur Joint Resistance Forces, Sudan

Women's participation is not verified.

Democratic Republic of Yemen, Yemen

Women's participation is not verified.

Revolutionary People's Liberation Front (DHKP/C), Turkey

The DHKP/C's Central Committee included a Women's Commission, and women reportedly participated in the organization in all roles. DHKP/C recruitment reports produced between 1990-1996 suggest that 33% of official recruits were women (Teymur 2007).

Front-line women carried out grenade and gun attacks and suicide bombings for the organization, including attacks against security forces and an American Embassy (Kenville 2000; BBC News 2015; Narozhna and Knight 2016; Mango 2005). Women are also implicated in setting fire to the Pan Am Office in 1982, and DHKP/C women have been killed by police (Pope 1992; Kenville 2000). Several female DHKP/C prisoners participated in the seven-year "Death Fast," a hunger strike that prisoners from leftist armed groups carried out modeled after the 1981 Irish republican strike (Serin 2013). Some women died on strike. Other women who participated in the Death Fast self-immolated (Ibid).

Women participated in non-combat activities, including disseminating DHKP/C propaganda (Al-Othman 2016). The group reportedly incorporated women in leadership roles (Kenville 2000); according to the U.S. government, women were members of the Central Committee (Voice of

America 2014). Other women appeared to hold military hierarchy leadership positions (Fraser 2017).

Some of the female members reference women's oppression as a source of their motivation to join the organization (Sevinc 2008).

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Democratic Karen Buddhist Army - Brigade 5 (DKBA5), Myanmar (Burma)

Women's participation is not verified.

In their study of women in armed ethnic organizations in Myanmar, Kolås and Meitei (2019) do not identify any women DKBA cadres or political leaders.

Sources

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Donetsk People's Republic (DPR), Ukraine

Women were participants in the Donetsk People's Republic armed groups. Evidence suggests that women receive military training, but they rarely engage in battles. DW (2015) interviewed a young female combatant and leader for the DPR, who was in charge of a unit of 50 men. When asked about how being a woman impacted her experience in the group, she replied "that being a woman has never proved an obstacle to serving on the front-lines. 'Guys are not afraid to follow me,' she said. 'They know that I give correct orders. Not the kind of commands that will create extra risk.'" According to the article, the only other woman in the interviewee's unit is a cook, but the overall number of female soldiers serving in the group is unknown. Another female commander of a women's battalion explained:

Why is it strange that a woman serves? Men serve," says Olesya Gerasimenko, leader of a women's battalion in the eastern region of Luhansk. She is married to another rebel serving nearby in Sloviansk. "Look at the situation we're in. If our men protect us, we also have to help our men" (Vocativ 2014, n.p).

Other evidence suggests that women's participation in combat roles is relatively rare. Yet, it appears that the imagery of gun-toting women is important to the pro-Russia movement's image. Schifrin and Fannin (2016, n.p) interviewed a group of teenage girls in a "Soviet-style youth squad," all trained in weaponry and wearing army uniforms, who took part in the recruitment of "fighting-age males." One of the girls reported:

I can't serve. I'm too young and we're not in a state of martial law now, so there's no mobilization of women. This is how I can make a contribution," Katerina says, walking quickly with a stack of white pamphlets. "First and foremost, a man defends his motherland, his home, his family. And only then comes all the rest."

McLaughlin (2014) states that women indeed served as a sort of "reserve force" for the group when fighting-age men are in short supply. News coverage particularly circulated the story of Svitlana Driuk, a female commander of a tank battalion and head of an all-female tank crew (EuroMaidan Press 2019). She was thought to be the group's only female tank commander. Some female soldiers reportedly participated in a "beauty pageant" for the group's celebration of

international women's day (News Tribune 2015). According to an article by Vocativ (Sharma 2014), women enlisted in the DPR's forces were often used as "human shields," because "no one will shoot at the separatists if they are women."

It seems that women more frequently serve in noncombat capacities. In addition to recruitment (Schifrin and Fannin 2016), women also appear to be active as nurses (EuroMaidan Press 2019). However, auxiliary services are not well-documented.

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Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU), Ethiopia

Women's participation is not verified.

Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP), Guatemala

The EGP became part of the URNG, and it ultimately comprised approximately 50% of the URNG (Luciak 2001). According to Luciak (2001, 27), women "at no time" made up more than 25% of the EGP's membership. Brinton Lykes (2019) describes the extent of women's EGP membership as "a small number." It is likely that women participated more widely in the EGP than official records suggest: Arias (2013, 112) notes that from the female combatants he interviewed, "none of them were included in the official list of de-mobilized combatants that the URNG presented to the U.N. and the Guatemalan government in 1996 [...] They were de facto abandoned by the EGP, the organization to which they belonged, and for which they had sacrificed everything."

Aura Marina Arriola – a former FAR member – was reportedly “one of the founders of the EGP” (Solana 2018, 1; Oliveria and Hernández 2019). She was involved in fundraising for the nascent movement (Oliveria and Hernández 2019). Similarly, citing EGP publications, Solana (2018, 1) writes of Clemencia Paiz: “Thus she became one of the founders of the nucleus that in 1974 would become known as the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP). She was the first person in charge of the clandestine work.”

Sharp (2017) suggests that few women cadres participated in the EGP in its early years, especially in armed roles. However, a former combatant’s testimony suggests that women’s involvement grew over time: “At that time there were few women [...] now there are many more” (EGP 1982, 30). Women carried out daring operations, including rescue missions, avoiding helicopter fires, handling RPGs, and training for “shoot-to-destroy missions” (Arias 2009, 1876). Mazurana (2004, 33) contends that some women in the EGP were “primarily fighters.”

Writing on former female combatants, Arias (2009, 1876) notes of EGP women: “They were surprised to discover that men were more afraid than they were or that some women were better shots than men. [...] The women are not shy about describing their ability to handle weapons, to organize resistance activities or teamwork, or to display military aptitudes.”

Luciak (2001, 28) concludes that “most female combatants were active in communications, logistics, and rear-guard activities. Traditional domestic activities, such as preparing meals, washing clothes, cutting firewood, or cleaning, however, were more equally shared between the sexes. Women carried information, food, and weapons including grenades and machine guns. They worked as healthcare providers and political educators, engaged in farmwork, armed themselves, hid and smuggled weapons, and participated in military operations” (quoted in LAP 1983; Arias 2009; Sharp 2017). Aura Marina Arriola traveled to Europe “with the mission of organizing support networks for the new phase of the guerrilla war” when the EGP was first founded (Burgos 1999, 54).

Luciak (2001, 28) notes that “no woman held a rank higher than captain.” However, women became squadron leaders (Arias 2009) and regional directors (Sharp 2017). Women reported their willingness to fight, but they were restricted by male family members or rebels in the EGP (Ibid).

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Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement- Abul Suhail faction (EJIM-AS), Eritrea

Women's participation is not verified.

Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), Ethiopia/Eritrea

Initially, the ELF excluded women from their operations. But by the late 1960s,

the ELF began to allow women's participation in small numbers... with women participants supporting the organization as nurses and cooks; others provided shelter or aided the front by fundraising, distributing information, and protesting. Women were also reportedly successful as recruiters to the cause. [...] While some women engaged in smuggling weapons, transmitting messages, and reporting enemy movements, very few engaged in open combat or leadership roles (Thomas and Bond 2015, 500-501).

Mason (2001, 8) argues that ELF women made significant contributions in non-combat roles: “They began by utilizing their traditional roles to resist Ethiopian occupation. This encompassed everything from cooking, nursing and shelter provision to weapon collection and message transmission. [...] Women took part in diverse resistance processes.” Women further fundraised, “distributed pamphlets, protested in schools and universities and transmitted information about Ethiopian activities. When fighters came to Keren and Asmara, they were hidden in women’s houses and the men collected information that women gathered in the urban areas” (Ibid, 9). Bernal (2001, 133) notes that the ELF “limited women's participation to that of support, helping to supply the movement with provisions and information” and that very few women fought in combat. Mason (2001) notes that research prioritizes women’s combat activities to the EPLF and the larger rebellion at the expense of ELF women’s non-combat contributions, despite this making up the bulk of their work.

The ELF organized a women’s association, which ran “handicraft centres, dispensaries, a maternity home, etc” perhaps unsurprisingly given the nature of this association and women's roles in the ELF generally, “at meetings of this association there is by contrast a lot of talk about the war situation, but little about women's liberation” (Custers 1980, 770). The Women’s Union was also part of the ELF’s mass organizations, lobbying on behalf of gendered issues (Mason 2001).

Mason (2001, 2003) concludes that “few” ELF women held leadership positions or fought on the front-lines, but that their non-combat contributions ranged from quality of life jobs like cooking and sheltering fighters to collecting weapons, transmitting weapons, fundraising, couriering messages, and distributing information about the organization’s cause. Former ELF members recall sexism and violence facing women in the organization, including pressure to remain sexually available to male fighters and sexual violence committed by combatants whose advances women refused (Ibid).

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National Liberation Army (ELN), Colombia

The ELN apparently recruited fewer women than other rebel organizations operating during the Colombian conflict. Henshaw (2020, 7) concludes that “the ELN included at least one woman among its original membership..... [but] as the group developed a more decentralized leadership structure, some women complained of discrimination and in particular being marginalized from planning and strategic discussions.” During a demobilization period in the 1990s, the ELN had the lowest percentage of demobilized women – 17.5% (Gjelsvik 2010). Women initially had limited access to the organization, and the women who joined it were often male commanders’ partners who were restricted into non-combat roles. Still, there are reports of women participating in ELN activities in the group’s earlier years; for example, in 1981 an ELN combatant was killed when a bomb she was planting exploded in her hands (Globe and Mail 1981).

During and after the 1990s, women’s participation in the ELN expanded significantly and was estimated to be approximately 25% (Verdad Abierta 2015; Henshaw 2020), though women made up between 40 and 50% in some fronts (Londoño and Nieto 2007). Women in the contemporary ELN participated in both combat and non-combat positions. Off the front-line, women are involved in “education, health, communications, international work, logistics, organizational definition, intelligence, [and] political work” (McFarland 2018, n.p). Women were actively involved in clandestine work for the ELN (García 2009). Though women are engaged in a broad slate of activities, some have noted a gendered division of labor within the organization that mirrors pre-existing gender norms (Darden et al. 2019).

The ELN reportedly established a women’s association in the early 2000s, though few details are known about the scope of the organization’s activities (Mouly, Garrido, and Idler 2016).

Women and girls “have roughly the same opportunity as men to become field commanders” (Human Rights Watch 2003, 56). There are few women at the highest leadership levels, and women’s leadership was normalized only in regional command (Londoño and Nieto 2007). But reportedly there was at least one woman on the Central Committee (García 2009).

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National Liberation Army (ELN), Peru

Women's participation is not verified.

The ELN in Peru was short-lived and not as well-documented as the ELN in Colombia. According to Jacquette (1973, 348), the group did not refer to women's emancipation in their platform, indicating that the recruitment of women may not have been a priority for the group.

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National Liberation Army (ELN), Bolivia

Much of the writing on the ELN focuses on this group's relationship to Che Guavera. As Randall (2017, n.p) notes, however, "although most of Che's comrades in his final doomed endeavor were men, many women also took part: as strategists, decoders, drivers, nurses, keepers of safe houses or liaisons in the cities, or as fighters on an equal footing with their male comrades underground and in the mountains. A few held leadership positions." A number of the women involved in the organization were either from foreign countries or had spent significant time abroad; for example, an American nun was reportedly a part of the organization's clandestine operations (Carmody 1973).

Furthermore, Jaquette (1973, 352) notes that “the National Liberation Army operating out of Nancahuazti never issued a program, but its proclamation of April, 1967, contained a statement that appealed to the tradition of revolutionary heroes and heroines in Bolivia.” As compared to other Latin American rebel groups, however, women’s participation in the Bolivian ELN seems relatively uncommon (Wickham-Crowley 1992); in fact some reports suggest that there was only one woman among the 56 fighters affiliated with Che (Perez 2003).

Still, there is evidence of women playing leadership roles and being active in the underground. One resource lists: Tamara Bunke, Mónica Ertl, Loyola Guzmán, Amiria Murillo, Marcela Toiti, Luxer Estática del Worpo, Josefina Fargat, Marlene Ariola, Beatriz Allende, Jhenny Coler, Amalia Rada, Loila Sánchez, Graciela Rutillo, Marina Briz, Cecilia Ávila, Rita Valdivia as participants, but with little detail about what these women did (Randall 2017). Rita Valdivia was put in charge of the underground operation in Cochabamba and was killed in this position (Randall 2017). She was referred to as a commander, which was reportedly a function of her leadership in the military organization (Randall 2017). Loyala Guzman played an important role in the organization, working in leadership positions in the group’s urban operations (Jaquette 1973; Salmón et al. 1990; Bassi 2020).

Tamara Bunke accompanied Che in Bolivia (she was also known as “Tania”) (Estrada 2005; Löwy 2009; Jaquette 1973). According to Löwy (2009, 269), summarizing a book about Tania’s life, written by her former romantic partner and instructor, notes that the foreigner

arrived in La Paz in 1965, under the cover identity of Laura Gutierrez Bauer, a non-political German-Argentinian woman interested in Bolivian folklore. She managed to infiltrate the ruling circles of Bolivia, including some collaborators of president-dictator René Barrientos, and was therefore able to get for “Alfredo Mena” - Guevara's cover when he arrived in Bolivia in 1966 - letters of introduction from several official Bolivian institutions!

Once she was no longer able to do such intelligence work (a result of her cover being blown), she became a combatant (Löwy 2009). According to Jaquette (1973, 352), “for two months before the guerrillas began assembling in rural Bolivia, she was able to gather and report political and military information, and she later communicated with them in part by means of an ‘advice to the lovelorn’ radio program, broadcast in code out of Cochabamba.” Other women, like Else Burgoa, helped produce “uniforms and packs for the guerilla wars,” received mail for the rebels, and acted as “the ELN liaison inside the country and abroad” (Burgoa v. Bol 1978, 2). Burgoa appears to have been recruited by a woman and worked with both men and women in auxiliary tasks (Ibid).

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Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM), Ethiopia

Women's participation is not verified.

Popular Liberation Army (EPL), Colombia

Women composed at least 25-30% of demobilized combatants from the EPL (Alape 1996; Florez-Morris 2007; Ortega 2012). In a study of a sample of EPL combatants, Alape (1996) found that most women were from peasant backgrounds. EPL women and other groups attended networking meetings for female ex-combatants (Nieto-Valdivieso 2015). In her testimonial memoir, Maria Eugenia Vasquez Perdomo (1998), an M-19 combatant, recalls two adolescent girls in the EPL arrested with Molotov cocktails.

EPL women are implicated in violence committed against civilians, but are also victims of the group's abuses. For example, in 2017,

Members of the EPL ordered Carolina Vega (pseudonym) to attend a meeting, saying one of her family members was at risk. When she arrived, she said, four men and a woman wearing EPL insignia on their clothes threw her to the floor and started beating her. She fought back, hitting one of them, she said, and in response, the four men sexually assaulted her. They let her go, and days later, Vega ran into the woman who had

witnessed the abuse. The woman told her that the men had done the same to her before she joined the EPL (Human Rights Watch 2019, n.p).

EPL reportedly allowed women to join as auxiliaries in the early years before expanding opportunities, including those on the front-line (Reif 1986). Still, in 1986, Reif (Ibid, 156) suggested that the group “made no real attempt to recruit women.” Most female participation in the group included logistical and political duties, such as collecting intelligence on the needs of local communities (Gonzalez-Perez 2008). Women “acted as core conduits, sustaining informal social networks and facilitating spaces that maintained and reinforced the group cohesiveness” (Nieto-Valdivieso 2015, 191). Women reported extremely “isolating” clandestine work (Ibid, 275).

Nieto-Valdivieso (2015, 25-26) contends of women in the EPL:

[...] although this guerrilla group had a strong rural presence they performed most of their revolutionary duties in the cities or like Eva in small towns. They were living a double life in which their clandestine identity was concealed under the ‘normality’ of their everyday activities as women, mothers, workers, trade unionists, teachers, professionals[...] Many of the women interviewed [...] began their involvement with insurgent organisations doing legal political and community work within the social, peasant and indigenous movements in urban, peri-urban, rural, and semi-rural areas. Due to political persecution many of them had to become clandestine or join the rural troops of the guerrillas. Women from the old insurgencies were very diverse, among them were trade unionists, middle-class high school and university students, school teachers, housewives, factory workers, youth peri-urban inhabitants, and in some cases children.

She writes of one woman she interviewed:

For instance, Patricia became in the late 1970s the only female member of an EPL urban unit composed of five members. She recalls that the male comrade in charge used to knock on her door every day at five in the morning saying ‘comrade wake up to accomplish your historical mission. It was to cook breakfast’ (Patricia – EPL). She never rebelled against this instruction and when evaluating the incident she stated that it was a symptom not only of women’s socialisation and the reproduction of the wider gender order in the guerrillas, but also of the way in which militants assumed directions as if they were ‘what is correct, and should be done’ (2015, 266).

Women joined for a myriad of reasons and through diverse pathways. Nieto-Valdivieso (2015, 153) concludes of women she interviewed:

Although Rita (55 years old), Ignacia (late 70s), and Juliana (38 years old), were from a peasant background, lived in the same region and joined the EPL, all followed different pathways, which were to some degree determined by their generation. Rita and Ignacia began their militancy, as stated before, doing legal, political and communitarian work, but had to become ‘clandestine’ and join the rural ranks. In contrast Juliana’s motives for

mobilisation were not ideological. She joined the EPL in a period during which the organisation needed more combatants to strengthen its military capacity. Like other rural militants recruited during this period (i.e. Bella and Viviana – EPL) she did not have to pass through different stages in order to be accepted or prove her capacity as a combatant, among other things because in the rural areas the process of recruitment was more open and straightforward (Florez-Morris 2007, 626). Her motives for joining the guerrillas [...] are close to the ones used today by girls and women individually demobilised: looking for adventure, liking weapons and military life, revenge, escaping poverty, domestic and gender violence, or the established presence of the guerrillas in the community. Aurelia is aware that some EPL ex-combatants' lack of political consciousness is linked to the recruitment process during the military expansion of the organisation, especially in rural areas, where young girls and boys were 'invited' to join the ranks without previous political preparation.

Women also held leadership roles in the EPL. At least one woman, Myriam Criado, was a spokesperson for the organization in the Magdalena region (Bouvier 2014). But women also “complained of discrimination, including feeling left out of decisionmaking positions or the general flow of information” (Henshaw 2020, 9).

Some women report giving birth in guerilla camps (Ibid). And some EPL women report feeling as if their stories are not addressed by academic narratives of the Colombian conflict, which often focus on the FARC (Ibid).

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Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), Eritrea

Women participated widely in the EPLF, making up between 35-40% of the group's membership (UK Department for International Development 2001; Weber 2011). Near the end of the war, women composed between 13-25% (varying estimates say 13, 23, and 25) of front-line combatants (Pool 1980; Müller 2004). Bernal (2001, 133) concludes that "As guerilla fighters, women fought side by side with men in mixed units and marched to victory with their male comrades. In fact, the image of a khaki-clad woman warrior brandishing a rifle became emblematic of the nationalist movement."

Women also composed an estimated 35% of administrators, 30% of those working in EPLF industrial activities, 55% of health workers, and 32% of communications workers, including in broadcasting, teaching, and other outreach areas (Pool 1980; Müller 2004). EPLF women worked as military trainers and in popular mobilization work (Müller 2004). They were intelligence operators and attack organizers (Wilson 1991).

Women and men shared many combat and non-combat tasks equally. As one EPLF fighter argues, "There are no men or women in the field, they are all comrades" (Weber 2011, 357). Bernal (2000, 68) contends:

Tasks such as making enjera (the staple bread eaten with most meals) and carrying water were assigned as collective work. These tasks, significantly, were also used as punishment (assigned to individuals as retribution for some infraction), thus reflecting the devalued status of this work even within the EPLF. Zerai quotes verses of a song sung by women fighters that goes, "Dahan kuni wushate, Mokuhki tihise." It translates as "Farewell kitchen, I have broken your shackles" [...] Ironically, women ex-fighters now perform at home these tasks that were regarded as punishment in the liberation movement. Zerai reports that until 1976 combat was the only activity considered work and that those doing supportive tasks "were seen as cowards, not committed to the cause" [...] She says, "Even those women who joined the armed struggle to contribute by cooking or taking care of the wounded came to feel after they had finished the military training, that combat was the only really important work" [...]

Bernal (2001) further suggests that 'fighter' in the EPLF construction included a broad scope of activities.

While EPLF women were team leaders and in other leadership positions, "relatively few women were to be found in the higher echelons of command" (UK Department for International Development 2001, 4). Women did hold high ranking political positions but were excluded from the group's Executive Committee during the war (Bernal 2000).

The EPLF established a women's association during the war, the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW). Gebremedhin (2001, 214) writes: "As an organ of the EPLF, the NUEW's main aim was to expand female participation in the liberation struggle and to increase levels of awareness on gender equality and equity issues among women in the liberated areas[...] The EPLF chose a cadre of women to head NUEW and to frame its mission."

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Popular Revolutionary Army (EPR), Mexico

Reports suggest that women do participate in the EPR, a small organization. During the group's first public appearance in 1996, around 100 masked men and women in military uniforms brandished weapons and declared the organization's founding (Gatsiopoulos 2007). Groups of armed women and men "attacked the local police and military offices" (Gatsiopoulos 2007, n.p).

In 1997, militants held a news conference featuring three commanders: one woman and two men (Preston 1997). Reportedly, in the 1990s the EPR included consisted of 150-200 guerrillas, including "Indians, peasants, housewives, workers and intellectuals" (Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 1997, n.p)

Stephen (2000, 826) contends that Mexican police units and the army carry out counter-insurgent operations under the guise of “drug searches” against indigenous men and women suspected of participating in the EPR.

The EPR’s First Communiqué—“Manifiesto Of Aguas Blancas” states:

The Popular Revolutionary Army (EPR) is formed by men and women, from the different exploited and oppressed sectors of the people, that have comprehended the necessity of organization against the reactionary violence of the exploiters and oppressors, that for decades intended to drown in blood the struggle of the Mexican people and their legitimate aspirations. This gives it an essential popular character because of the participation of simple men and women [...] (Wrighte 2002, 220).

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Ethiopian People’s Liberation Front (EPRDF)

The EPRDF included the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM), the Oromo Democratic Party (ODO), and the Ethiopian Democratic Officers' Revolutionary Movement (EDRM). Women’s participation in the EPRDF came primarily from the TPLF.

Women were “involved in the armed, political and propaganda struggle against the Derg regime” (Burgess 2013, 101). An estimated 30% of TPLF troops were women, numbering around 40,000 (Ibid). Women and men fighters reportedly dressed similarly, wearing the same uniforms and with similar hairstyles (Berhe 2009). Geisler (2004, 50) contends,

Testimonies of women fighters in the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) involved in an armed struggle against the central government of Ethiopia from 1975, have suggested that peasant women were particularly keen to become women fighters, because it was one way of balancing their inequalities.

Desta (2008, 147) notes that the TPLF had a broader conception of ‘fighter’ than only participation in combat. Some “women fighters were able to rise to commanders while many other women and girls were trained as administrators, health workers, technicians, carpenters, metal workers, and drivers” (Oda 2010, n.p). Women also participated as spies, educators, and in mass mobilization (Maki 2001). Interviews with former fighters suggest that combatants often did non-combat jobs (Oda 2010).

Women worked in mobilization, presenting the front’s political program at local events and recruiting entire families into the movement; according to Oda (2010), women also played roles as intelligence gatherers. According to Hammond (1990, 102) women were “over-represented in the cadres, the department responsible for the organization of the masses.” There were mass associations formed for women (Ibid).

The TPLF operated a Women’s Fighters Association (WFA) (Oda 2010). The WFA operated schools for women – half of which were for women fighters and half of which were for women from the villages – providing political training and political education. WFA women and others in the TPLF also participated in mobilization, accounting, food and goods supplying, and as military trainers (Maki 2001).

The TPLF was relatively open to female commanders, but fewer women had access to high levels of leadership. One woman worked on the TPLF Central Committee (Oda 2010).

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Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), Sri Lanka

The EPRLF was reportedly the first rebel group in Sri Lanka to recruit a significant number of women (Samarasinghe 1996). Explaining the EPRLF's quickness to adopt a gender-conscious ideology, Stack-O'Connor (2007, 46) writes,

The PLOTE and EPRLF are guided by Leftist philosophies that promote general equality among people; in contrast, the LTTE's only political platform is an independent Tamil state through armed struggle. The LTTE emphasizes the value of traditional Tamil culture, which had no place for militant women. The PLOTE and EPRLF had Leftist scripts that provided them with justifications for including women and women's issues in their programs.

Women who joined the EPRLF were often stigmatized by their families and communities. Contrasting with the JVP, which forced male cadres to make their girlfriends members of the group, one female EPRLF member recalls, "when a young woman visited a male cadre's house on official EPRLF matters, his family would speak rudely to the woman because families were afraid their sons might get married to women within the movement" (Satkunanathan 2012, n.p).

Women's roles in the group evolved over time to become more expansive. According to Thiranagama (2012, 193), "by 1986, around 1,500 women cadres were receiving political education, with some receiving military training." Corroborating this, Satkunanathan (2012, n.p) writes:

Initially, women in the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) engaged only in political work due to the group's decision that only women who were politically aware would be sent abroad for military training. Following the 1983 riots when women joined the group in droves, a decision was made to provide military training in Sri Lanka to all women cadres.

Women also assisted the EPRLF in more subtle ways. Following the LTTE's crackdown on other Sri Lankan revolutionary groups, some women from oppressed caste villages "sat on the road around their villages armed with kitchen knives and chili powder to defend EPRLF members" (Hoole et al 1990, cited in Thiranagama 2012, 203).

The EPRLF had a women's wing (Thiranagama 2009, 134), which according to Alison (2009), was considerably more radical than that of the LTTE. Alison (2009, 179) explains that the group "maintained that 'the liberation of women could not be automatically achieved through national

liberation' and argued that 'women should consciously and constantly struggle against patriarchy in order to attain their own liberation while participating, simultaneously in the common struggle.'" Thiranagama (2012, 193) notes that the women's wing would go into villages to "hold political meetings and form women's committees to deal with issues of caste, education, and labor."

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Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP), Ethiopia

Women participated in the EPRP in a myriad of roles (Bisewar 2011; Semela, Bekele, and Abraham 2019). Reportedly, the EPRP organized some armed men and women in the northern provinces (Tiruneh 1993). A former female member concludes:

I am not able to state figures but I remember a substantial number of women who participated in the political struggle. I was a member of the EPRP. Looking back, I am amazed about the courage with which we embraced the struggle in the face of merciless torture and killings. Women who have not been on the forefront of political activism were committed to providing backup support, assisting victims of torture, sheltering those in hiding etc. I always believed in the energy and courage of the youth and the unflinching commitment of women in any context (quoted in Ashenafi 2009, 36).

A 2020 documentary, *Finding Sally*, focuses on a female EPRP fighter, and includes footage of armed women. But “many” women in EPRP were involved in “mobilizing women at workplaces and schools, holding party meetings, recruiting other women, and so forth” (Biseswar 2011, 102). Biseswar (2011, 102) suggests that women “were not at the leadership level though.” Still, there are reports of a handful of female leaders and influential women, often in political positions (Ibid). This includes Hiwot Teffera, who was a member of the Youth League’s leadership committee and who was later imprisoned from 1979 to 1986 (Guidi 2019). One female EPRP activist contends:

Women were active participants in the student movement, we deeply believed in activism and sacrifices. With the conversion of the student movement into political parties, we carried on the struggle and we knew few women who held leadership positions within our party, the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Party (EPRP). Some of these leaders were killed (Ashenafi 2009, 35).

There were supposedly several women’s groups organized in relation to the EPRP, which were active in civilian outreach work. These groups include the “Ethiopian Mother’s Association,” whose “major objective... was to protest against the atrocities committed by the Derg against children and youth using the strategy of outcry” (Gebrewold 2017, 12) and the Women’s Coordinating Committee (WCC), which used “conscientious schemes, in the form of lectures, seminars and political education forms” as a way to “mobilize women to struggle for their emancipation (Ibid, 10). When the EPRP was influential in the WCC, women’s associations were reportedly established throughout the country. Biseswar (2011, 108) notes:

In the countryside, the establishment of PAs was accompanied by the setting up of local Women’s Associations (WAs) in 1975 for all women above the age of fifteen. By 1980 nearly all women had been integrated into these structures. These WAs were very ambitious at their initial stages when they were introduced by the EPRP activists and campaign students in the old WCC. Some of their objectives included securing the rights of members, monitoring their social, political and economic problems and establishing professional associations (Fellows 1987, 20). Unfortunately, these ambitions were drowned and the strength of the women’s committee collapsed when most of its active members fled the scene after 1976.

These structures were leveraged by the Derg to incorporate women into the government’s women’s organization. There are also reports of a women’s wing affiliated with the EPRP, which emerged in 1972 (Biseswar 2011, 96). There are interesting reports of how women’s wing affiliates tried to use Derg-affiliated women’s programs to pursue women’s mobilization. Biseswar (2011, 100-101) notes:

Some of the students, especially those forming part of the EPRP, but also from MEISON, started to realize the political potential of the Zemecha [a government development initiative] and decided to use it towards their own advantage. That is how the Zemecha became instrumental in the spread of the ‘woman question’ to some of the remotest corners of the country. This was done by a few of the EPRP and MEISON female

students. The ultimate goal of these students was to initiate a national mass women's movement. Due to their small numbers, their work was minimal and insignificant at the time. However, all their intentions were brought to an abrupt halt when the Derg realized this 'abuse' of the Zemecha and ordered its immediate closure in July 1976.

In 1976-1978, during the government "Terror Campaign" many women were taken off the streets or their homes and tortured until they confessed to be part of the EPRP. None of them were brought to trial and many of them were secretly sentenced to imprisonment from five to fifteen years (U.S. Government Printing, 1987).

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People's Revolutionary Army (ERP/PT-ERP), Argentina

Women accounted for 40-50% of ERP members, but reportedly "few women made it to the front" (Manzano 2014, 214; Pozzi 2000). Manzano (2014, 215) concludes that "women's contributions [...] were associated with their most 'traditional,' 'home-like roles' and that women "comprised a minority of those performing [...] armed action." Women were often

couriers between underground networks and ERP activists, but some did participate on the front-line (Lewis 2002). For example, Lewis (2002) recalls an ERP attack where women set up the barricades and covered advancing fighters with a bazooka. The ERP's leader encouraged women's involvement in militant activity (Cóvolo 2010).

Reportedly, women joined the ERP for ideological reasons and often had family or friends involved in the movement (Ibid). Women were heavily involved in propaganda, making and circulating group publications, and working with relatives or prisoners. They also delivered food to civilians in ERP areas, after the group expropriated farms (Noguera 2013). But ultimately women and men did many of the same non-combat tasks within the group, including in logistics (Ibid).

Hollander (1977,192) contends that security forces targeted women working in supportive roles. She writes:

Thousands of male and female cadre supporters and even relatives fall victim to torture and murder. Women are not just the wives, mothers, sisters, and lovers of those who continue to struggle, but are an integral part of that struggle. Knowing this, the military government does not hesitate to brutalize and assassinate women as well as men who appear to be a danger to the existing system.

The ERP operated 'The Women's Front,' a mass front to organize and politicize women (Noguera 2021, n.p). The organization's primary functions were to mobilize women, publicize the ERP, raise funds, and, importantly, to ensure that women were not an 'obstacle' to men's participation as militants (Ibid, n.p). There were regional divisions of the front, headed by women (Ibid).

ERP women faced sexism and hostility and had limited opportunities to advance in leadership positions (Manzano 2014; Casso 2014; Cóvolo 2010). For example, while women ERP participants were generally more educated than their male counterparts when they joined the organization, they held only two positions in the ERP Central Committee leadership (Manzano 2014). The only two women who reached management bodies worked in outreach propaganda (Martínez, 2009). Some female militants recalled being seen only as wives and partners of militants, rather as fighters or activists themselves (Cóvolo 2010).

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People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), El Salvador

The ERP contributed the largest percentage of armed combatants to the FMLN, of which women composed at least 20% (Montgomery 1995; Viterna 2013). The ERP also had the greatest number of female combatants and officers of FMLN groups (Luciak 2001). The group had a "traditional focus on military organizing over community organizing," and so they had a "systematic process of recruiting highly educated, well-trained young women" (Viterna 2013, 253).

ERP women were actively involved in expansion work mobilizing the population, as cooks and munitions experts, as propagandists, news reporters for rebel radio, radio operators, instructors, medics, and combatants, cell leaders, political strategists, and military plan coordinators (Diaz 1992; Viterna 2013).

Women in the ERP also held leadership positions. As Viterna (2013, 253-254) contends, by the second half of the war, "ERP women were more likely than women in any other faction [of the FMLN] to be placed in a high prestige position from the beginning of their guerilla tenure, without first passing through the kitchen." Álvarez and Orero (2014) suggest at least one woman was an ERP leader when the group first went public in 1972, and Álvarez (1020, 12) notes that in the ERP's "political committee during the eighties, which consisted of seven members, three were women." The ERP also enlisted women as senior commanders (Montgomery 1995; Ibid), and female commanders were "numerous" (Ortega 2012, 497).

The ERP established a women's association, the Asociación Mujer Salvadoreña (Salvadoran Woman Association) (AMS).

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Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), Spain

While women did participate in the ETA, they reportedly faced considerable barriers based on gendered stereotypes of women's roles held by their male compatriots. According to Hamilton (2007b, 4), this stereotyping was related to the kinds of roles women were typically able to fill in the group:

The idealisation of a particular form of nationalist motherhood not only heightened the visibility of male militants; it also had the effect of making less visible other forms of women's nationalist activism, including their roles in ETA. If women were associated above all with the home, ETA itself was constructed as a place of male domination separate from the domestic sphere. Paradoxically, however, it was precisely inside ETA that a small number of female activists had the opportunity to gain access, even if under very restricted conditions, to one of the historically privileged sites of male power: the sanctioned violence of military activity.

In terms of recruitment, women often joined the ETA in "teams" with their husbands (Clark 1986, 305; Hamilton 2007a, 143). Unlike many male members of ETA, few women were in universities at the time of the ETA's operation, which meant that only a limited number of women had the opportunity to be recruited in universities (Hamilton 2007a).

Many women were more "collaborators" of the group than "members of military or political fronts" (Hamilton 2007a, 136). According to Hamilton's (2007b, 105-106) overview, women's participation in the ETA increased over time; they, however, primarily provided non-combat support, while occasionally filling combatant and leadership roles:

Between the mid-1960s and 1970 small numbers of women joined the organisation, the majority active in cultural activities or support roles. By the late 1960s there was a small number of female armed activists, as well as three women members of ETA's executive. In addition, three women were among the sixteen accused at the Burgos trial in 1970. During the 1970s there was a gradual rise in the percentage of female recruits. Moreover, there was a growth in the number of women accused of direct involvement in armed actions and of holding leadership positions. By the early 1980s a few female ETA members were serving lengthy prison sentences for violent crimes including murder. Moreover, by the late 1970s at least one woman, Dolores González Catarain, popularly known as Yoyes, had become a member of ETA's executive committee. Overall, however, the numbers of female activists in the period under study (1960s to 1982) remained small, probably never more than about 12 or 13 per cent. The significant majority of these women were active as collaborators. Thus in spite of the rise in numbers of female armed activists and leaders, the gendered division of labour inside ETA persisted.

Corroborating this evaluation, Clark (1986, 286) explains:

The data on sex... reflect ETA's pronounced antipathy toward women in the organization. As one etarra told me in an interview in 1973, ETA opposed women in the organization because "their place was in the home" and "they talked too much, especially to their parish priest"... The few women who do manage to enter the organization are always found among the support or information cells.

Nonetheless, "small but steady" numbers of women eventually began to fill combatant and leadership roles for the ETA (Hamilton 2007a, 136). They sometimes went to prison for their participation in violence; between 1975-1983, up to 10% of imprisoned ETA members were women (Hamilton 2007b). In 2000, the "only female member of ETA's executive committee" was accused by security forces of 11 murders (Daly 2000, n.p).

While the group dissolved in 2018 and seems to have been acting more limitedly in its later years, evidence shows that women's participation in the group continued into the 21st century. Two 'senior' women in the ETA, for example, are thought to have been behind a recent terrorist attack (Tremlett 2009).

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East Turkestan Islamic Movement/Turkestan Islamic Party (ETIM/TIP), China

Women carried out a handful of front-line attacks for the ETIM. There are at least three reports of female suicide bombers, including the 2008 attempted bombing of a China Southern airplane; the same year two women perpetrated a dozen bombings and then one committed suicide to avoid capture; and female suicide bombers carried out a 2009 attack in Pakistan and attempted to bring down an airplane (Reed and Raschke 2010). Women were also visible at ETIM training facilities, and their participation was publicized. A one-minute video circulated by the group “shows five burka-clad women training with pistols, assault and sniper rifles, machine guns, and grenade launchers. A male trainer is seen directing the women” (Roggio 2013, n.p).

As China’s abuses against the Uigher population grew more extreme, “several thousand Uighur men, women and children” fled to join the organization, now called the Turkestan Islamic Party (TIP) (Shih 2017, n.p). The TIP was reportedly “calling up Muslim women” by “producing highly individualized propaganda targeting them” (Shaoying 2015, n.p). The group’s propaganda stressed women’s role in marrying male jihadists and raising their children to grow the Muslim community (Ibid).

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Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), Mexico

Women have participated in the Zapatistas since the movement’s inception, when women led the first uprising (Gonzalez-Perez 2006; Khasnabish 2015). An estimated 30% of fighters were women in the 1990s, as was half of the organization’s support base (Kampwirth 2002). Women reportedly “form the most active group within the EZLN, perhaps because “the indigenous women of Mexico are the most marginalized group in that country” (Gonzalez-Perez 2008, 44). A “significant proportion” of women “held commanding offices” (Kampwirth 2002, 26; Millan 2002). Women created “policy on women's social and economic rights” and “contributed to

negotiations with the Mexican government” (Gonzalez-Perez 2006, 323). Women participated in the EZLN’s Indigenous Clandestine Revolutionary Committee, the highest political organ, and the group’s General Command (Mora 1998; Collier 1999). Some women reached the highest level of military leadership, including Comandante Ramona, a well-known public face for the organization. According to Henck (2007, xx), María Gloria Benavides Guevara (a.k.a. Ana or Comandanta Elisa) “was one of the original six (and the only woman) who comprised the foco that went to Chiapas (November 1983) and called itself the EZLN.”

The timing of recruitment appears to have impacted women’s abilities to gain prominence within the organization. Franco (2009, 178) observes that

Women recruited into the EZLN before the 1994 uprising drew power from their claim to be ‘insurgentas’ (insurgent woman). Their participation and leadership in the January 1994 armed takeover of the Chiapas municipios reinforced their position and the comandantas Ramona, Ana Maria and Esther became powerful public speakers. They deliberately refused to be known by the supposedly comprehensive term, ‘insurgente’ (insurgent).

Women shared non-combat work with men; reports call this an “equal division of labor in the army” where men cook, clean, sew, and do other quality of life work (Khasnabish 2015, 75). Female EZLN members also work in communication and in other logistical work (Gonzalez-Perez 2008). As with many other cases, there are also reports of women considered ‘civilians’ doing auxiliary work for the rebel organization. This includes working on clandestine committees as spies and lookouts, feeding troops, sewing uniforms (Rovira 2000). Women’s organizations also played an important role in mobilizing community support for the EZLN and provided women with influence within the movement (Stephan 1995).

The EZLN’s first declaration included the Women’s Revolutionary Law, which notes: “In the just fight for the liberation of our people, the EZLN incorporates women into the revolutionary struggle, regardless of their race, creed, color or political affiliation, requiring only that they share the demands of the exploited people and that they commit to the laws and regulations of the revolution.”

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Armed Forces of the North (FAN), Chad

Azevedo and Nnadozie (1998) estimate that there were about 10 women associated with FAN in 1978.

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People's Armed Forces (FAP), Chad

Information about women's participation in FAP is limited. One resource suggests that there were roughly 50 women in the group between 1980-1982; 3 died in combat, while one went on to enjoy a degree of fame for her military abilities (Azevedo and Nnadozie 1998).

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Rebel Armed Forces (FAR), Guatemala

Women participated in the FAR, which later became part of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG). Luciak (2001, 27) writes:

In the early years of the Guatemalan guerilla movement, female participation was very limited. In 1962, says former guerilla Aura Marina Ariola, ‘the armed struggle was initiated with the organization of the first Rebel Armed Forces (FAR). In these [forces] a number of us women participated who also initiated our struggle for the liberation of women. Then we didn’t know it, but in a society as machista as the Guatemalan, we were true pioneers.’ This female participation, however, was largely restricted to the urban areas and involved support activities. URNG leader Juan Jose Hurtado has affirmed that during the 1960s, ‘the revolutionary movement of the time failed to fully incorporate women. In fact, there were almost no women combatants in the guerilla ranks.

Still, Hauge (2008, 306) interviews former female FAR fighters and notes that the group had some level of gender consciousness in its later years:

[...] the guerrilla organisation, FAR, actually came with a resolution in 1991, expressing that only a focus on the realisation of women’s rights could lead to a fundamental restructuring of society, one that would guarantee gender equity. This resolution became the basis of a later FAR document, produced in 1996, elaborating the group’s position on the gender dimension in a revolutionary language. Nothing similar happened in the other guerrilla organisations EGP, ORPA or PGT.

When discussing the EGP and FAR, Paz y Paz Bailey (2006, 95) notes that women were key in clandestine work and logistical support; women reportedly clandestinely transported documents in their clothes or “hidden in their braided hair.” She also notes that “approximately one-fourth of combatant forces in all organizations were women” and that women were leaders in these organizations (Ibid, 95). Men and women reportedly shared responsibility for cooking (Posocco 2014). There is one report regarding Nuestra Vox, described as “a group of women from the Rebel Armed Forces,” though it is not clear if this group was formed during or after war (Fung and Lavoie 2019, n.p).

Famously, labor activist and former Miss Guatemala Rogelia Cruz Martínez was affiliated with the FAR and was murdered by a death squad in retaliation. Surviving “FAR members revealed that Rogelia did participate in some direct way, using her appearance and class status to set up safe houses in wealthy residential neighborhoods [...] and driving luxury cars to transport papers and people for the FAR” (Treacy 2001, 45). Sanford (2000, 132) refers to Cruz Martínez as a “member of the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR) in the 1960s.” Other women report being “underground” FAR members (de Onis, 1970, n.p).

In her memoir, Mirna Paiz Cárcamo recalls her participation in the Frente Guerrillero Edgar Ibarra within the FAR, where she says she was the first woman to join. She writes that one of her first tasks was to train Clandestine Committee members and peasants at the front’s schools

(Cárcamo and Vázquez Olivera 2015). In the early days of the guerilla, she says, “our participation (that of women) was more of a camouflage, of ‘cover’ of the boys [...] and, sometimes, we did control tasks, check-ups [...] Personally, I was lucky enough to accompany [a male commander] several times in a car, to collect weapons, transfer companions from one house to another, etc. [translated from Spanish]” (Ibid, 118). Women also collected intel on police and army officials, passing these reports to combatants; hid weapons and documents; made purchases for the rebels, and hid fighters on the run (Ibid, Cárcamo and Vázquez Olivera 2015). Cárcamo and Vázquez Olivera (2015) calls women the front’s “social bases” [translated from Spanish] (162).

FAR women reportedly held leadership roles when the organization was part of the URNG (Hunter 2014).

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Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army (FARC-EP), Colombia

Women’s participation at all levels in the FARC is well-documented and widely publicized. At varying times, women composed between 20 and 50% of FARC members and participated in non-combat, front-line, and leadership roles (Gonzalez-Perez 2006; Bouvier 2016; Gutiérrez-Sanín and Franco 2017). FARC women report “their roles are equal to those of the men in FARC, performing guard duty, patrolling, gathering intelligence, fighting in combat, and serving as field commanders” (Cunningham 2003, 179). Gutiérrez-Sanín and Franco (2017, 775) summarize: “they consistently wielded weapons, participated in combat, and performed basically the same duties, routines, and drills as men in the camps. Active and demobilized FARC women stress the fact that the ground rules were the same for both sexes.”

Off the front-line, FARC women also worked as medics and seduced security forces to generate intelligence (Verdad Abierta 2015, n.p). Some jobs, such as nurses and radio operators, were primarily done by women (Gutiérrez-Sanín and Franco 2017). The FARC also relied on women recruiters; there are allegations that women were involved in recruiting child soldiers (Gottipati 2017).

Women also participated in command and political leadership. For example, “it was not that uncommon to see women as first or second officers of small units (12–26 combatants)” (Ibid, n.p). In some regions, 30-55% of commanders were women (Brittain 2010). However, reportedly no women were part of the Secretariat, the FARC’s main decision-making body, and only one became a Front Commander (around 250 total in the organization). Some observers and some female FARC members blame sexism and misogyny for limiting women’s access to the highest levels of leadership (Gutiérrez-Sanín and Franco 2017; Agencia EFE 2019). Indeed, the FARC restricted women’s access to political life - “in both the FARC and M-19, women’s involvement in armed struggle was conditioned on them not having children (which, in the FARC, was expressed as a forced contraception policy), or being willing to abandon their children with relatives” (Henshaw 2020, 9).

The FARC emphasizes gender-egalitarianism and women’s participation in their propaganda; however, mass mobilization of women into the FARC reflected not just the rebels’ ideological commitments, but also the organization’s efforts to “to absorb the totality of the life of its fighters and become a self-contained organization” (Gutiérrez- Sanín and Franco 2017 770-771). As Gutiérrez-Sanín and Franco (Ibid, 771) note: “the feminization of the FARC was a prerequisite, or at least a highly relevant condition, for the implementation of its people's army project, because it allowed the FARC to absorb the totality of the life of its fighters and become a self contained organization.”

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Armed Forces for the Federal Republic (FARF), Chad

Women's participation is not verified.

There are no explicit references to women's participation in the FARF, however Debos (2016) notes that women were involved in non-combat positions in a number of the southern rebel groups. She writes: "In the first half of the 1980s, the entire south was plunged into warfare. Entire villages fled into the bush. Young men and boys were quickly trained to use weapons, while the women and girls took care of the combatants and took over delicate operations such as intelligence" (Debos 2016, 61). Debos (2016, 12) notes of conflict in Chad in general:

As far as rebellions are concerned, the first rebellion of Chad, known as the Frolinat, did not enrol women as combatants, although there were a few exceptions. In the 1980s, the armed groups in the south relied on the work of the women who lived in the bush with the male combatants, but few women actually bore arms. As for more recent rebellions, few women were enlisted as combatants. Women are, however, active participants even when they do not wield a rifle. Many women lived in the rear bases of the rebellions or hid out in the bush and shared the daily lives of the fighters. They could then provide food, care, and information on enemy troop movements. Some of them were sexually exploited. In Chad, as in many other contexts, there is a 'sexual division of revolutionary labour.' The tasks assigned to women are undervalued; their role is rendered invisible. While men in arms are dependent on women both inside and outside the military, the contribution of women has not been acknowledged.

Moreover, the participation of women in the rebellion is often stigmatised. In the post-war period, they win scant reward for the part they played in the war. Armed violence is a practical occupation that is not just carried out by men; it is also viewed as essentially masculine.

Sources

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Chadian Armed Forces (FAT), Chad

According to Azevedo (2005), the FAT included a women's wing whose leader was implicated in a ritual involving burying sheep alive to control future events.

Sources

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Fatah, Palestine/Israel

According to Eggert (2018, 8), "the percentage of female fighters in Fatah was considerably lower than in the PFLP and probably similar to the numbers in Kataeb/LF," which she estimates as "2 to 7.5 percent." In the 1960s and 1970s, Fatah held training classes for women at a Fatah House in Jordan. The classes included "light-weapons training for women," and, as one former female participant concluded:

There were clashes [...] and we used to fight. I mean, I used to stand guard till morning. [...] Sometimes, when I would go to one of our brother fighters and tell him to give me the gun because it is time for my guard duty, he would find it very hard to give it to a sister. Afterwards, they passed beyond that complex and we became part of them (Kawar 1996, 43).

Kawar (Ibid) concludes that women fighters were a "true rarity" in that period, but "numerous Palestinian women eventually trained in the militia and took part in armed resistance." For example, in 1978, Dalal Mughrabi participated in an attack that killed 38 Israeli civilians along with herself and eight other militants.

Between 1965-1995, around 8% of attacks committed by women in Palestine that are attributable to an organization were committed by Fatah (Margolin 2012). Wafa Idris, the first Palestinian woman to perpetrate a suicide attack, was a participant in the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades (AMB) (Bloom 2007); AMB is a militant unit officially recognized as a Fatah wing. At least five other women attempted or perpetrated suicide attacks for AMB between 2002-2004 (Ponzanesi 2014). The CPOST data suggests that women perpetrated 4 of the 35 (11%) of bombings fully or partially attributed to AMB between 1974-2016.

A female Fatah militant who opened early training camps notes that the first camps training women had around 50 members (May Sayigh 2011). Some women in Fatah reported finding the organization too conservative when it came to women's roles. For example, Leila Khaled left Fatah to become a fighter in the PFLP. She concluded of women in Fatah:

Our sole function was fund-raising. We were not a part of the policy-making processes, but merely spectators or ticket agents in the temple of Fatah ... I began to press for answers ... I wanted to know what women could do beyond fund-raising? (quoted in Daly and Cragin 2009, 22).

Women participated in Fatah as logisticians, recruiters, mobilizers (Daly and Cragin 2009; Raghavan and Balasubramaniyan 2014). Women were also members of the organization's military scouts unit and were fundraisers, couriers, educators, and money smugglers (Parkinson 2013). Parkinson (2013) details how women associated with PLO factions kept the groups operating by running supply, information, and financial networks in 1980s Lebanon when security forces arrested men en masse. Quoting a Palestinian accountant involved in money smuggling in this period, Parkinson (Ibid, 426) notes: "[...] Women - organized women in Fatah - transferred every letter that underground cells in Beirut sent to each other to organize returning officers' movements."

In the 1960s and 1970s, Fatah women invested in women's vocational training and literacy (Kuwar 1996). They also opened education centers, healthcare, and recruiting centers within refugee camps:

We recruited a large number of women. This was in Fatah before the creation of the GUPW [General Union of Palestinian Women]. Then these centres merged with each other [...] when the GUPW was formed here in Amman we rented a building in Jabal al-Lweibdeh. Fatah paid the rent (May Sayigh 2011, quoted in *The Palestinian Revolution* 2016, 2-5).

In the 1980s, the Women's Committee for Social Work (WCSW) organized and mobilized for Fatah (Hiltermann 1991; Sharoni 1995). In the 1980s, the WCSW had thousands of members (Hiltermann 1991). Sabbagh (1998, 36) concludes that the WCSW was "by far the largest mainstream political group" of the faction-supportive women's committees and is the one most closely tied to a militant organization.

Fatah women, including those who worked as smugglers and in the militia, also participated in the PLO's General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW), the central and most powerful women's organization associated with the PLO (Kuwar 1996; Parkinson 2013). Peteet (1992) and Kawar (1993, 63) contend that from the 1970s through the 1990s, Fatah women "dominated" the GUPW.

According to Kawar (1996), there are top-ranking women in each PLO faction, including distinct women's groups in the PFLP and Fatah. In 1996, women made up "5 percent of the members of the Central Committee of Fatah movement" (Jabali 2009, 6). In 2016, 11 out of 128 delegates were women (~9%) on Fatah's Revolutionary Council (Høigilt 2016). Fatah women were also advisors to Yasser Arafat and international ambassadors (Kuwar 1996). Still, Fatah activists report disillusionment with the organization's approach to women and women's rights (Peteet 1992; Høigilt 2016).

Women also held leadership roles in Fatah's military wing, the highest rank of which, for women in the early 1990s, was major (Kawar 1996).

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Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), Rwanda

Women participated in the FDLR in non-combat roles, and sometimes in fighting roles. One report characterizes the "absence of women in the FLDR" as "striking" (Omaar n.d., 34). Linke (2018, 1) similarly writes that:

The demobilization statistics of the United Nations (UN), the Rwandan Government, and the World Bank seem to confirm the finding that women were nearly absent among FDLR combatants. Since the founding of FDLR in 2000, the Rwandan Demobilization and Reintegration Program (RDRP) implemented by the Rwandan Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (RDRC) has demobilized 85 women and 11,077 men ex-FDLR combatants [...] With 0.77 percent, the rate of female demobilized FDLR combatants is the lowest in the region.

Linke (Ibid, 44) goes on to assert that "women were highly under-represented in all parts of the political and military organization of FDLR, and especially the leadership," and that "accounts of the percentage of women combatants in ALiR/FDLR in the year 2000 range between 1-2 percent and 10 percent." Hedlund (2017, 119) interviewed male combatants in the FDLR who reported that "women could be fighters if they wanted to, but that most women and girls were not willing to carry weapons or to participate in the conflict. Some women also claimed that it was the responsibility of the men to protect the women and children from enemy groups."

Officially, women in the FDLR with children were not allowed to fight, though "unmarried women with children 'kept participating in all the soldiers' activities'" (Linke 2018, 33-34). Female members of the FDLR report being victims of sexual violence by other members of the group (Rwanda Demobilization and Integration Commission 2016, 12).

Women took on a variety of auxiliary roles, such as "nursing, social services, liaison, and reconnaissance," as well as acting as porters, buying gold, selling beer and drugs (Linke 2018, 44-45), cooking, cleaning, and "taking care of children" (Hedlund 2017, 120). A female ex-combatant reported that some women would spy for the FDLR specifically through sleeping with

enemy soldiers, known as “honey-trapping” (Linke 2018, 45). Women also acted as “prophets” and “spirit mediums,” boosting combatant morale and encouraging discipline (Linke 2018, 46).

Women sometimes married FDLR soldiers for protection from sexual assault by other armed groups (Linke 2018). Women interviewed by Hedlund (2017, 121) complained that “they had no choice but to remain in the camp” because there were “no other options.” Women were further sometimes “forcibly recruited” into the FDLR (Hedlund 2017, 122), though Hedlund (2017, 123) stresses that many women joined the FDLR willingly and felt committed to the group.

There appear to be a handful of women involved in the FDLR as leaders, including in positions of leadership in the gender commission (Omar 2008).

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Democratic Front for Renewal (FDR), Niger

Women's participation is not verified.

Invisible Commandos (FDSI-CI), Côte d'Ivoire

There is very little information about women’s affiliations with this group. Though there are reports of women protesting against the incumbent Gbagbo (aligning them politically with the goals of the FDSI-CI and perhaps even following their orders to protest), it is not clear if they are

associated with the group (Frindéthié 2016). There is a report of women cooking for the Commandos, which we consider a non-combat contribution. (Lomax 2014).

Sources

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Arab Islamic Front of Azawad (FIAA), Mali

Women's participation is not verified.

There are reports that women contributed to the conflict in Northern Mali and among the Tuareg, but their activities are rarely attributed to a specific organization. Klute (2011, n.p), for example, reports that “the few cases of people I recorded, who refused ‘to choose sides,’ were not actually sanctioned by killing, as in many other contemporary small wars, but by avoidance, and, more importantly, through the disapproval of women. In fact, some Tuareg women actually left their husbands to follow rebel lovers, if they felt that their spouses adopted an in-between-position.”

Sources

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First Liberation Army, Chad

Women's participation is not verified.

Air and Azawad Liberation Front (FLAA), Niger

Women's participation is not verified.

Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda-Armed Forces of Cabinda (FLEC-FAC), Angola

There is limited information about women's participation in FLEC-FAC. Available information suggests that women contributed to auxiliary tasks, rather than fighting. Ngangoue (1996, n.p) notes that the rebels' "fighters are men and teenage boys [...] women contribute in other ways." Women played an important role in raising support for the rebels among other women; Ngangoue (1996, n.p) reports the existence of "a group of about 50 women who have taken on the task of getting other women to support the rebel group's struggle." She also notes that women taught children in rebel-controlled areas. Additionally, women provided food to combatants (Ngangoue 1996; Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 1999).

Sources

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Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda-Renewed (FLEC-R), Angola

Women's participation is not verified.

There are reports of girl soldiers comprising 30-40% of the population of child soldiers in the organization (Jaffrè 1999). There are reports that women contributed to the larger FLEC movement, but not this faction; for example Mougoué (2018, 348) notes that "a 1996 press release reveals that although most FLEC fighters are men and teenage boys, women also actively participate." Women in the broader FLEC movement were reportedly involved in the mobilization of citizens to support the cause and to provide food to the fighters (Ngangoue 1996).

Sources

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Congolese National Liberation Front (FLNC), DR Congo (Zaire)

FLNC documents and secondary accounts suggest that women participated in the organization in combat and non-combat roles. According to a FREEDOM RISING! Africa Solidarity Committee pamphlet published during FLNC’s operations, “the FLNC takes the struggle of women so seriously that in 1978 they sent the Tigress Women’s Battalion, which appears to be an all-female armed unit, to attack Kinshasa, the capital. They wanted to show the women and men of the Congo, and the world, what women can do.” A demonstration organized for the “International Day in Solidarity with the Congolese Liberation Struggle” includes a photograph purportedly of the Tigress Battalion (John Brown Anti-Klan Committee and All African People's Revolutionary Party n.d., n.p)

When the FLNC merged with the Congolese National Movement Lumumba (MNC-L), a representative noted that FLNC women “join[ed] the paramilitary,” and worked as clandestine medics and medicine-related couriers (Salit 1987, n.p). Similarly, the FLNC operated three mass organizations, including the Organization of Congolese Women. According to a 1977 FLNC statement (n.p), the organization’s task was to “sensitize the Congolese masses to the political problems of our country.” Consequently, women performed critical mobilization work for the rebellion.

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Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen (FLOSY), Yemen

Women in Southern Yemen played an “important role in their country’s fight for liberation from British colonial rule” in the 1960s (Holt 2020, 7). One woman, a former FLOSY participant, recalled that “there were girls, women, men of Aden, all of us” (Ibid, 7). Al-Ashtal (2012, 209) concludes that women participated in FLOSY in “far fewer numbers” than in other, competing revolutionary groups, particularly the National Liberation Front (NLF). Those who joined were often encouraged by active male relatives in the movement (Ibid).

Women in FLOSY took on non-combat roles; they “contributed by distributing publications, carrying food and ammunition, handling administrative work at FLOSY’s offices, and occasionally giving political talks” (al-Ashtal 2012, 209; al-‘Alis 2005). Reportedly, women’s groups in Aden contributed to the revolutionary struggle through mobilization and outreach, though it is not clear if they were affiliated with FLOSY or the NLF (Stork 1973). Similarly, Elkhamri et. al. (2005) concluded that women most often smuggled weapons because British rules of engagement prevented British soldiers from searching women. Women reportedly left grenades or firearms for men at attack sites (Ibid).

FLOSY women faced obstacles to their political involvement because of the conservative social traditions of the time (al-Ashtal 2012). According to Farie (2010, n.p),

The National Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen was the first political organization allowing the Yemeni woman to participate in the armed struggle where the number of women affiliated to the organization amounted to about 200 women during the sixties of the last century... In the battle fields in defence of the homeland the Yemeni woman were given several tasks, among them preparing and distribution of leaflets, broadcasting news on the guerrilla operations and instigation on staging demonstrations, hiding weapons and carrying them through checkpoints of the British forces in addition to providing shelter to those wanted by the colonialists.”

Sources

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National Front for the Liberation of Haiti (FLRN), Haiti

Women's participation is not verified.

Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), El Salvador

Women participated in varying ways and to varying degrees in the organizations that composed the FMLN. Overall, women composed approximately 30% of the FMLN and 20% of military leadership (Montgomery 1995; Viterna 2013). On the front-line, most if not all organizations had senior women commanders; there was at least one all-female battalion (Montgomery 1995). There were also non-combatant women's groups, organized by some of the constituent rebel factions in the FMLN; these women's groups went on to play important roles in the post-conflict environment, where they articulated women's political interests (Luciak 1999). These organizations were important sites of consciousness development; Roggeveen (2003, 27) notes that "women were able to discuss collectively, for the first time, issues surrounding womanhood in the FMLN and to formulate criticism and suggestions."

During the conflict, "the FMLN saw women's organizations as political assets - a chance to get international aid from organizations wishing to further the women's movement, an issue that would re-emerge in a struggle for autonomy at the conclusion of the civil war" (Roggeveen 2003, 26). Luciak (2001, 14) notes a divide between the female leaders and the efforts to organize women's groups: "In general, female FMLN commanders did not focus their energy or thoughts on women's rights... Those female leaders who were outspoken in their support for women's rights tended to have spent some time outside of the country, where they were exposed to and influenced by the international dialogue on women's rights."

Women participated on the front-line as well as in critical auxiliary roles. It is estimated that 60% of support roles were filled by women (Vázquez 1997). For example, recruitment was almost entirely delegated to women FMLN members (Viterna 2013, Shayne 1999). Women worked as cooks, logisticians, receptionists, munitions assemblers, medics – including combat medics – radio operators, couriers, and expansion workers – propagandists, mobilizers, spies, and recruiters (Ibid; Viterna 2014). Viterna (2013, 132) concludes that women were "significantly more likely to fill support roles" than be full-time combatants. Some women who

worked in the lowest prestige jobs – like cooking – were often considered civilians attached to the camp rather than FMLN members.

The FMLN factions included women’s political associations (Montgomery 1995). High-ranking FMLN women participated in the peace negotiations that ended the armed conflict (Silber and Viterna 2009).

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New Forces/ Forces Nouvelle (FN/FRCI), Côte d'Ivoire

FN/FRCI was an umbrella group composed of MJP, MPCFI, and MPIGO, the main rebel groups that participated in the war. Angela (2011, 18) concludes: “Women were said to be part of the ‘Forces Nouvelle’ (FN) rebelles who controlled half of the northern part of the country in 2002, after having attempted to overthrow President Laurent Gbagbo [...] women were estimated to make up a thousand.”

The FN’s armed wing, the Forces Armées des Forces Nouvelles (FAFN), “were supported by young men and women from Abidjan of Northern origin” (Diallo 2017, n.p). Some FAFN women referred to themselves as ‘the Amazons.’ In an interview, a French military official concludes that “many” combatants who participated in DDR, “especially” from the FAFN, were women: 6,000 of the 74,000 ex-combatants were women, or 8% (Miran-Guyon 2017, 280). Diallo (2017, n.p) similarly concludes that “According to the Authority for Disarmament,

Demobilization and Reintegration (ADDR), women made up approximately 10% of the total number of Ivorian fighters.”

But Diallo (2017, n.p) further notes of her interviews with women who participated:

As opposed to men, however, all the women who were interviewed stated that they had primarily occupied auxiliary positions: as cooks and nurses, or hiding weapons and food and smuggling them between the loyalist and the rebel zones. None of them had held a command position, and only one stated that she had handled weapons and taken part in clashes—an Amazon whose companions dubbed her “the warrior”. Such statements should, however, be taken cautiously, since these women, by characterizing themselves as “auxiliaries”, may have been seeking to avoid becoming implicated in potential crimes, and/or falling prey to reprisals. This may also have been a tactic that enabled them to remain within the role ascribed them by society.

Women in FN also participated off of the front-line as guards, spies and intelligence officers, and weapons couriers (Kra 2014).

Badmus (2009, 832) concludes of women in these groups (without specifically naming them):

Aside from being forcibly conscripted, other group of women voluntarily joined the armed factions and fight to protect themselves and other women from rape and murder, and as a survival strategy. To this group of women, becoming a soldier was a matter of kill or to be killed. Also in this category, others voluntarily chose to go into battlefield for ideological reason [sic] and to prove their equality with males.

Sources

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National Liberation Front of Angola (FNLA), Angola

Women's participation is not verified.

According to reports, one difference between the FNLA, MPLA, and UNITA was that the FNLA did not incorporate women into the army (Temudo and Talhinhas 2019). Other reports claim that civilian women participated in “drills and marching practice” in FNLA controlled territory (Claassen 2016, 61).

Some sources vaguely imply women’s participation in the nationalist struggle, of which the FNLA was a part. These references suggest that women served as combatants, worked as porters and nurses, provided food, and engaged in community mobilization and outreach (Adesina 2020). For example, though specific groups are not named, Makana (2017, 69) notes that “women who desired to enter and participate in the liberation struggles as combatants had to find some quasi-military roles such as transporting guns, engaging in espionage, and working in other clandestine activities. Their roles were, therefore, multidimensional and often contradictory as many were involved in various aspects of armed struggle as perpetrators, actors, porters, spies, bodyguards, and human shields.”

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Chadian National Front (FNT), Chad

Women’s participation is not verified.

Farabundo Martí Liberation People's Forces (FPL), El Salvador

The Farabundo Martí Liberation People's Forces (FPL), ultimately composed part of the FMLN. Women made up an estimated 34% of the group, with “hundreds” working as political cadres (Luciak 2001, 239). Women were combatants in both urban and rural areas (Viterna 2013). Women in the FPL reportedly had “more politicized beginnings” than those in other FMLN units (Ibid, 253).

Off of the front-lines, “women had the role of cooks, as radio operators, working hospitals, doing a lot of work with the population, and doing a lot of running from one place to another. Many women died when they left to deliver messages to the cities” (Shayne 2004, 36). One former female fighter notes that women “for the most part” took on non-combat roles, including communication logistics, mobilization, and healthcare work (Shayne 1999, 94).

Women in the FPL produced propaganda and handed out flyers; they were teachers, medics, cooks, munitions experts, supply couriers (Viterna 2013). A woman reportedly “built the ranks of urban-based FPL groups that gathered intelligence and materials in San Salvador” (Sierra Becerra 2017, 4).

Women held leadership positions in the FPL, including in their Political Commission (Shayne 1999). They were military trainers, squadron leaders, hospital directors, and headed FMLN National Communications (Sierra Becerra 2017; Viterna 2013). The group also organized women’s associations for mass mobilization, including those composed of peasant women (Viterna 2013). This included the Asociación de Mujeres de El Salvador (AMES) - and the Movimiento de Mujeres “Mélida Anaya Montes,” a political group named for the FPL’s second in command (Ibid). The MEM “declared its independence from the FPL but many members continued to work within the party structure” (Sierra Becerra 2017, 22).

The AMES

organized women to participate within the councils and worked to make the revolution address the needs and aspirations of women. In coordination with the councils, the Association collectivized food production, shaped the agenda of health clinics to address gynecological health, and created childcare centers that enabled the political participation of women and taught children anti-sexist values. The Association even intervened in domestic disputes, denouncing men who opposed the political participation of their wives and daughters. Its motto proclaimed, winning the rights of women and children, we will build the new society (Ibid, 4).

Once the FPL joined with others to form the FMLN, women could be both militants and MAM participants at the same time (Shayne 1999).

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Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR), Rwanda

Today, Rwanda is known for having the world's highest percentage of women in parliament and promoting women in leadership roles (Hogg 2009). However, the inclusion of women can be traced back to the RPF during the Rwandan Civil War when the group was not the country's governing party. Some women did participate in combat -- Spens-Black (2016, 137) interviewed women fighters who left home to fight with the RPF; she noted that "several hundred women" fought on the front-lines. Demobilization records estimate that women constituted just 1% of the Rwandan Patriotic Army's (RPA, the RPF's armed wing) forces during the civil war (Rwanda Demobilization and Integration Commission 2015), though this is likely under-reported. Rose Kabuye, a female combatant and officer for the RPF during the war, went on to hold a position in Paul Kagame's government. Kabuye was part of a group accused of carrying out the assassination of Hutu president Habyarimana (McGeal 2008).

Spens-Black (2016, 140) explains that while the RPF did champion women's equality, there was nonetheless some organizational resistance to women's inclusion in the group, and in dangerous situations, "the men ultimately still felt a duty to protect the women." The RPF created a special unit for women called the "Yankee Division" which operated "behind the lines;" women were pulled back from the front-lines to participate in this unit, which was intended to protect women from combat dangers (Spens-Black 2016, 139).

According to Spens-Black (2016, 138), "larger numbers of RPF women served in the war zone as nurses or in supporting functions such as welfare or administration," and women worked as radio operators, medics, and secretaries. Some women were involved in "financing, developing strategy, and gathering intelligence" (Holmes 2018, 234). Other women joined the "political cadre," which recruited and mobilized supporters (Spens-Black 2016, 137). Women and men reportedly did the same chores as well as military training (Ibid).

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Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo), Mozambique

Frelimo was resistant to recruiting women at first, but the group eventually allowed women and girls and operated a women's wing, the Destacamento Feminino (DF). Early female recruits reportedly became "founding members" of the Women's Detachment (Kamei 2018, n.p).

Evidence of women's participation in armed combat is mixed. The DF offered military training (Coulter, Persson, and Utas 2008; Katto 2014). Arnfred (2010, 113) calls the level of women's involvement "massive." However, Selerud (2014, 19-20) argues that "although militarily trained and sometimes involved in direct combat, women were [...] mainly used for mobilizing and social services tasks." Similarly, Katto (2020, 2) concludes, "Receiving the same military training as their male comrades, the female recruits worked mostly in the transportation of war material and in Frelimo's bush hospitals and nurseries. To a varying degree, they engaged in direct combat with male soldiers." Indeed, former DF members interviewed by Katto (2014) noted that they had not participated in combat despite being trained. Still, Katto (Ibid, 540) estimates that "hundreds" of women and girls participated in Frelimo.

Gonzalez-Perez (2021) argues that Frelimo had an official policy against women in combat. In contrast, Geiles (2004) contends that Frelimo once expelled a group of cadres because they did not support women's participation in armed struggle.

In 1972, Frelimo created the Organization of Mozambican Women (OMM) to integrate women into non-combat roles. The DF "played a central role in [this] organization, educating their comrade sisters in Frelimo revolutionary ideology" (West 2000, 185). Despite Frelimo's orientation towards gender egalitarianism, it is important to recall that "the OMM is an arm of the Party, and the movements of the arm are decided in the head, in the all male leadership of Frelimo. The policy of OMM is the policy of Frelimo" (Arnfred 1988, 11).

DF women and girls participated in non-combat roles, including as weapons experts, couriers, porters, military trainers, intelligence recruits, spies, recruiters, educators, farmers, nurses, and medics (West 2000; McKay and Mazurana 2004; Coulter, Persson, and Utas 2008; Arnfred 2010). Women played central roles in mobilizing the population to support Frelimo (Katto 2020).

Frelimo's leadership was primarily composed of men, as officials prohibited women from high-ranking positions (Selerud 2014; Gonzalez-Perez 2021). Some former combatants speculate that when the group began training women, Frelimo leadership was unaware of the extent to which women were participating (Katto 2014). Still, women did hold commander-level positions, specifically within the DF and were provincial representatives of the OMM (Gonzalez-Perez 2021; Arnfred 2010). Women were also present on the organization's Central Committee (Sheldon 1990).

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Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Fretilin), Indonesia/Timor Leste

Women were significantly involved in Fretilin, primarily through non-combat participation and the women's wing of the group - the Popular Organization of Timorese Women (Organisação Popular da Mulher Timorese, OPMT) (Cristalis, Scott, and Andade 2005; Mason 2005; Niner 2013).

Sources suggest that women participated in front-line combat situationally. For example, according to Capizzi, Hill, and Macey (1976, 391), the women's wing "helped develop a women's army unit of one hundred under a woman commander fighting at the front." Similarly, Pinto and Jardine (1997, 47) contend that "many women guerillas died fighting in the front-lines." Da Silva (2011) confirms this in interviews with former female Fretilin combatants and notes that the group trained women in two military camps. Niner (2013, 236), however, argues that while women were "occasional combatants" but "they were not acknowledged as soldiers." She concludes that "women whose main duties may have officially been logistics and support often switched to combat duties when conditions warranted" (Ibid, 238).

Women's contributions in non-combat roles were immense and substantive. Cristalis, Scott, and Andade (2005, 25) call women an "invaluable support network for the armed resistance." Indeed, as part of mass mobilization 'revolutionary brigades' before the OPMT was established, women held literacy classes, conducted cultural campaigns, and supported agricultural cooperatives (Cristalis, Scott, and Andade 2005).

OPMT conducted dual campaigns, supporting the armed struggle and promoting women's emancipation and equality in Timorese society. They were armed guards, educators, health workers, provided logistical support, gave political speeches, couriered messages, goods and weapons, cared for children, and grew and distributed food (Franks 1996; Cristalis, Scott, and Andade 2005; Mason 2005; Kent and Kinsella 2015). Women were also uniquely involved in intelligence work: women reportedly comprised "more than 60% of the clandestine front" (Wigglesworth 2013, 571). In fact, former female combatants suggest that the OPMT carried out all clandestine operations for Fretilin: "The women were the ones who kept contact with clandestine groups. There were no other organisations to do this, only the OPMT" (Franks 1996, 158).

Three of the 50 central committee leaders in Fretilin's early 1970s were women, though they reportedly all held junior positions (Cristalis, Scott, and Andade 2005). But "although women might have been consulted in the decision-making process, it was the men who took the decisions. There were no women in the command structure of the army, and this was mirrored in the political hierarchy" (Ibid, 31). Women did compose the political leadership of the OPMT (Franks 1996), and also reportedly took on lower-level military leadership roles like unit commanders (Da Silva 2011).

Indonesian soldiers tortured and killed several of the OPMT's leaders and founders during the war (Cristalis, Scott, and Andade 2005).

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Frolina, Burundi

Women's participation is not verified.

National Liberation Front of Chad (Frolinat), Chad

Debos (2016, 12) concludes that Frolinat "did not enroll women as combatants, although there were a few exceptions." She notes that few women were on the front-line "in or any of the rebel groups fighting in Northern Chad in this period" and that "while few women took up arms, they supported the combatants and encouraged them to join the rebellion" (Debos 2016, 51).

Hadjé Halimé, a Chadian revolutionary and activist, joined Frolinat in a non-combat role. She was reportedly the president of Frolinat's women's faction. When the group was based in Libya

she educated girls and provided military training to some women as well (Akyeampong and Gates 2012; Sheldon 2016).

Sources

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Front for National Salvation (Fronasa), Uganda

Fronasa briefly recruited front-line women. Fronasa leader and later President of Uganda Museveni claimed in a 2018 speech:

When fighting Idi Amin in 1979, we recruited women in Fronasa but our partners did not agree with us and thought that women should be in the kitchen preparing meals for the soldiers (The Independent 2018, n.p).

Museveni similarly wrote on Twitter: “[...] in 1979, our women soldiers in FRONASA were rejected by our partners and we agreed to disband the women units. However in the 1980s because we were fully in-charge [when the group became the Popular Resistance Army and later the National Resistance Army], we actively recruited women and we let them participate in the struggle” (Museveni 2018, n.p).

In his book, Museveni (2020, 320) writes, “I told you of our struggles with the UPC when they were blocking the FRONASA girls from joining the army. You must have seen how the FRONASA women led by Joy Mirembe, wreaked revenge [...] by vigorously assisting the men to defeat those groups.”

Haji Ahmed Kateregga Musaazi’s (2019, n.p) article about women in Ugandan armed forces similarly concludes that “there was an attempt to recruit women in 1979 especially by FRONASA faction under Museveni, but almost all of them were dismissed or not married by some officers and men.”

Kainerugaba (2010, 63) suggests that “FRONASA men and women” were part of the official disarmament process.

Sources

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Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (FRUD), Djibouti

There is very little available information about women’s participation in FRUD, though there is broader information about Afar women joining the struggle (FRUD largely represented people some from the Afar population during the Afar insurgency). One source notes: “Afar youths including females were joining the front” (Yasin 2010, 119). It is unclear what roles women occupied.

Sources

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Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy –Ahmed Dini faction/Combatant (FRUD - AD/FRUD-C), Djibouti

Women's participation is not verified.

Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), Nicaragua

Women’s participation on and off the front-line in the FSLN is well documented. Luciak (2001) characterizes women’s participation in the FSLN as being composed of three phases. Between

1961 through the early 1970s, women participated in combat only in “exceptional cases;” in the second phase (between 1973-1977), women joined in support roles in large numbers; in the third phase (between 1977-1979), there was a “massive incorporation of women,” including in combat roles (Luciak 2001, 21).

The women who were early participants in the FSLN’s armed combat roles understood the significance of their participation in these positions. Gladys Báez, the first woman to serve as an armed combatant full-time in the FSLN, stated: “In the first place, to accept the presence of women was a new experience for the men. The challenge in my case was that it depended on me whether more women would be brought to the mountains. I understood this clearly, that it depended on me. The *compañeros* were accustomed to see us arrive as messengers, to see us engaged in logistical support, but our full-time permanent presence, this was a different story” (Luciak 2001, 17).

Egalitarianism was key to the FSLN’s female recruitment strategy, and women’s liberation was a central tenet in organizational messaging (Gonzalez-Perez 2008). Women comprised an estimated 30% of FSLN combatants, and “many more” participated in auxiliary roles (Kampwirth 2001, 814). Female members also worked in the ‘rear guard’ with ‘base communities’ as mobilizers and performed ‘semi-clandestine’ non-combat labor (Ibid). This included working as spies (Gonzalez-Perez 2006) and as messengers (Heaton 2017). One particularly striking account underlines how the rebels exploited gender norms to their advantage: “Realizing that ‘maybe the only part of the woman that they [the National Guard] would not search was the vagina ... we made the messages in the form of a tampon. Then the task was to explain to a peasant woman who had never used a sanitary napkin what a tampon was, teach her how it was introduced and how it should be taken out, and how to make this tampon safe so that it would not be destroyed” (Luciak 2001, 20).

Many women were recruited through the FSLN’s women’s wing the Luisa Amanda Espinoza Association of Nicaraguan Women (AMNLAE) (originally called the Association of Women Confronting the National Problem (Sherman 1983). After the war, AMNLAE served as an effective community mobilization organization -and even continued to encourage recruitment of women into the armed forces, which eventually produced all-female infantry units (though this was after the end of the war, in which men and women reportedly trained and fought together (Chinchilla 1990). AMNLAE was not necessarily a ‘feminist’ organization; in fact in the post-conflict period it was “first and foremost a Sandinista organization. The needs of the population as a whole - such as improving health care and nutrition and keeping the economy moving - take clear priority over adjusting relations between women and men” (Sherman 1983, 8).

Evidence suggests that women in combat roles also took on non-combat positions; men and women performed many roles equally (Gonzalez-Perez 2006).

Women in support positions often moved into battle and command roles; Gonzalez-Perez (2006, 320) contends that women sometimes filled “as many as half of the leadership posts in battle.” Women commanded small units and full battalions (Reif 1986). The FSLN’s western front’s general command was led by Dora Maria Tellez and “of its seven members, five were women”

(Luciak 2001, 21). This general command was responsible for “the first major military victory of the guerilla forces - the liberation of the provincial capital of Leon” (Luciak 2001, 21). More than a third of FSLN leaders were women when the group overthrew the Somoza regime in 1979 (Heaton 2017).

Sources

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United Front for Democratic Change (FUCD), Chad

The United Front for Democratic Change was later known as the United Front for Change (FUC); UCDP data considers it to be one group under the former name. Through her fieldwork interviewing FUC members, Debos (2016, 13) concludes that the organization was the “the only armed group [in Chad] in recent history to have recruited women – women who played a direct part in the fighting.” She also notes that at least one female former “commandant” was assassinated after the conflict (Ibid). The group reportedly had a separate group of girls, which was led by a female commander. These girls (no ages provided) reportedly “did many things, including singing and chanting to encourage the fighters” (Amnesty International 2011, 26). Amnesty International notes that many of the girls joined the organization after being raped or for avoiding sexual violence at the hands of Zaghawa combatants (Ibid, 19).

Sources

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Former Ugandan National Army (FUNA), Uganda

Women's participation is not verified.

National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia (FUNCINPEC), Cambodia

Women's participation is not verified.

Free Aceh Movement (GAM), Indonesia

The GAM operated a women's military wing, called Inong Balee Troops (Pasukan Inong Balee, PIB, Askariyah/Askarimah, or Tjoet Njak Dien Troops) (Schulze 2003; Rahmawati et. al. 2018). Estimates of women's participation vary widely. According to Rahmawati and colleagues (2018, 238), "women, girls, and widows, some 2,000 to 2,500 in number, joined PIB and fought in the forests and the mountains. For several months, they received military training and ideological reinforcement as they sought to gain Aceh's independence. They courageously, without any fear, became involved as combatants."

The authors suggest that armed women were "integral to GAM's fight against the Indonesian government" and concludes that "[i]f GAM's had total membership of between 20,000 and 30,000 fighters, 10% were thus women" (Ibid, 239-240). The Department for International Development (Reliefweb 2009) similarly puts the number of women in GAM in the "thousands." A World Bank report (2009) estimates that approximately 3800 women were part of GAM, of which 600-700 were 'front-line' fighters in GAM.

However, Schulze (2003, 255) argues that women probably numbered "no more than 100" and that their primary roles were intelligence gathering and reconnaissance. Clavé-Çelik (2014, 295) too described women's participation as "very limited" with "50-100" women. Wood (2019, 49) also concludes that while "GAM had provided formal military training to hundreds" of women, "it generally excluded them from participating in combat." In some regions, women's

participation in the PIB was formalized as the GAM actively recruited female fighters, while in other regions it was more spontaneous (Clavé-Çelik 2014).

Women contributed to GAM in auxiliary roles, as logisticians and intelligence workers, nurses, weapons and goods couriers, weapons fixers, educators, recruiters, and they planted bombs and booby traps (Schulze 2003; Reliefweb 2009; Clavé-Çelik 2014; Rahmawati et. al. 2018). Women also participated in diplomatic missions and international mobilization, including propaganda:

Hence in 2001, two young inong balèë [female fighters] of 17 and 19 years old participated in the Geneva Call against anti-personnel mines. They were sent by Muzakir Manaf, commandant of the Acehese army, on the request of Nur Djuli who explained that during the conflict he considered women's inclusion in the army as a strategy for campaigning for the Acehese cause abroad (Clavé-Çelik 2014, 301).

PIB women were commanders in the GAM (Reliefweb 2009; Clavé-Çelik 2014), and they were in charge of PIB camps (Clavé-Çelik 2014). Mazurana (2004, 33) contends that GAM women “are or were commanders of battalions, fighting units, or heads of military operations.” They are also “senior intelligence and communication officers” (Ibid, 34).

Sources

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Armed Islamic Group of Algeria (GIA), Algeria

Women's participation is not verified.

Garó National Liberation Army (GNLA), India

The GNLA is a relatively small organization -- membership estimates range from 70-200 (South Asia Terrorism Portal n.d., Telegraph 2012). In 2012, security forces concluded that women or girls were doing non-combat work for the group but were not involved as fighters (Telegraph 2012). They also suggested that many GNLA members were underage. Another report contends that the group has “a few women cadres” (Hindustan Times 2011, n.p), while Roul (2014, 40) notes that the GNLA is among a number of rebel groups that “have lured young boys and girls to their ranks and file.”

At least six women were arrested for collaboration with the organization, including those arrested with weapons, ammunition, and GNLF documents. Another was arrested for allegedly supplying arms to fighters (South Asia Terrorism Portal n.d).

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God’s Army, Myanmar (Burma)

There is relatively little information about God’s Army; much of the available sources underline that it was led by two child soldiers. Within some of this reporting, however, we do see women’s presence. For example, when God’s Army was defeated, according to reports, people were “separated into groups of men, women and children;” however, because the group surrendered at a village, it is unclear if this is a reference to rebels or civilians (Peck 2013, n.p). When the twin leaders themselves surrendered, they were reportedly with 12 followers, three of which were female (and two of which were girls) (Washington Post 2001). Furthermore, a report regarding an attack on a God’s Army base suggests that women were among those killed (Irish Times 2000).

Sources

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Transitional Government of National Unity (GUNT), Chad

Women's participation is not verified.

Hamas, Palestine/Israel

Hamas women almost exclusively participate in non-combat roles, though a few women suicide bombers have committed attacks for the organization. For example, in 2004, Reem al Riyashi carried out a suicide attack for Hamas – the group circulated martyr posters and a video of her discussing the attack. Hamas reportedly founded a women's military unit the following year in her honor (MEMRI 2005). Chicago Project on Security and Threats (2019) data identifies two female suicide bombers acting on behalf of Hamas or in Hamas-coordinated attacks, but Margolin (2016, 923) concludes that Hamas exhibits an "organizational reluctance to incorporate women."

Women participate most extensively in non-combat positions and are "active as logisticians and facilitators" (de Leede 2018, 7). In 2018, Israeli security forces arrested seven women in the West Bank for allegedly sending funds, messages, and instructions to Hamas fighters (Jahal 2018). Some analysts pushed back on these arrests, suggesting it was unlikely that the group, based in Gaza, would recruit women in the West Bank (Ibid). Hamas' police force also recruits women in Gaza, with approximately 60 women officers in 2008 (El-Khodary 2008).

A "large number" of women activists compose an important part of Hamas and there are women leaders in the movement (Jad 2014, 180). Jad (2010, n.p) contends that Hamas has benefited from the PLO's shift towards supporting negotiated peace, which turned Islamist women towards Hamas and resulted in "a large growth in the number of its female members." Women in Hamas play an "essential role...in terms of encouraging other women to support the movement or carrying out social tasks such as paying visits to citizens' houses and spreading Hamas' concepts among female workers and university students via the female wing of Hamas' student arm, the Islamic Bloc" (Amer 2015, n.p). Women compose around 20% of public servants working for Hamas (Associated Press 2013).

In the late 1990s, the group organized a women's political section. Jad (2011) found that eight members of the Consultative Council were women, constituting 15.3% of members. The political wing is officially separate from the militant wing (Jad 2011). The political wing operates an "impressive" Women's Action Department that is involved in education, cultural affairs, women's affairs, and political affairs (Jad 2011, 176). Hamas created a women's work committee in the 1980s, and since 1987 women have held senior positions (Amer 2015).

According to Jad (2011, 144), “the Women’s Action Department of Hamas has been able to integrate women, not into a separate section, but fully into its political organs, whether in the leadership or in its popular base.” The Women’s Department also helped the organization illustrate a new model of femininity: someone who “is highly educated, outspoken, *moltazemah* and modern” (Jad 2011, 180).

There is reportedly some ideological tension about what roles women should play in the organization. There has been some discussion of whether women can, ideologically, participate in *jihad* (Bloom 2013). Jad (2011, 195) reports that “inside the Party, women leaders rejected the assertion by Hamas leader al-Zahhar that their work should be ‘suitable for women's capabilities and characteristics’. They called for total equality in two respects: in their daily work in the Party and in their rejection of the claim that women are not equal to men in military activities.”

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Harakat-i Inqilab-i Islami-Yi Afghanistan, Afghanistan

There are some reports that women were involved in the Mujahideen in supportive roles; however, because their activities are not attributed to specific groups it makes it difficult to estimate how women contributed at the rebel-group level. In light of this problem, we code

women as participating in logistical support and in auxiliary roles, though we do not provide prevalence estimates for individual groups. As Dearing (2010, 1088) notes,

as participants of the anti-Soviet jihad, most women played supportive roles to mujahideen. There was an important role for non-combatants to fill, to include political activity, writing and supporting front-line fighters. Women sheltered and hid mujahideen traveling through villages, stood watch in the evening as mujahideen slept. Women would tend to soldiers by cooking, cleaning clothes or dressing wounds. They would clean, oil and repair weapons. They would also serve as couriers, carrying weapons, radios, and supplies from safe havens to the front. They would even wash and care for the dead, preparing them for burial and often mother orphaned mujahideen children. It was also incumbent on women to carry out vengeance in accordance with tribal code, when no living or able man of the family could reclaim the family's honor. One woman during the anti-Soviet jihad, after seeing many in her village killed by Soviets, pleaded with her brothers to give her a bomb so that she could destroy a tank and become a shaheed, however they refused since the obligation for vengeance became the brothers' first.

Ahmadi and Lakani (2016, 5) similarly suggest that women were “mobilizers, sympathizers, logistic providers, informants, and preventers of violence.”

Ellis (2000, 46) conducted interviews with women working with the mujahideen in this period. One recalls:

There were women in every village to cook and clean for the Mujahideen... In Kabul, I would carry guns in my purse. I would deliver guns to other Mujahideen, our house was a safe house... Myself and two other women washed the clothes of the Mujahideen, we took an active part in the resistance in Afghanistan... There were three of us women who cooked for 600 men, we washed clothes for 600 men. During the night, we carried a gun and took our turn at standing watch... I was taught to fire a gun by my cousin, in case I was ever alone. We were allowed to clean and oil the guns, and to cook and clean the clothes for the Mujahideen.

Women also hid bullets for fighters (Ibid).

He also notes that “women have played an important inspirational role as purveyors of information in Afghanistan through artistic expression, particularly during times of crisis and in support of mujahideen” (Ibid, 1091). Fatima Gailani (the daughter of a leader of the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan) served as a spokesperson for the Mujahideen while living in exile in London in the 1970s (Skaine 2008).

Still women's participation in this movement remained limited. As Moghadam (2002, 24) noted, “unlike liberation, resistance, and guerrilla movements elsewhere, the Afghan Mujahideen never encouraged the active participation of women” and claimed that the group had no female spokespeople.

Women also occasionally participated in armed violence. Some women in the villages were reportedly soldiers and they would hide other soldiers (Ellis 2000). In 1980 and 1981 schoolgirls and their women teachers led militant demonstrations in Kabul (Giles and Hyndman 2004). Giles and Hyndman (2004, 236) contend that a small group of women participated in “covert war” against the Soviets, but women’s roles were generally subordinate to men. They identify popular stories about women suicide bombers among the *mujahideen*, but these were not verified.

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Harakat-i Islami-yi Afghanistan, Afghanistan

Women's participation is not verified.

Hizb-i Wahdat, Afghanistan

Women participated in Hizb-i Wadhat’s political organizing while the group was actively engaged in armed insurgency. In 1989 there was at least one woman on the central committee, Sima Samar, who established the ‘Martyr clinic’ and administered around fifty schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Emadi (2002, 138) contends: “Although Hizb-e-Wahdat’s policy toward women does not significantly differ from the regressive policies of other Islamic parties, Samar nevertheless joined Hizb-i Wahdat and became a member of the party’s central committee (*Sura-e Markazi*) and participated in conferences and meetings on behalf of the party.” A 2001 roster published by Hazara.net, a Hazara clearinghouse, listed 10 women on the committee. Hizb-i Wadhat also reportedly operated a Women's Committee within the *Sura-e Markazi* (Niamatullah 2001).

A 2016 report similarly suggests that Hazara women had “prominent positions” on the central committee and as part of Hizb-i Wahdat, women “probably played a role in carving out military

strategy” (Landinfo 2016, 8). Another report suggests that the Health Ministry of the Hazaras was headed by a woman (Schultheis 2008).

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Hezbollah, Lebanon

Women participated in Hezbollah, primarily in non-combat roles, though a few fought on the front-lines (Calabrese 2016; Eggert 2018). Female Hezbollah fighters were among the “most visible” in the war following Israel’s invasion of Lebanon in 1982 (Schulze 1998, 136). Schulze (1998, 136) concludes that while “some Shi’a females volunteered and were trained to fight” they “never entered into combat.” Still, in 1985, a teenaged, female suicide bomber attacked Israeli soldiers for Hezbollah (Ibid). More recent reports identify occasional women fighters in Hezbollah-affiliated armed groups, including the Lebanese Resistance Brigades. One combatant recalls: “My first military operation was planting a bomb to blow up an Israeli convoy of six trucks. At that time, girls played a bigger role than young men, as girls were less likely to be caught and arrested by Israeli soldiers” (quoted in Al Jazeera 2010, n.p).

During the Lebanese Civil War, women also smuggled weapons and fundraised for militants (Schulze 1998; Holt 1999).

The organization currently does not allow women to participate in armed combat (Calabrese 2016). According to Naim Qassem, Deputy General Secretary of the party:

Some (women) asked to have the opportunity to bear arms and participate in the fighting. However, the religious obligation of fight does not include them when the number of men is sufficient and when their participation is not necessary. The role of the woman is at the back of the front, in the support and mobilisation; which is better suited to her physical ability, in view of the division of roles between women and men (quoted in Calabrese 2016, n.p).

Hezbollah offers education courses for women interested in participating in the group’s political activities (Calabrese 2016). There is a women’s department – the Women’s Association of the Hezbollah - as well as women’s committees who offer community outreach and education, work elections, mobilize other women into the organization, and organize events (Ibid; Shehadeh

1999). Among other work, the Women's Association works with the Martyrs Foundation and advocates for martyrs' widows (Jaber 2007). The organization also created a Women's Organizations Unit (Bob 2019). There are further reportedly specialized bodies for recruiting women (Addis 2011).

Ghaddar (2016, n.p) reports that there is a robust infrastructure for Hezbollah to organize women's lives, nearly from cradle to grave: "Hezbollah's institutions constitute an alternative economic structure that hires and attracts Hezbollah's men and women. A girl in Hezbollah's community is brought up in Mahdi's or Al-Mustafa's schools (Hezbollah's schools). She is expected to work in Hezbollah institutions, marry a Hezbollah fighter, and promote Hezbollah's values both outside and inside her family. The Party of God knows that a disciplined and committed woman can raise disciplined and committed fighters. It is a system that physically reproduces itself."

Hezbollah relies heavily on women to be mothers and raise martyrs for their rebellion; this is a key component of their mobilization narratives and propaganda (Bianchi 2018). For example, "pro-Hezbollah press frequently publishes articles and videos that portray women thanking God for their son's martyrdom" (Ibid, 21). Furthermore, women helped the organization "bridge the gap to new constituencies" (Baylouny 2011, 90).

There are a few women in Hezbollah leadership. The first woman to hold a top position in the organization was named to the political council in 2004 (Dawn News 2005). Hezbollah also named a woman as the deputy at the Hezbollah's Office of Central Information (Calabrese 2016).

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Hizb-i Islami-yi Afghanistan, Afghanistan

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Hizb-i Islami-yi Afghanistan - Khalis Faction, Afghanistan

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Hizbul Islam, Somalia

Women's participation is not verified.

Holy Spirit Movement (HSM), Uganda

Behrend (2000) estimates that about 100 HSM members were women, out of an estimated 7000 and 10,000 members (1-2%). But the Holy Spirit Movement was led by a female spirit medium named Alice Auma, also referred to as Alice Lakwena, who was believed to channel a deceased army officer called Lakwena (Ibid).

The HSM established a Women's Office (Van Acker 2004; Behrend 2000). Behrend (2000, 54) explains,

There was the Women's Office under the command of a lady. All the women in the movement belong to this department. Initially women were treated equally as men, and would participate in combat operations, and in which some of them were very successful. But as the strength of the army grew by the day, their role in combat was minimised. They took on the role of serving in the kitchen of the various units, and in the yard. They, however, all underwent basic military training, in the mode of the Lakwena.

According to Behrend (2000, 146), "the day to day administration of this office is carried out by the Chief Clerk to the Lakwena. A few women soldiers are assigned to this office for purposes of offering domestic services to office." Women reportedly worked in the Intelligence Office as well -- according to Behrend (2000, 147), "the men and women are carefully selected because of the nature of the work." Three of the 20 members of the intel unit are reported to have been female (est 15%) (Ibid). Reportedly "a few women soldiers are assigned" to the Chairman's Office, but it seems that they were only "offering domestic services" in these positions, making it difficult to assess if they were combatants or members (Behrend 2000, 53).

Women played other important noncombat roles. According to one report, for example: "The treatment of wounded fighters had to be administered by either herself [Alice Lakwena], a virgin boy or an elderly woman who no longer had sexual relations. The treatment included cleaning the wound and applying the shea nut oil, twice a day, in the morning and evening" (Monitor 2021, n.p).

Another account reports that

wounded soldiers and the bodies of dead rebels were seen around the women's compounds every day. Women were forced to take care of the wounded, which was no simple task. Due to the limited health services and the warm climate, the wounds and bodies of the injured and dead putrefied quickly. Many boys and girls from the area joined Lakwena's army at the time, hoping for a better future. Lakwena tended to place the young soldiers in the front-lines, where they were expected to defend themselves with ordinary stones, oiled and blessed by Lakwena. Many parents unsuccessfully tried to get their children out of the army. The struggle had claimed many victims, and to this day many boys and girls, including family members of the interviewees, are missing (Abel and Richters 2009, 343).

Behrend (2000, 143) notes that Alice Lakwena, "like other women in the movement.... Prepared food and distributed it to the soldiers." There are also references to the HSM abducting women and children (Turshen 2000). These reports suggest that girls may have been used in fighting positions. Another report states that "between 7,000 and 10,000 HSM men and women marched towards Kampala" before they were defeated by the Ugandan government, alluding to the possibility of female combatants (Bird, Higgins, and McKay 2010, 1189).

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Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL), Liberia

There is less available information about women's contributions to the INPFL than other Liberian rebel groups. Still, Utas (2005, 423) notes:

A majority of young women who fought in the civil war got involved through their soldiering boyfriends. However, both INPFL and the NPFL had special female units comprised of, in the words of ex-NPFL leader and ex-president Charles Taylor, "not just gun-toting women" but women who were "highly trained" and "an important part of our fighting force" (quoted in Huband 1998:76).

Aning (1998) similarly reports that the INPFL included a women's combat wing. Vastapuu (2020) also documents women and girl soldiers who fought for the group.

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Issa and Gurgura Liberation Front (IGLF), Ethiopia

Women's participation is not verified.

Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Uzbekistan

Women in the IMU carried out attacks as suicide bombers and worked as recruiters for the organization. Women perpetrated attacks in 2003 and 2004, including a 2004 operation where the IMU targeted Uzbek security forces (Mydans 2004; Ali 2006). Female bombers committed a 2004 attack that killed 19 people; it was allegedly the first suicide bombing in Uzbekistan (Mydans 2004). In 2015, group members beheaded “an individual they claimed to be an Afghan soldier and threatened to behead Hazara (a historically persecuted ethnic group in Afghanistan) hostages, in supposed retaliation for the Afghan security forces capture of several female members of IMU” (US Department of State 2018, 302). In 2012, the IMU featured two female fighters in a video, “calling on Muslims to conduct terrorist acts and urging women to marry fighters and to prepare their children to undertake violent extremist activities” (Australian Government n.d., n.p).

The IMU also sent women to recruit other women in Central Asia. They reportedly went door to door to female migrants’ homes. According to the International Labour Organization (2011, n.p), “women who recruit for the IMU are trained to ingratiate themselves and to approach that topic indirectly.” One Uzbek political analyst suggests that “female migrant workers play an important role in recruitment since they tend to be perceived as trustworthy” (Ibid; Sadibekov 2014).

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Islamic Charter Front (ICF), Sudan

Women's participation is not verified.

The Islamic Charter Front was formed in the 1960s and became a governing power during the 1990s after it had renamed itself the National Islamic Front. The group was headed since its inception by Hassan al-Turabi, who “played an influential role in the creation of the International Organization for Muslim Women, thereby enforcing his views on women's equality in Islam” (Warburg 2006, 8). al-Turabi was criticized for his comparatively liberal position on women’s roles in society (Warburg 2006, 12). While no numerical estimates are available, the NIF became fairly popular amongst educated, middle-class Sudanese women (Hale 1992; 1996). According to Hale (1992), the NIF recruited women for political organizing, and they are among the most visible activists for the group. There’s also evidence that a few women filled leadership roles in the NIF (Ibid). All this suggests that women may have been involved in the ICF before it transitioned to a political party, though this cannot presently be verified.

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Islamic Legion, Chad

Women's participation is not verified.

Islamic State (IS), Iraq/Syria

As Vale (2019, 2-4) notes,

IS recruited women on an unprecedented scale. Adult females represent up to 16 percent of foreign nationals who travelled to join the group in Iraq and Syria, together with unknown numbers of locals [...] Within IS’ extensive bureaucratic infrastructure, women were required to adopt public-facing roles such as doctors, nurses, teachers, administrators, and even internal security officers. Furthermore, women enrolled within the female *hisbah* (religious police) brigades enjoyed exclusive privileges. They were

trained to use weapons; were permitted to drive and earn a wage; and could patrol the streets without a mahram [male guardian]. However, it is important to emphasise that despite these freedoms, the brigades functioned under a predominantly male leadership structure.

Data on foreign recruitment suggests that a minor portion of IS members were women: an estimated 11 percent of Westerners (Cook and Vale 2019) and an estimated 13 percent of foreign affiliates (UN CTED 2019). These numbers vary by origin country. For example, 17 percent of known Moroccans who traveled to Syria to join ISIS were women (Morocco World News 2019). But Pearson and Winterbotham (2017, 62) noted in 2017 that “Since the call for European jihadis to join the caliphate, as many as 38 per cent of Germans travelling there are women.”

IS recruited local and foreign women widely in auxiliary roles and occasionally on the front-line. IS justified keeping women out of combat by relying on Qur’anic ideals and concluding that women should only participate in violent jihad in self-defense (Winter 2018). Women cooked for fighters, birthed and raised ISIS combatants’ children, fundraised, kept other women in sexual slavery, and recruited (Loken and Zelenz 2018). Eggert name notes that women’s roles and participation within IS reflects the rebel’s broader political and strategic objectives: “When State-building became a goal, IS began to actively encourage Muslim women to join them in their newly-founded ‘Caliphate’” (Eggert 2015, 367). Women also were involved in the “dissemination of radical jihadist propaganda and the recruitment, organization, direction and funding” for the group (UNODC 2012, 111).

We know less about IS’ recruitment of domestic women than foreigners, but women in IS-held towns taught their curriculum in schools and worked in administrative roles, as IS functioned as the government. Some voluntarily served in the *Hisbah*, the morality police who monitored women’s dress and other compliance with IS’ rules (Hanoush 2019), and others worked as medics (Winter 2018).

In 2014, IS announced the Al-Khansa brigade, one of their all-female policing units, which “executes activities in intelligence gathering, law enforcement, overseeing slaves, and recruiting” (Spencer 2016, 83). According to Zakaria (2015, 122),

[...] the main role of the all-female Al Khansaa Brigade is to monitor and discipline other women. Female brigadeers drag improperly covered or unaccompanied women off the streets of Raqqa and punish them for deviating from ISIS’s conception of acceptable behavior for observant Muslim women by detaining them for long hours.

Al-Khansa included around 60 women who primarily worked at checkpoints and were a key part of IS propaganda. Women also patrolled IS-held areas to enforce dress morality codes (Re 2015). A similar function is reportedly served by Umm Al-Rayan (Eggert 2015), as well as other policing units throughout IS-controlled territory.

Once IS began losing territory, a few women suicide bombers began carrying out attacks. At the same time, IS’ official documents began easing their prohibition on women’s combat operations

(Winter 2018). Women's combat involvement was not widespread -- a handful of attacks are documented, and a few photos circulate of IS women fighting (Winter and Margolin 2017).

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Ittihad-i Islami Bara-yi Azadi-yi, Afghanistan

There are some reports that women were involved in the Mujahideen in supportive roles; however, because their activities are not attributed to specific groups it makes it difficult to estimate how women contributed at the rebel-group level. In light of this problem, we code women as participating in logistical support and in auxiliary roles, though we do not provide prevalence estimates for individual groups. As Dearing (2010, 1088) notes,

as participants of the anti-Soviet jihad, most women played supportive roles to mujahideen. There was an important role for non-combatants to fill, to include political activity, writing and supporting front-line fighters. Women sheltered and hid mujahideen traveling through villages, stood watch in the evening as mujahideen slept. Women would tend to soldiers by cooking, cleaning clothes or dressing wounds. They would clean, oil and repair weapons. They would also serve as couriers, carrying weapons, radios, and supplies from safe havens to the front. They would even wash and care for the dead, preparing them for burial and often mother orphaned mujahideen children. It was also incumbent on women to carry out vengeance in accordance with tribal code, when no living or able man of the family could reclaim the family's honor. One woman during the anti-Soviet jihad, after seeing many in her village killed by Soviets, pleaded with her brothers to give her a bomb so that she could destroy a tank and become a shaheed, however they refused since the obligation for vengeance became the brothers' first.

Ahmadi and Lakani (2016, 5) similarly suggest that women were “mobilizers, sympathizers, logistic providers, informants, and preventers of violence.”

Ellis (2000, 46) conducted interviews with women working with the mujahideen in this period. One recalls:

There were women in every village to cook and clean for the Mujahideen.... In Kabul, I would carry guns in my purse. I would deliver guns to other Mujahideen, our house was a safe house... Myself and two other women washed the clothes of the Mujahideen, we took an active part in the resistance in Afghanistan... There were three of us women who cooked for 600 men, we washed clothes for 600 men. During the night, we carried a gun and took our turn at standing watch... I was taught to fire a gun by my cousin, in case I was ever alone. We were allowed to clean and oil the guns, and to cook and clean the clothes for the Mujahideen.

Women also hid bullets for fighters (Ibid).

He also notes that “women have played an important inspirational role as purveyors of information in Afghanistan through artistic expression, particularly during times of crisis and in support of mujahideen” (Ibid, 1091). Fatima Gailani (the daughter of a leader of the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan) served as a spokesperson for the Mujahideen while living in exile in London in the 1970s (Skaine 2008).

Still women's participation in this movement remained limited. As Moghadam (2002, 24) noted, "unlike liberation, resistance, and guerrilla movements elsewhere, the Afghan Mujahideen never encouraged the active participation of women" and claimed that the group had no female spokespeople.

Women also occasionally participated in armed violence. Some women in the villages were reportedly soldiers and they would hide other soldiers (Ellis 2000). In 1980 and 1981 schoolgirls and their women teachers led militant demonstrations in Kabul (Giles and Hyndman 2004). Giles and Hyndman (2004, 236) contend that a small group of women participated in "covert war" against the Soviets, but women's roles were generally subordinate to men. They identify popular stories about women suicide bombers among the *mujahideen*, but these were not verified.

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Jabha-yi Nijat-i Milli-yi, Afghanistan

There are some reports that women were involved in the Mujahideen in supportive roles; however, because their activities are not attributed to specific groups it makes it difficult to estimate how women contributed at the rebel-group level. In light of this problem, we code women as participating in logistical support and in auxiliary roles, though we do not provide prevalence estimates for individual groups. As Dearing (2010, 1088) notes,

as participants of the anti-Soviet jihad, most women played supportive roles to mujahideen. There was an important role for non-combatants to fill, to include political activity, writing and supporting front-line fighters. Women sheltered and hid mujahideen traveling through villages, stood watch in the evening as mujahideen slept. Women would tend to soldiers by cooking, cleaning clothes or dressing wounds. They would clean, oil and repair weapons. They would also serve as couriers, carrying weapons, radios, and supplies from safe havens to the front. They would even wash and care for the

dead, preparing them for burial and often mother orphaned mujahideen children. It was also incumbent on women to carry out vengeance in accordance with tribal code, when no living or able man of the family could reclaim the family's honor. One woman during the anti-Soviet jihad, after seeing many in her village killed by Soviets, pleaded with her brothers to give her a bomb so that she could destroy a tank and become a shaheed, however they refused since the obligation for vengeance became the brothers' first.

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Jam’iyyat-i Islami-Yi (Jamiat-E Islami), Afghanistan

Jamiat-e Islami was one of the most significant mujahideen groups fighting in Afghanistan’s anti-Soviet conflict. There are some reports that women were involved in the Mujahideen in supportive roles; however, because their activities are not attributed to specific groups it makes it difficult to estimate how women contributed at the rebel-group level. In light of this problem, we code women as participating in logistical support and in auxiliary roles, though we do not provide prevalence estimates for individual groups. As Dearing (2010, 1088) notes,

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Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, Pakistan

Women's participation is not verified.

Jamaat al-Muslimeen, Trinidad and Tobago

Though there are multiple reports of women's presence in Jamaat al-Muslimeen's compound and a thorough discussion of the group's gender dynamics, there is little information about what women's roles were within the organization when it pursued political violence (Baptiste 2016). According to one account, "The attempt on the part of the Court to secure Bakr's arrest was frustrated by the latter who surrounded himself with the women and children of the Jamaat. According to Superintendent Elton Keith of the Western Police Division, when a party of six policemen, accompanied by the Deputy Registrar of the High Court, sought to execute a warrant for the arrest of Yasin Abu Bakr, they found the gates locked and a large crowd gathered near the gate with women and children prominent in the crowd" (Ryan 1991, 16).

Men and women affiliated with the group also participated in public marches, "shouting well prepared slogans" (Millette 1991, 100). In one account, the group is likened to gangs in Trinidad and Tobago -- Townsend (2009, 29) asserts that "[f]ew of the rank-and-file members of street-level gangs are female, and neither are women in the upper levels of the hierarchy."

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Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), Sudan

Reportedly, the JEM "brought five women" as part of its delegation to peace talks (Sudan Tribune (2005, n.p)).

Women's participation in other roles is likely, but not verified. For example, a 2019 UNAMID report (n.p) concludes of the Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (SDDRC):

The demobilized ex-combatants were out of the planned caseload of 838 that were planned for demobilization. Among the demobilized, 123 were female and 606 male combatants from Justice and Equality Movement/Peace Wing (JEM/PW), Sudan Liberation Army/Free Will (SLA/FW), Sudan Liberation Army/ Mustafa Terab (SLA/MT), Justice and Equality Movement/Dabajo (JEM/D) and Popular Forces for Democratic Rights (PFDR).

However, information on the participation or prevalence of women in JEM, specifically, is not currently accessible. There are also reports of arrests of women associated with JEM leaders and of women of the Zaghawa ethnicity, but it is not clear if that is a form of collective punishment or repressive policing or a reflection of women's participation in JEM activities (Amnesty International 2008, Human Rights Watch 2008).

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Islamic Jihad Union (IJU/IJG), Uzbekistan

The Islamic Jihad Union is a faction that broke from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), originally named the Islamic Jihad Group (IJG) (Wigen 2009).

According to Lang (2013, 24), the IMU and IJG "actively" recruited women. Limited evidence documents women's participation in the IMJ across combat and non-combat roles. There is a report of women acting as suicide bombers in a series of IJU/IJG attacks (Wigen 2009, 13-14). A German woman was also arrested on charges of assisting IJU financially (Reuters 2010).

There are reports of plans to recruit women for marriage and train them in arms, however, it is not clear if this ever came to fruition. According to Fredholm (2014, 344), a German IJU recruit named Eric Breiningger

wanted unmarried Muslim girls to travel to their camp, so they all could get married. The girls would also learn to use weapons, “just like the mujahidin.” Then the newlyweds, he argued, would raise a new generation of mujahidin who would know Arabic, Turkish, English, Pashto, Urdu, and the mother tongue of the parents, in his case German. The children would learn Islam and temper their bodies through sports and martial arts, and early on learn the use of weapons and military tactics. This would, he planned, produce a new “generation of terrorists” whose names did not exist in any security service database.

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Jondullah, Iran

Women's participation is not verified.

al-Jamaa al-Salafiyya al-Muhtasiba (JSM), Saudi Arabia

Women's participation is not verified.

According to Hegghammer and Lacroix (2007, 107), “it seems that most members were young, unmarried men. Some members did have families, but no women played any direct role in the organization.”

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Parbattya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti/Shanti Bahini, Chittagong Hill Tracts People's Coordination Association/Peace Force (JSS/SB), Bangladesh

The JSS/SB was ideologically committed to gender equality (Nasreen 2017), and there are reports of women fighting with the organization (Nasreen 2017; IRB 1995; Ahmed 2017; Braithwaite and D'Costa 2012). However other reports suggest that some women were trained in arms but not actually called upon to fight (Nasreen 2017; Priyadarshini 2012).

Women provided critical non-combat support for the rebel group. As Nasreen (2017, 114) notes, "women's traditional role as homemaker was the key to the survival of the SB. They cooked food and provided shelter to the guerrillas when required." She (Ibid) relays an example of a woman hiding a bag of money and arms abandoned by rebels intercepted by the army. She notes that "Despite being closely questioned by the military about the movement of the fleeing SB members and even being whipped and forced to stay in cold water for a long time, she did not disclose any information" (Ibid). Furthermore, women played an important part of the rebels' intelligence collection efforts and helped the rebels acquire goods when male members were subject to heavy surveillance (Ibid). Women were also trained to provide medical care (Ibid).

The JSS/SB included a variety of all-women organizations and a robust infrastructure of women's organizing that extended even into "remote villages" (Mohsin 2005, 244). In the mid-1970s, the 'Parbatyo Chattagram Mohila Samity' (or the Chittagong Hill Tracts Women Society) was founded as a part of the JSS's central committee. Furthermore, "during that period each village had a branch of this Mohila Samity, which was known as 'Mohila Panchayet'. The task of this Samity was basically to raise awareness among the women, provide ideas about the struggle, organize political schooling, inspire women on how to contribute in the struggle or provide psycho-moral support as women and so on" (Halim 2003, 186; Chowdhury 2017). The purpose of the formation of these women's groups "wing was twofold: to provide already-active women with a platform of their own, and to mobilise more women behind the struggle" (Nasreen 2017, 107). In the CHT Women Society, "women extended their active support and cooperation especially in terms of disseminating information and carrying letters and other secret documents for the fighters. They worked and risked their lives as informants" (Priyadarshini 2012, 66).

Furthermore, a few years later, a "women's regiment" of the JSS was formed, comprised of roughly 150 women who had participated in the organization's underground operations (the organization was disbanded a few years later, though the women that constituted it remained close to the JSS/SB (Halim 2003, 186). The formation of the Hill Women's Federation in the late 1980s helped organize indigenous women, incorporating them into the political movements (Ibid). The HWF sought to raise support for and awareness of the rebels' objectives in international forums and through domestic activism (Nasreen 2017; Priyadarshini 2012). Both the CHT and the HWF members have been active in producing pro-rebel cultural and artistic materials (Priyadarshini 2012).

There are a number of reports of violence targeting women by the government, particularly sexual violence against indigenous women. There is also a significant degree of coverage of the high-profile disappearance of Kalpana Chakma, a leader of the HWF who was abducted by the army (Chittagong Hills Tracts Commission 2000; Guhathakurta 2004). The threat and experience of sexual violence is cited as one of the most compelling drivers for the formation of HWF (Braithwaite and D'Costa 2012). There are some reports that the JSS/SB coerced women into participation and used them as "human shields" (Sajib and Sohad 2018, 266).

Women could rise to some leadership positions within the organization; Madhabilata Chakma became a member of the executive committee of PCJSS (Priyadarshini 2012; Chittagong Hills Tracts Commission 2000).

Following the brokering of a peace accord between the JSS/SB and the government, there was division within the organization (including within the HWF) about whether the terms of the agreement was acceptable (Chittagong Hills Tracts Commission 2000). According to the Chittagong Hills Tracts Commission (2000, 30):

Not long after the signing of the Accord, first the Hill Peoples' Council (HPC), the Hill Students' Council (HSC) and later the Hill Women's Federation (HWF) split in two, one faction supporting the JSS and the Peace Accord, the other declaring that the Accord was inadequate and that they would continue the struggle for 'full autonomy'. The students' faction supporting the JSS now calls itself the Greater Chittagong Hill Tracts Students' Council (GCHTSC).

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Junbish-i Milli-yi Islami, Afghanistan

Women's participation is not verified.

Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), Sri Lanka

While some women sought out the JVP, others were recruited through relationships to male members of the group, as JVP men were required to make their girlfriends part of the movement, or break off the relationship (Hemachandra 2019, 26). One female candidate for the party in 2015 claimed that women have participated in the group "since its early years" and that men and women are not treated differently in the group (Weerawardhana 2017, 83). However, Weerawardhana explains,

In its nearly 50-year existence, it [the JVP] has shared the parity-related problems faced by Left movements elsewhere, with a tendency to relegate committed female members to secondary and support roles. Since its early years, the JVP rank-and-file has been (and largely continues to be) mostly limited to Sinhala men from petit-bourgeois backgrounds, with women's engagement determined, managed and regulated by men (Liyanage 1999: 126-128). JVP membership has always been disproportionately male and Sinhala-Buddhist, with far fewer female and ethno-national minority members.

Weerawardhana (2017) claims that the JVP, since its inception, perceived feminism to be a symbol of Western capitalism. Similarly, de Mel (2003, 61) contends that “the JVP failed to foster and enlist large scale female participation for its cause because of its patriarchal bent.”

Women were, however, sometimes able to access combat roles in the group. According to Bandarage (2010, 657), “The JVP is known to have introduced women’s units and used women in armed violence in its insurrections against the Sri Lankan government in 1971 and 1987–1990.” Leelananda (1990, 18) claims that, modeling themselves after Vietnamese groups, the JVP brought women to the “frontline” in street battles with the government. One woman who joined reported that, “[s]he enjoyed a new-found freedom through her involvement with the JVP. She had been one of seven women chosen to retreat into the jungles because of her adaptability, and although in one sense she was on the run, a fugitive from the law, in another sense she enjoyed communal living” (De Mel 2001, 209).

Women took on non-combat roles as well: one male member of the group explained that all group activities, from weapons collection, to intel gathering, to recruiting, to cooking, were gender-neutral: “When we were assigning duties to the membership, we did not consider the gender of that person [...]” (Hemachandra 2019, 25).

Women were apparently not prominent in leadership positions during the JVP’s years as a violent group. De Mel (2003, 61) writes, “During the 1970s, the JVP had only five or six women at the action committee level. There were no women on the district committees or the decision-making politburo. There were no women on the district committees or the decision-making politburo.” Even the group’s women’s wing formed in 1976, Samajavadi Kantha Sangamaya, was apparently “assimilated into the JVP patriarchy,” and even the group’s original leader Rohana Wijeweera “admitted that it was the weakest wing of the organization” (de Mel 2003, 61).

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Kamajors, Sierra Leone

Mazurana and Carlson (2004, 12-13) explain, "Although the Kamajors were originally a male-only traditional hunting society, in response to the increased pressure from the RUF it became a self-defense force and enlisted women and girls beginning in the early 1990s and continued this practice throughout the war." Women often joined the group at the request of their husbands; others were forcibly conscripted or became "wives" to group members as a survival tactic (Mazurana and Carlson 2004, 13).

Women participated in the Kamajors as soldiers (Mazurana and Carlson 2004, 31), though it is difficult to gauge how many because some women, like the men, only joined for short periods of time (Ferme and Hoffman 2004, 91). It appears that the female combatants in the CDF, the paramilitary group supporting the Sierra Leonean government (the majority of which were Kamajors), were often not considered fully-fledged Kamajors, however, because they were not allowed to go through the highly gendered initiation rituals (Włodarczyk 2009, 101). Men's participation in the Kamajors implied "mystical powers" cemented by an initiation ritual "that would allow initiates to not only be immune to bullets but to become invisible, walk through walls, and command material objects" (Włodarczyk 2009, 97). Still, women were *initiators*, a powerful role (Ibid). According to Ferme and Hoffman (2004, 93),

There was a small number of armed female CDF members; frequently, their gender marked them as particularly fearsome among their male counterparts. Perhaps the most famous of these is Mama Munda Fortune, the female Kamajor initiator and the head of a fighting unit based in the Bo region known as the Kassela War Council. The early stages of the war also saw the rise to prominence of female initiators in the North.

Ferme and Hoffman (2004, 87) further explain, "For the kamajors it is also articulated in the prohibitions on contact with women while in battle dress. If not generally combatants in the literal sense of armed agents, women nevertheless defy any easy categorization as passive, nonthreatening bystanders in the drama of war."

Women reportedly participated in capturing civilian youth who would be forcibly initiated into the group and trained as fighters (Mazurana and Carlson 2004, 13). One former female combatant interviewed by Mazurana and Carlson (2004, 13) mentioned the role of witchcraft during battle: "Jeneba explained that her role during the conflict was to 'do concoctions and oracle activities in the holy shrine.'" Women in the group filled broader non-combat roles (Lahai

2012, 45; Munro 2004, 24), though the types of support women provided for the Kamajors, beyond their spiritual roles, is not well-documented.

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Kashmir insurgents, India

UCDP identifies groups including the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (Party of Holy Warriors), Pasdaran-e-Inquilab-e-Islami (Guardians of the Islamic Revolution), Harkat-ul-Ansar (Helper Movement), Jaish-e-Mohammed (Army of Mohammed, JeM), and Lashkar-e-Toiba (Army of the Righteous) as Kashmir insurgents.

In the early 1990s, “a number of” Kashmiri women trained at military camps in Pakistan, and women regularly kept arms in case of attack (Ibid). Indeed, in the 1990s, a few women trained in the Pakistan-controlled regions as JKLF fighters during a period when the group was open to female combatants. But they were, reportedly, the only group of women who trained across the border (Saksena 2018). Bhatia and Knight (2011) report that there was a failed suicide bombing attempt by a female militant, in an attack later claimed by the JeM.

Groups like Hizbul Mujahideen believed that training women would provide legitimacy to the group’s struggle by signaling the importance of violent resistance (Ibid). Parashar (2011, 301) notes that “in the initial phase of the militancy that began in 1989, militant groups set up specialized wings to train women and enlist their ideological and logistical support. The militants thrived on support from women in various forms and were aware that without enlisting the support of women the militancy would not acquire legitimacy or popularity. Women alone could convince the world outside of the need for violent resistance to the state.”

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) also apparently ran military training camps for women (The Times of India 2012; Shekhawat 2015). But Parashar (2011) suggests that the group rarely allowed women to fight in combat. Similarly, Haq (2007, 1030) concludes, “Although the women are not given military training, many of the women leaders are taken to the training camp to witness the training of young men.”

Women contribute to the pro-Pakistan rebellions in Kashmir primarily in non-combat roles. Women are “planners, perpetrators, and patrons of militancy” who “sheltered militants in their homes, cooked for them, and took care of them, all the while nurturing nationalist aspirations like the Kashmiri men” (Parashar 2011, 296). Hizbul Mujahideen also has its own women’s wing dedicated to auxiliary support (Sharma and Behera 2014). Women Kashmiris spy on security forces, fill the streets to block their searches for fighters, work as weapons couriers, fundraise, and provide logistical support (Saksena 2018). LeT also “has an active women’s wing with its own publications, regular meetings, weekly *dars* (Qur’anic lessons), and girls’ madrassas in villages and lower-class and lower-middle class urban neighborhoods [...] the pragmatic need to mobilize women into the public sphere while holding firmly to the ideology that home is the only rightful place for women also shapes the [LeT]’s agenda (Haq 2007, 1027-1028, 1030). LeT women fundraise for martyrs’ families, organize meetings, and perform security duties (Ibid).

The LeT’s women’s wing operates a magazine, *Tayyabiat*, advocating for jihad and an entire publication branch dedicated to recruiting women (Ibid; Fair 2017). The women’s organizations in Kashmir are headed by women leaders (Parashar 2011); some of these leaders have connections to men in the organization (Bhatia and Knight 2011).

Moreover, since the 1980s, all-female Islamist groups Dukhtaran-Millat (DeM) (the women’s wing of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen) and the Muslim Khawateen Markaz (MKM) have been enforcing the burqa in public spaces and encouraging female participation in the resistance against Indian authorities in Kashmir (Parashar 2011, 2014). When the insurgency in Kashmir began, DeM called on women to remain in their homes to support their rebel husbands, framing this support role as a central part of their personal jihad, or struggle (Ibid). The DeM “has provided logistical support to militant groups by acting as couriers of messages, funds, and weapons” for several Kashmiri rebel organizations in the region and has at least 500 members (Ibid, 303). Jaish-e-Mohammed also organized an all-women’s group, “Banaat-e-Ayesha” (Zakaria 2015, 123). One of these women was reportedly a suicide bomber (Sjoberg and Gentry 2011).

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Kata Katanga (Mayi Mayi Kata Katanga), DR Congo

Women's participation is not verified.

According to MONUSCO (2015, 1), Mayi Mayi Kata Katanga "systematically recruited and used" girl soldiers. In their interviews with soldiers recruited as girls, the MONUSCO report (2015, 15) highlights individual recruitment stories:

A 17-year old girl explained how she left school in 2012 when she was 15 years old to join Mayi Mayi Kata Katanga because she was influenced by a recruitment campaign organised by elements from the group that Katanga province had to be separated from the rest of the DRC. She received military training and underwent initiation rites upon her recruitment.

The MONUSCO report (2015, 15) also concludes that "72% of the girls formerly associated with Mayi Mayi Kata Katanga, told MONUSCO they had accompanied or followed a parent, husband or boyfriend to the bush. A 17-year old girl interviewed after she was separated from a Mayi Mayi Kata Katanga faction following an awareness raising campaign by the authorities in Katanga in September 2013 to encourage them to surrender said:

I was living in Camp Sowe with my husband who was a Mayi Mayi combatant, I had no choice and I had to follow him to the forest. I went through initiation rates to protect me from bullets in case of an attack by FARDC. I didn't do anything in the group except take care of my husband.

The specific nature of the Mayi Mayi Kata Katanga, who live in the bush with their families, means that hundreds of girls are permanently associated, most of them dependants, who perform domestic tasks for their families and face life-threatening risks when the group is attacked” (Ibid, 15).

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Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP), India

The KCP actively recruited women. Female members reported recruiting, procuring food and medical help, transporting funds, and fighting on the front-lines (Saksena 2018). One woman, who eventually became a camp commander, recalls that 15 of the 50 KCP members she trained with in the military camp were women – 30% (though not all actually engaged in front-line fighting). There, cadre were trained how to use rifles and assemble bombs (Ibid). According to the former combatant, she was an assassin, extortionist, and recruiter in the KCP (Ibid).

The South Asia Terrorism Portal further identifies at least six incidents involving female cadre between 2000-2012. Security forces arrested KCP women for smuggling weapons and bombs, financing the group, fundraising, extortion, and recruiting new members (SATP n.p; Business Standard 2015a, 2015b; The New Indian Express 2017). Women in KCP appear more involved in non-combat than front-line roles.

In a governmental assessment of rebel groups in the Manipur region, the Human Development Society (2010, 29) concludes of the KCP, the PLA and UNLF,

Every underground organisation has its female wing in which many young women cadres have been enrolled. The women cadres are utilised for cooking, housekeeping, watch and ward, and nursing tasks in the camps of organisations. The women members are also utilised for gathering intelligence and for brain washing of girls and women to enlarge the support-base of their organisation in general public. During operation of the security forces, the women sympathisers are made to come forward while the men folk stay behind so that security forces are prevented from launching offensives. During agitation backed by the underground activists, the women sympathisers turn out massively to make the agitation look broad-based and spectacular. There is hardly any instance where a woman cadre has risen to the hierarchy and command structure of an insurgent organisation in Manipur.

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Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), Iraq

Women are involved in the KDP’s political activities, but less so in their militant campaigns. Female fighters have joined since 1961 (Orhan 2019), but as Trisko-Darden, Henshaw, and Szekely (2019, 45) conclude, “neither the PUK nor the KDP have prioritized the recruitment of female soldiers.” By 2015, Iraqi Kurdistan’s authorities stopped recruiting female fighters, though women are trained for the peshmerga’s police force (Ibid).

The Kurdistan Women’s Union (KWU) is the women’s branch of the KDP. The organization supported families of peshmerga soldiers killed in battle, organized cultural activities, operated a sewing factory to create jobs for women, operated social and healthcare centers to provide services, sent delegates on diplomatic missions and public relations abroad, fundraised, and offer education and informational programming (KDP n.d; Al-Ali and Pratt 2011). According to the KDP, the KWU “has more than ten thousand members” (KDP, n.d., n.p). However, Mojab (2001, 142) argues that the KWU’s operation “formalized the segregation of the rank-and file along gender lines, each having its own organization [...] Clearly the two were not on the same footing.” For this reason, Mojab (2001, 142) concludes that the women’s wing existence “justified their exclusion from the decision-making ranks of the KDP.”

Women secured Parliament seats as KDP representatives (McDonald 2001). But Dadparvar (2013, 149) contends,

Political representation of women at senior levels in either of the two largest political parties, KDP and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), is poor. While there is a quota to ensure that 25% of seats in the Kurdistan National Assembly (KNA) are held by women, many are not genuinely independent and have been placed in their positions by the KDP and PUK, which, despite having formed a unified KRG, still view each other suspiciously.

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Kurdish Democratic Party of Iraq (KDP-QM), Iraq

Women's participation is not verified.

Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (KDPI/PDKI), Iran

In a random sample of 740 KDPI members, Ghazanjani (2019, 20) finds that approximately 38% were women operating as both “rank and file combatants (Peshmerga)” and in “high-ranking” roles. Ashrafi’s (2014) reporting suggests that in addition to mixed gender units, there was an all-female military unit, the 2nd battalion, which included an estimated 550 female soldiers.

Women also worked as guards (Ashrafi 2014) and were actively involved in the organization’s political activities (Homa 2011). Before the Iranian revolution, women founded the ‘Yaya Organisation,’ “aiming to develop literacy and an attachment to national identity among women” (Begikhani, Hamelink, and Weiss 2018, 14). Once the group dissolved, women from the Yaya Organisation continued to be active in the KDPI (Ibid).

Reportedly the “KDPI provides a shelter for the members and pays them a minimum amount monthly that covers their basic expenses. They have a doctor, a clinic and a school in the camp, Koya, which is more than an hour away from Hewler” (Homa 2011, n.p). Women and children members live in these camps, though not exclusively.

The KDPI operates a women’s wing, the Democratic Women’s Union of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI n.d.; Ghazanjani 2019). The women’s wing chairperson is automatically a member of the KDPI’s Central Committee (PDKI n.d.). Women also hold other political positions within the party (c.f. Homa 2011, n.p).

According to the KDPI constitution (cited in Sawyer et al 2020, 31),

A considerable portion of the Party’s leadership committees must be female, and a practical way of implementing this policy must be followed. When it is necessary the Party shall use ‘positive-discrimination’ in order to achieve this goal.

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Kikosi Maalum, Uganda

Women's participation is not verified.

Kikosi Maalum eventually combined with FRONASA to form the UNLA, which did arm and train women on at least one occasion (Behrend 2000).

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Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO), Myanmar (Burma)

Women have long played important roles in the KIO and its armed wing, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA). Women have reportedly been active in the group since it began operating in 1961 (Hedstrom 2015). Women were initially prevented from military training and armed positions; they were active in non-combat support roles “that mirrored women’s traditional family duties: they were encouraged to provide food, clothing and shelter for male soldiers and to nurse injured and disabled veterans” (Ibid, 70). Women have also played important roles in medical and administrative positions (Hedstrom 2018) and as “cipher operators” (Sadan 2016, 101).

As a result of “lobbying by female recruits who argued that they needed to learn basic military skills in order to survive, military boot camps opened for women at the end of the 1960s, and are still operating today” (Hedstrom 2015, 70). Indeed, the KIA is “the only non state armed group in Myanmar that actively drafts women” (Ibid, 62). However, women are still restricted from frontline combat, despite their training, participation in other KIA activities, and an oft-articulated desire to serve in such positions. Hedstrom (2016, 77), for example, writes that “every woman interviewed for this research expressed a wish to fight on the frontlines alongside male soldiers.”

It is estimated that 15% of the KIO is female (Kolås 2019). Though women’s participation is fairly common, there is a strong expectation and norm that women will retire from the KIA once they are married “in order to fulfill their duty to have children,” which is also considered a means of contributing to the cause (Hedstrom 2015, 69). Hedstrom (2020, 4) notes that “women’s social reproductive duties are so important that the Kachin army regularly organizes mass-weddings and compulsorily mobilizes women into ‘women’s units’ to ensure the continued reproduction of the armed forces.”

Furthermore, the KIO’s popularity suggests that women who may be officially unaffiliated with the organization still send food and support to fighters or mobilize populations in support of their cause. One female fighter asserted, “I am connected to the KIO as a mother organization. It’s more emotionally connected, like not officially connected, not like you have to go and do training... it’s more about being emotionally involved, an awareness of being an ethnic minority, and that we are an oppressed people” (Hall and Smith 2016, n.p, see also Hedstrom 2020). Women also help compensate for KIO weaknesses -- Hedstrom (2020, 5) observes, “the Kachin army can no longer afford to regularly pay its soldiers, compelling the wives and daughters of male soldiers to engage in unsafe income-generating activities in order to send materials to soldiers on the frontline.”

Women affiliated with the KIO were organized into several all-female units. The KIO's "official women's wing" was the Kachin Women's Association (KWA) (Hedstrom 2015, 66), though this has also been described as the women's wing of the KIA (Hedstrom 2020). The KWA was involved in enlisting and training women (Sadan 2016). Women in the KIA were also organized into the In-Service Women's Fellowship (Hedstrom 2018). The KWA provided services to Kachin women who were victims of trafficking, including community outreach and livelihoods programs (Barr and Kamler 2019). The organization was also involved in mobilizing "female soldiers and the daughters and wives of male soldiers to make uniforms, grow rice, and nurse injured men back to life" (Hedstrom 2020, 10). This group was "responsible for providing clothing, food and emotional support to KIA troops," and "has seats on the Central Committee, the KIO's highest decision-making body" though "at the time of writing these seats were vacant" (Hedstrom 2015, 66). Additionally, the Kachin Women's Association of Thailand (KWAT) is involved in raising awareness about women's issues and is an active advocacy group, as well as a provider of services to Kachin Women (Pepper 2018; Barr and Kamler 2019). There is at least one report suggesting that KWAT is independent of the KIO (Henry 2011).

Indeed, in 2016, Sadan (2016) noted that only one woman had served on the KIO Central Committee. There are reports of female attendees at a KIO leadership academy (Patterson 2009), but also that women are generally marginalized from leadership positions in the organization (Kolås 2019).

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Kuki National Front (KNF), India

Women participate in the KNF, reportedly in front-lines roles, but information on the scope of their participation is limited (Northeast Now 2019). One news source suggests that “many Kuki women have taken up arms” (Ahmed 1993, n.p). News stories similarly report women carrying rifles and grenades and include photographs of armed KNF women (Ahmed 1993). Another report states that a female KNF cadre was arrested along with male cadre by police (Jitendra 2016). The South Asia Terrorism Portal (n.d.) documents at least one woman cadre killed by security forces and others arrested.

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Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP), Myanmar (Burma)

Women have been involved in the KNPP’s peace negotiations and delegations, though their participation has been circumscribed (Hedström 2013). At least one woman served on the KNPP’s central executive committee (Kolås and Meitei 2019). The KNPP also had a female Religious and Culture Minister (Thein 2019), who also served as a member of the KNPP’s peace negotiations delegation (it is unclear if she went on to serve as the woman on the central executive committee) (Khen and Nyoï 2014; UNWomen 2015).

There is at least one report of women being (involuntarily) incorporated into the KNPP’s logistics and Ma and Kusakabe (2015, 348) note that women and men have both been forced by armed groups “to serve as porters or messengers.” There are also reports of schools established

by the KNPP for displaced people, in which the majority of the students are male – but raising the possibility that female students are present as well: “Between them these two schools have close to 200 students, almost all of whom are boys and most of whom are under eighteen” Heppner 2002, 138).

The lack of female participation in the group’s armed activities is, reportedly, not a result of a lack of a desire. One female leader noted that:

A majority of women cadres have problems after they get married. Once women are married, their workload doubles. Many of them move to familyline camps, rather than staying at headquarters. There was a woman in the CEC of the KNPP, and her husband was also in the CEC. They were equal in the party hierarchy. After their marriage, she disappeared from party politics and shifted her priorities to family affairs (Kolås and Meitei 2019, 103).

Women have been active in the Karenni National Women’s Organization (KNWOa, n.d). The KNWO was founded by displaced women in Thailand and, though it appears independent from the KNPP, the degree of cooperation between the KNPP and the KNWO (as well as the degree of influence that the KNPP exerts over camps for displaced people) suggest that these two organizations are working towards a shared political objective (Kramer et al. 2018; da Costa 2006; KNWO b n.d). The KNWO has lobbied the KNPP to increase women’s leadership roles and has specifically asked for a 30% quota for the Central Committee (Warren et al. 2018). The KNWO has played an active role as an advocate and a bridge between the international community and the Karenni communities (KNWO a n.d; KNWO b n.d).

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Karen National Union (KNU), Myanmar (Burma)

Women’s participation in the KNU was “low” throughout the organization’s lifetime (Israelsen 2018, 379). KNU women are militarily trained, though Israelsen (2018) contends that women were not mobilized as combatants in fighting.

As one interviewee told Kolås and Meitei (2019, 4),

In the KNU military units, women are employed mainly in civil police, health care, communications, and general administration. After completing basic military training, they are put to work as cashiers, accounting staff, office assistants and clerks. They are program secretaries but not coordinators. They are not trained as commandos, even if they want that training. In most functions or meetings of KNU and other organizations, women are invited to serve food, clean, and entertain, not to share their ideas. There is no role for women in the KNU decision-making processes. Some women are in the KNU steering committee. They speak in the meetings of the CEC [Central Committee]. But few of their ideas are reflected in the decision-making.

The KNU operates a women’s group, the Karen Women’s Organization (KWO). In the 1980s, during the civil war, its objective was “to support the KNU through engagement in social work” (Israelsen 2019, 182). Its leaders were women, appointed by KNU members. KWO women were “and primarily engaged in social work, such as care of orphans and war victims” and mobilizing women’s participation in the KNU’s mission (Israelsen 2018, 392). A 1989 publication notes that “KWO members are also expected to help preserve the ‘traditional moral character’ of Karen women,” which had been challenged by wartime developments and dynamics” (Pippa 1989, n.p). Near the end of conflict, they began offering programs focused on women’s rights and education (Ibid). The KNU reportedly had a “women only” logistics team in 2012 (UN Women 2015, 30).

In areas under KNU control, some women served as village heads who ‘attend[ed] KNU functions’ and whose populations abided by KNU regulations, paid them taxes, and provided recruits (Israelsen 2019, 184). Women also held high-ranking positions in the KNU, including as general secretary and as delegates to the KNU Congress (Israelsen 2018). At least one woman is on the KNU’s Central Committee, out of 11 central committee members (Kolås and Meitei 2019). Between 2011 and 2012, at least three women members were part of KNU’s ceasefire negotiation team (UN Women 2015).

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Kampuchean United Front for National Salvation (KNUFNS), Cambodia (Kampuchea)

There is little available information about women’s role in the Kampuchean United Front for National Salvation, but documentation suggests that women did participate. Robinson (2000, 32) concludes that “able-bodied men and women” joined the group as “refugee warriors.”

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Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF), Cambodia (Kampuchea)

Peang-Meth (1990, 173) concludes that “men and women felt compelled to take action” against the Khmer Rouge regime and their atrocities committed against the Cambodian population. Women and men lived and worked in KPNLF camps -- as a report by (Branigin 1981, n.p) concludes:

[...] young men and women are currently enrolled in the political warfare school to study history, geography, psychology, Khmer culture, the politics of the front and “the techniques of political warfare” [and] the students receive first-aid training and do manual labor in preparation for their infiltration into the Cambodian interior. According to Thou Thonn, the director of the political warfare school, about three-fourths of the graduates are sent to the interior. The rest remain in the border area, some attached to the front’s army as political advisers. Front officials said the main functions of those sent into Vietnamese-controlled areas of Cambodia are to gather intelligence, organize ‘subversion’ and wage ‘psychological warfare.’”

Women also participated as nurses, medics, and other health workers (Dufresne 1993). The KPNLF included women’s associations, the Khmer Women’s Associations (KWA) with offices and operations in KPNLF camps (Dufresne 1993). Their programs often included “pre-school, adult literacy programs, vocational education, arts, and health education” (Dufresne 1993, 271), though women also participated as educators in a broader context. KWA programming also included lessons about domestic violence and healthcare. Many KWA women were widows or those with husbands in the KPNLF, and women compose the KWA’s leadership (Ibid).

According to Dufresne (1993, 277),

The leaders of the KWA view themselves as very much part of the resistance. ‘The women must have skills and education in order to rebuild Cambodia, to liberate Cambodia. This is our purpose, and we try to give this purpose to the women. We must have people to rebuild Cambodia after we liberate our country. The men now must be soldiers. They must fight to liberate our country. We are women; we are in the background during this fighting. But women can operate together to rebuild our country. It is the women who will mend the social fabric.’ The KWA has also served more immediate political purposes. The creation of the KWA demonstrated the concern of the KPNLF for the welfare of the civilians. Further, it assured resistance fighters that while they were away or if they were killed, their families would be looked after. The KWA helped strengthen the allegiance of the people to the KPNLF.

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Khmer Rouge, Cambodia (Kampuchea)

Women were incorporated into the Khmer Rouge's activities during their rebel years (before 1975) in a variety of roles. According to Klemensits and Czirják (2016, 217), "it is evident that young women played a significant role on every level of the Khmer Rouge administration, even if in the past, it was understated." Because of the prevalence of child soldiers and forced conscription, it can be difficult to differentiate between reports of girls' participation and women's participation.

Women served in combat roles in the organization (Vachon 2005; Klemensits and Czirják 2016) as well as in logistical support roles (Terada 2004) including cleaning and maintenance (Vachon 2005), "medical work, making booby-traps, village defense and agricultural production" (Karkaria 2003, 37). Women in the KR helped organize women's support for the cause, served in rear-guard positions (Kumar et al. 2001), distributed propaganda (Frieson 2001) and served as medics as well (Vannak 2003). Frieson (2001, 9) quotes a former KR combatant who recalled,

By 1974, in each battlefield (smare phum) location in Siem Reap there were cells composed of one male soldier and two female combatants. The role of the women was to provide moral support to the men, encouraging them to keep fighting. The role of the women was strategically important because when the Lon Nol soldiers wounded us, one of the women in the battlefield location would tend to our wounds, and the second woman was needed to take care of food and so forth. If there were only men on the battlefield, they would lose their morale, especially when they saw the wounded and the dead all around them.

Frieson (Ibid) also notes that "During periods of heavy fighting, young women were positioned behind the front-lines and stood in rows 100 metres apart on the rice dikes and roads in order to care for the wounded. Male medics transported the wounded in hammocks to field hospitals, and women accompanied the wounded, fanning them, whispering encouraging words, and keeping them as comfortable as possible."

A woman's age and familial status were also important determinants of what roles women took on in the KR. According to Frieson (2001, 11), older women looked after children, whereas adult

women “worked alongside men in rice agriculture, digging canals, building dikes, planting and harvesting rice” and “young adolescent girls were formed into mobile production teams (krom chalat) and sent to work as agricultural labourers.” Furthermore, So (2010, 71) notes that “Mothers or widows with small children, along with elderly and infirm people, usually worked in the village. If a widow did not have any small children, she was put in a widow’s mobile brigade (kang memay) and moved from one to another remote area.” Relatedly, Mam (1999, 9) notes that later, “During the KR regime, families were divided into three different types of work teams. These work teams were determined by age and sex. The first work team was called senah chun. Senah chun consisted of adult males and females aged 50 and above. Males belonged to senah chun boroh and females belonged to senah chun neary. They were given lighter work and usually remained within the village.”

The KR reportedly organized a variety of all women organizations. This includes all-female armed units (Vannak 2003) a women’s wing of the Communist Party of Kampuchea (Kumar et al. 2001), a Women’s Association of Democratic Kampuchea, and the Patriotic Women of Kampuchea (Karkaria 2003), as well as gender-and age segregated workers units discussed above (Frieson 2001). Despite all of these associations for women, Karkaria (2003) asserts that the failure of the KR to develop a robust and coherent women’s policy undermined their ability to effectively integrate women and questions how influential and well developed some of the women’s organizations were.

Women (particularly educated women) rose to positions of leadership within the KR once the group took over as the ruling party (Terada 2004), though it is difficult to assess if women held leadership positions during the rebellion years. Reportedly, “Women played a significant role in executive, regional and grassroots levels [of the Khmer Rouge]” (Crane 2015, n.p.). But,

before the Khmer Rouge seized control of Cambodia in 1975, girls and women were generally assigned to behind-the-scenes tasks in the guerrilla force: medical work, communal upkeep and the transport of weapons, supplies and food to male soldiers at the frontline. But gradually [...] they were assigned greater roles (Ibid).

There are also reports of women serving as leaders associated with the female battalions (Vannak 2003).

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Lebanese Arab Army (LAA), Lebanon

Women's participation is not verified.

Lashkar-e-Islam, Pakistan

Women's participation is not verified.

Lahu National United Party (LNUP), Myanmar (Burma)

Women's participation is not verified.

Lord's Army, Uganda

Women's participation is not verified.

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between reports regarding the Holy Spirit Movement, the Lord's Resistance Army, and the Lord's Army. There is at least one report of the Lord's Army abducting boys and girls, though aside from being forcibly married, it is not clear what roles these girls took on in the group.

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Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), Uganda

In 2002, Lucima and Nyeko reported that there were 400-500 active female combatants in the LRA. At its peak in the early 2000s, the group included around 3000 combatants (Titeca 2019). This suggests female combatants made up approximately 16% of fighters, though some of these individuals were likely children: according to Carlson and Mazurana (2008), "a minority" of young women and girls abducted into the LRA were forced to engage in combat. Of the former female LRA members that Annan et al. (2009, 8) interviewed, 16% reported a combat role, "whether a fighter, fighter's aid or spy." McKay (2005, 390) reports that these young women and girls "engage in terrorist acts that create widespread fear, such as attacking their own families and neighbors, abducting other children, and killing civilians."

Komakech (2019, 105) interviews 30 ex-female fighters from LRA. One recalls,

We were very good fighters. We would strategically allure our UPDF victims into confusion by making sharp and scary sounds and noise, including beating tins and any noisy object we would lay our hands on, and given the scare and confusion, we would be delighted to have a kill. In one of the successful encounters, we applied our usual tactic and we had for ourselves an exciting result; we overpowered them [UPDF] and burnt two of their tanks [Armoured Personnel Carriers – APCs] that they abandoned because we overwhelmed them.

Another recalls having to carry dead or dying comrades away from battle (Ibid). A small number of women and girls became commanders (McKay 2005). For example, one woman, called Captain Achiro, commanded ambushes on state soldiers (Komakech 2019). During an ambush, she reportedly shouted, “You are used to having sex with us in Kasubi [a suburb in Gulu municipality]. Today, I am commanding a war on you!” (Ibid, 105). She also reportedly married a security forces soldier “to gain access” to state “security details” (Ibid). There are reports of a “Mary Company” for LRA female fighters, though few details about the operations of this group (Cline 2013).

Women and girls performed various auxiliary roles outside of sexual labor. Annan et al. (2009) found that 69% of their interviewees, all former women and girls of the LRA, performed supportive tasks. Women served as porters, babysitters, cooks, supplies gatherers, and other domestic tasks (Ellison 2015; Gustavsson and Rubsenon 2017; Carlson and Mazurana 2008). In addition, some women fulfilled more specialized roles: “Earlier interviews suggest that more educated girls were sought by LRA for nursing, midwifery, radio communication, record-keeping, and logistical support” (Annan et al. 2009, 8; Carlson and Mazurana 2008; Carlson et al. 2006).

Komakech (2019, 106) identifies “escorting and guarding, mourning squad, regimental units in charge of administration, and intelligence” as non-combat activities female fighters took on, as well as smuggling weapons and uniforms. For example, “even in Kony Village, the onetime headquarter of the LRA rebel leader, women mostly guarded it” (Ibid, 107). Komakech (Ibid, 107) concludes,

Similarly, the various LRA established sites also had majorly women as; Regimental Sergeant Major (RCM) over seeing the administration of discipline, welfare, training and parade needs and equipment. They were also largely in the LRA Military Police to ensure discipline and handling crimes. Many women were also recruited into the intelligence arm of LRA because they were considered actually intelligent. One of the former male commanders when asked on this matter said, “women were our best in intelligence work. They were intelligent and intuitive”, repeating what the rest of the male LRA had earlier said, as if the message was carefully choreographed.

An estimated 80% of LRA forces are abducted children (McKay 2005, 390). Pham et al. (2008) estimate that around a quarter of the LRA’s child soldiers are female. Carlson and Mazurana (2008) estimate that one in six female adolescents in Northern Uganda were abducted by the LRA. Many of the young women and girls abducted into the group serve as “wives” for male combatants. According to Annan et al. (2008, 9),

The relationship is familial, and children are born and raised by abducted mothers and their captor husbands. These forced marriages are highly regulated and controlled by the LRA’s top leadership, with females being distributed to males based on the males’ rank and the physical attributes desired by the particular male commander (although lower ranking commanders and fighters do not appear to have much say regarding which

female is given to them by higher ranking commanders). There was seldom a ceremony, and never rituals resembling traditional marriage practices.

The LRA has also created a hierarchy among the wives. According to Ocitti et al. (2019, n.p),

To assert control over his “family”, commanders often appointed their first wife as the most “senior”, with subsequent wives being referred to as “juniors”. This created competition between women as they jostled to gain the attention and support of their allocated husband. Although women invariably described their initial enforced sexual intercourse as terrifying and traumatic, over time they came to view sex and physical closeness as a means to survival. Many of them said they wanted to be “more loved”, and have “more time for sexual intimacy.”

Baines (2014, 2017) similarly discusses ‘senior wives’ and the role of forced marriage among abducted women in the LRA.

Young women and girls forced to become wives for male combatants often also receive military training and carry guns. According to Human Rights Watch (2012, n.p), “Girls abducted by the LRA undergo ‘military training’ but are also forced to become ‘wives’ or sexual slaves of LRA fighters. They usually stay with the same fighter during their entire time in captivity.”

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Lao Resistance Movement (LRM), Laos

Women's participation is not verified.

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Sri Lanka

Women's roles in the LTTE evolved over time as the group began to include women's liberation in its stated agenda. Alison (2003) explains that women joined the LTTE for a variety of reasons, from feelings of ethnic oppression, experiences of trauma, family ties, and women's emancipation.

By the early 1990's, combatant women in the LTTE were increasing "rapidly," with women's combat participation estimated to be between 15% to one third (Alison 2003, 39). Each battalion had its own women's unit, and women established and ran their own camps (Wall and Choksi 2018). Women were particularly active in suicide bombing as well. Stack-O'Connor (2007, 53) writes the following on the prevalence of LTTE female suicide bombers, part of the the "Black Tigers:"

By most estimates, women make up about 15 to 20% of the LTTE's guerrilla fighters, and about 33% of the Black Tigers. Between 1991 and 2006, female Black Tigers have committed at least 15 suicide attacks on land and male Black Tigers have been responsible for about 35 suicide bombings on land. Women have also been involved in suicide attacks as Freedom Birds and Sea Tigers, the LTTE's navy, but reporting on their involvement in naval suicide attacks is inconsistent at best. Female Black Tigers have gained fame even though they account for only about 30% of attacks, because they have been used against prominent political targets, including Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister Kumaratunga, and most recently, Lieutenant General Sarath Fonseka. Among groups using suicide terrorism, only the PKK and Shamil Basayev's Chechen group use women as regularly and systematically as the LTTE.

There were two main all-women brigades in the LTTE, the Sothiya brigade, formed in 1989, and the Malathi brigade, formed in 1994 (Dissanayake 2017, 2). The Sothiya brigade was named after a female military leader (Ibid, 3). According to Dissanayake (2017, 2), “Similar to their male counterparts, women laid and cleared mines, carried weapons alone, operated heavy machinery and dug bunkers.” Apparently the group’s naval wing, the Sea Tigers, was primarily female (Alison 2003, 39). Indeed, the the Malathi brigade was divided in economic, political, and intelligence, and naval units (Thamizhini 2020).

Von Knop (2007, 401) argues that the case of LTTE exemplifies that women are often recruited into groups at particularly high rates when the group experiences major losses in membership due to combat deaths.

However, before women became more active in combat roles, they were confined to auxiliary roles, and certain auxiliary roles remained “feminized” despite women’s entrance into traditionally masculine roles. Dissanayake (2017, 2) writes, “Even though women began to join the separatist movement in 1976, female cadres were initially confined to supportive roles such as propaganda, fundraising, recruitment, medical care, and information collection.”

Stack-O’Connor (2007, 52) claims, “While it appears that no job is off limits to LTTE women, there appear to be some jobs that are ‘women’s work,’ particularly in nursing and social work.” Women often took up organizational roles after disenrolling from combatant service for the group. Hellmann-Rajanayagam (2008, 17) explains that these women

may become members of the politbureau like Thamilini, work in the Peace Secretariat, like Selvy, its Human Rights spokeswoman, the PDS, like Gita, or the TRO, as principals of LTTE-children's homes, like Jayanani or, as was the case especially after the Tsunami, they work as doctors in the Tilipan Primary Health Centres and other health institutions with limited means but great dedication. 40% of Tamil Eelam Police personnel are women, and many health, education and administrative institutions are led and run by former LTTE women with great efficiency.

In addition to its women’s brigades, the LTTE also had a Women’s Front of the Liberation Tigers, formed in 1983 (Alison 2003, 38-39). In 1991 the Front released a statement outlining the following aims (Alison 2003, 45):

- to secure the right to self-determination of the Tamil Eelam people and establish an independent democratic state of Tamil Eelam;
- to abolish oppressive caste discrimination and divisions, and semi-feudal customs like dowry;
- to eliminate all discrimination against Tamil women and all other discrimination, and to secure social, political and economic equality;
- to ensure that Tamil women control their own lives; and
- to secure legal protection for women against sexual harassment, rape and domestic violence

There is disagreement as to women's participation in leadership positions. Women were commanders, including of the women's units (Thamizhini 2020). As Alison (2003, 47) notes, many have questioned the LTTE's inclusion of women as genuinely liberating for Tamil women because of "the presumed lack of women in highly placed decision-making positions within the LTTE." Alison (Ibid) continues,

Radhika Coomaraswamy has said of LTTE women that '[t]hey are not initiators of ideas, they are only implementers of policy made by someone else, by men [...] They become cogs in the wheel of someone else's designs and plans [...] They are the consumers, not the producers of the grand political project'. However, Bose claimed in 1994 that three of the LTTE's Central Committee, its top decision-making body, were women. In 2002, Thamilini told me that there were currently 12 members on the Central Committee, five of whom were women. There is also a separate women-only committee on women's development, with members drawn from various sections of the organisation. When I asked her about the allegation that women are much more represented in the military activities than in political activities, Thamilini agreed that in the past women were not so involved in the Political Wing but argued that this is changing.

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Lugansk People's Republic (LPR), Ukraine

We found no estimates available as to how many women were part of the Lugansk rebellion, or what kinds of roles they most often took on. Limited evidence, however, shows women active in both combat and non-combat roles.

Wendle (2014, n.p) reports “Pro-Russia brigades of female fighters” in the eastern Lugansk region, but also notes that it was a gender-integrated unit. One female member of the group interviewed by Wendle reports having been a part of the rebellion “from the very start.” Another asserted, “It doesn’t suit a woman to walk around with assault rifles, but we are doing what we have to right now,” reflecting that the recruitment of women was seen as an abnormal necessity only during times of crisis. The “Ghost Brigades” in the Lugansk region appear to have included women (Losh 2015).

Women were also involved in logistical and political operations for the Lugansk People’s Republic. One woman was arrested for mercenary activities committed on behalf of the group (Vlas 2017). There is another report of a woman being arrested for organizing a political campaign on behalf of the group (State Border Guard Service of Ukraine 2020). According to Ukrainian officials,

Operational officers of Luhansk Border Guard Detachment from the Joint Forces Operation exposed a citizen of Ukraine for encroaching on the territorial integrity and inviolability of Ukraine. So, operatives established that the inhabitant of Stanytsia-Luhanska district of Luhansk region was the organizer of so-called “Referendum on the state independence of Luhansk People’s Republic”. The woman acted as a “member of the election commission” in the “referendum”, in particular, registered persons who participated in the voting, issued ballots, and monitored the voting process (Ibid, n.p)

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Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), Liberia

In a survey of a “representative sample” of UCDP-identified ex-combatants in Liberia, “approximately 20% were female” across four factions, including LURD. Of those, 71% said that their primary role was as a combat soldier, while around 20% listed non-combat positions including camp worker and administrative jobs as their primary role (Pugel 2007). Other studies put women’s participation as fighters in Liberian rebel groups closer to 2 and 4% (Utas 2005), though 22% of all combatants who participated in DDR in Liberia were women (Pugel 2007).

Women were thought of as especially effective combatants. One Colonel said, “They take a bit longer to train but become better fighters than the men” (Carroll 2003, n.p).

The LURD operated the ‘Women’s Artillery Commandos,’ (WAC) units composed of girls and women that at their peak consisted of “at least several hundred” people. Specht (2006, 23) concludes that “the WAC was known for its fighting capacity and was integrated into LURD military structures.” Women also participated in mixed units, and women commanders oversaw women and men (Ibid; Utas 2005). Black Diamond, a well-known LURD leader (and deputy command for the WAC), was recruited into the organization as a teenager and widely sensationalized by international media (Nilsson and Thapar-Bjorkert 2015). Female military leaders were in charge of all-female units as well as mixed-gender units (Coulter et al. 2008).

Still, “the majority” of girls and women involved with the LURD were not soldiers. They were “primarily the wives of combatants with some supporting roles such as carrying water or ammunition, cooking, [and] spying” (Specht 2006; Coulter et. al. 2008).

In his history of the LURD, Käikhö (2015, 256) writes of LURD founder Aisha Conneh and the group’s early days:

This former market woman with Liberian roots had reportedly divined the military coup of 1996 [...] While Aisha Conneh would have been the obvious choice as the chairman of LURD because of her close relationship to Conte´ [president of Guinea], which provided supplies, fighters say that this was impossible because of her gender. This is why her husband Sekou Damate Conneh, Jr – a former tax collector in Liberia, and a trader in used cars – was appointed as the liaison between the rebels and the Guinean government, and the national chairman of LURD. Because he lacked a powerbase independent of his wife and his position was completely dependent on her, it must have been felt easy to control him [sic].

In an interview with the New Humanitarian (2004, n.p), Conneh said she was a “founder and main leader of LURD” who had arranged support for the movement.” Moreover, she argued, “LURD fighters know me very well for what I have done for them in Guinea when LURD was formed and in fact I made Sekou Conneh the chairman of LURD forces [...] I am considered as a leader in LURD.” Elsewhere, researchers refer to her as the “head” (Hoffman 2019, 139) and “co-leader” (Bjarnesen 2018, 159) of the LURD. Conneh helped facilitate recruitment from Guinean forces into LURD and used her relationship with Conte to free imprisoned LURD fighters (Bjarnesen 2020).

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19th of April Movement (M-19), Colombia

At its most popular, “M-19 is believed to have been 1500–2000 people strong including about 30% women” (Henshaw 2020, 6). When they demobilized in the 1990s, M-19 consisted of around 31.5% women, a higher percentage than the other guerrilla groups demobilizing at that time (Londoño and Nieto 2007).

M-19 women worked in a variety of roles, often sharing them with men (Vélez Morales 2017). One former combatant concludes, “It is a guerrillero it is a guerrillera, either way you have to do the same, absolutely the same tasks” (Gjelsvik 2010, 42). Women members worked in intelligence and logistics (Wood 2019) as well as as diplomats and representatives (Ortega 2015). Lists of women demobilized from M-19 “frequently omitted women” who were part of “political militias” (Bouvier 2016, 4).

Women were “top commanders” in M-19 (Durán et. al. 2008, 13). The organization “had more women amongst their national leaders than any other guerrilla movement. However, this did not mean that there were no difficulties regarding gender issues, or that the weight of chauvinist opinion did not affect the internal dynamics of the organisation” (Ibid). At least two women were part of the national directive, comprising 15% of members (Londoño and Nieto 2007). One woman, Vera Grabe, was part of the highest leadership organ, the Superior Command. Women

also participated as representatives for the group, including Carmen Cordona, an M-19 negotiator during the Dominican Republic Embassy in Bogota in 1980. Colombia forces reportedly killed her in 1981 (The Washington Post 1981). In Vásquez Perdomo's memoir (2005), she recalls participating in many of M-19's front-line operations, their clandestine efforts, and in group leadership.

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March 23 Movement (M23), DR Congo

Houngbedji, Grace, and Brooks (2012, 4) conclude that "many" women "have fought alongside men in non-state armed groups such as Mai Mai, M23 or the CNDP." The peace agreement signed by the M23 and the government includes "Planning of the cantonment shall take into consideration the desirable characteristics for a cantonment site, taking into account the specific

needs of the M23's female combatants" (Peace Agreements Database 2013, 4). Former child soldiers report that M23 had a "female military police" that also included girls (MONUSCO 2015, 19).

The M23 also forcibly recruited girl soldiers, including those older than 15 (Robjant et. al. 2020). An estimated 9% of girls under 18 interviewed by MONUSCO said they participated in M23 as combatants (MONUSCO 2015). Girls in the group also performed domestic tasks (Ibid).

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Mahaz-i Milli-yi Islami-yi, Afghanistan

There may be a women's association affiliated with Mahaz-i Milli-ya Islami-yi Afghanistan. Fatima Gilani, the daughter in law of the leader of the armed group, established the Afghan Women's Council in 1993. According to Pourzand (2003, 69), "The Council has run schools and clinics for refugees in Peshawar and also been involved in advocacy activities and has a publication for women called Zan-e-Afghan (Afghan Women)." It is not clear the extent of the relationship and whether they are merely politically aligned or if the armed group has taken a role in organizing the women.

Fatima Gailani served as a spokesperson for Mujahideen while living in exile in London in the 1970s (Skaine 2008).

There are some reports that women were involved in the Mujahideen in supportive roles; however, because their activities are not attributed to specific groups it makes it difficult to estimate how women contributed at the rebel-group level. In light of this problem, we code

women as participating in logistical support and in auxiliary roles, though we do not provide prevalence estimates for individual groups. As Dearing (2010, 1088) notes,

as participants of the anti-Soviet jihad, most women played supportive roles to mujahideen. There was an important role for non-combatants to fill, to include political activity, writing and supporting front-line fighters. Women sheltered and hid mujahideen traveling through villages, stood watch in the evening as mujahideen slept. Women would tend to soldiers by cooking, cleaning clothes or dressing wounds. They would clean, oil and repair weapons. They would also serve as couriers, carrying weapons, radios, and supplies from safe havens to the front. They would even wash and care for the dead, preparing them for burial and often mother orphaned mujahideen children. It was also incumbent on women to carry out vengeance in accordance with tribal code, when no living or able man of the family could reclaim the family's honor. One woman during the anti-Soviet jihad, after seeing many in her village killed by Soviets, pleaded with her brothers to give her a bomb so that she could destroy a tank and become a shaheed, however they refused since the obligation for vengeance became the brothers' first.

Ahmadi and Lakani (2016, 5) similarly suggest that women were “mobilizers, sympathizers, logistic providers, informants, and preventers of violence.”

Ellis (2000, 46) conducted interviews with women working with the mujahideen in this period. One recalls:

There were women in every village to cook and clean for the Mujahideen... In Kabul, I would carry guns in my purse. I would deliver guns to other Mujahideen, our house was a safe house... Myself and two other women washed the clothes of the Mujahideen, we took an active part in the resistance in Afghanistan... There were three of us women who cooked for 600 men, we washed clothes for 600 men. During the night, we carried a gun and took our turn at standing watch... I was taught to fire a gun by my cousin, in case I was ever alone. We were allowed to clean and oil the guns, and to cook and clean the clothes for the Mujahideen.

Women also hid bullets for fighters (Ibid).

He also notes that “women have played an important inspirational role as purveyors of information in Afghanistan through artistic expression, particularly during times of crisis and in support of mujahideen” (Ibid, 1091). Fatima Gailani (the daughter of a leader of the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan) served as a spokesperson for the Mujahideen while living in exile in London in the 1970s (Skaine 2008).

Still women's participation in this movement remained limited. As Moghadam (2002, 24) noted, “unlike liberation, resistance, and guerrilla movements elsewhere, the Afghan Mujahideen never encouraged the active participation of women” and claimed that the group had no female spokespeople. Importantly, she also notes that “the group responsible for most of the

intimidation of women was the fundamentalist Hizb-e Islami (Islamic Party), led by Gulbeddin Hekmatyar, who received considerable U.S. diplomatic and military support” (Ibid, 24).

Women also occasionally participated in armed violence. Some women in the villages were reportedly soldiers and they would hide other soldiers (Ellis 2000). In 1980 and 1981 schoolgirls and their women teachers led militant demonstrations in Kabul (Giles and Hyndman 2004). Giles and Hyndman (2004, 236) contend that a small group of women participated in “covert war” against the Soviets, but women’s roles were generally subordinate to men. They identify popular stories about women suicide bombers among the *mujahideen*, but these were not verified.

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Maidan, Ukraine

It is estimated that around 41% of Maidan participants were women (Onuch 2014). However, women comprised only around 12% of protestors living in the Maidan “tent cities” erected as the protests escalated (Phillips 2014).

According to Benigni (2016, 62), “women played crucial roles in organizing and co-ordinating participation in the protests, medical and humanitarian aid for injured demonstrators, crowd-funding, and communications through social media.” However, while women were essential to the overall machinery of the protests, many women found themselves pushed into low-ranking and highly gendered roles. Khromeychuk (2018) argues that while women did participate in the Maidan, this participation was circumscribed by gender norms. Khromeychuk (2018, 51) explains that tasks within the movement were highly gender-segregated:

The allocation of duties on the Maidan was firstly based on gender and only then on the person's skills. All of the women I interviewed said that they either started their volunteering in the kitchen or were aware that this was where most women started their protest activity. Anna Kovalenko, who was the only woman among the 42 leaders of the self-defence structure, said that the women who wanted to join her all-female unit told her they were "tired of making sandwiches."

Phillips (2014, 415) corroborates this:

It became apparent to many of these Maidan women, however, that they were filling a mostly support role; women were carrying out "traditional roles" and tasks that were expected of them as women (not necessarily as full-fledged citizens)—providing food for protesters, cleaning up the protest spaces, coordinating logistics, and administering services.

Indeed, when protests turned violent, "women were turned away from the barricades by men, 'for their own protection'" (Phillips 2014, 416). Even providing medical services was difficult for some women; an activist interviewed by Onuch and Martsenyk (2014, 14) explained that even credentialed nurses would be turned away from medical clinics, while inexperienced men were accepted. Interestingly, Phillips (2014) notes that despite the fact that women were often held back from the frontlines of the conflict, imagery of armed, partisan Ukrainian women were heavily circulated amongst protestors.

Some female Maidan participants, however, pushed back heavily against their marginalization. Philippis (2014, 417) summarizes the origins and activities of the Women's Squad of Maidan:

Out of this dissatisfaction with women's at least partial exclusion from the Maidan grew the phenomenon known as the "Women's Squad" (Zhinocha Sotnia), an all-women self-defense brigade. (The literal translation is "Women's Hundred," "hundred" referring to the common grouping of soldiers into squads of 100.) One of these women's brigades, the First Women's Squad, was closely associated with the Far Right. It did not get much support and apparently dissolved. Women's Squads were established in Ternopil' oblast in western Ukraine (Espresso TV 2014) and in L'viv. The 16th Women's Squad of Maidan Self-Defense in Kyiv carried out interesting street art projects promoting peace. The most visible and influential group, however, has been the Olha Kobylanska Women's Squad, established by young leftist and trade union activists under the leadership of well-known feminist and LGBT rights activist Olena Shevchenko and feminist activists Nadia Parfan, Maria Berlins'ka, and Nina Potarska.

According to Roßmann's (2016) interviews with female and male Maidan participants, however, it doesn't seem that all women were dissatisfied with their roles. Apparently some women even used the protests as a sort of dating platform (Ibid).

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Maoist Communist Centre (MCC), India

While details of women’s participation in the MCC are difficult to obtain, incident reports suggest that there were women cadre. Lata (2019, 5) suggests that “the Maoist Communist Centre of India (MCCI) mobilised women under the peasant organisations.”

At least two women, including the women’s wing chief and a commander were arrested in 2007 and 2008 (SATP n.d.). Chitrlekha’s (2017) oral history interviews with Naxalite women includes discussion of a female MCC member who was arrested and tortured by Indian police.

MCC also operated a Women’s Front (SATP n.d.). There is one report of the women’s wing of the MCC preparing a list of rapists who had not been punished (Narayan 2011, 1082). The MCC organized a mass association called Nari Mukti Sangh (NMS). According to Lata (2019, 34), “the NMSS and NMS were formed by the Communist Party of India (Marxism Leninism) Party Unity in 1987 and Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) in 1989 respectively, which were the two Naxalite groups in undivided Bihar prominent in the landless peasant struggle.” The NMS was run by women leaders, including a female president, who led social and political campaigns (Ibid).

Women have participated extensively in the Naxalbari movement and other Naxal groups, suggesting their involvement in the MCC may be more substantive than documented.

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Malayan Communist Party (MCP/CPM), Malaysia

Women were active in MCP/CPM (Koo 2004), possibly constituting up to 30% of participants in the organization (Tan 2008). Musa (2013, 236) concludes that “women had played crucial roles through all the MCP’s phases of expansion and operation.” She summarizes:

Women in the MCP have been present largely as nurses, cooks, seamstresses, couriers, and wireless /radio operators, but they went through hardship and danger and fought the same battles as the male guerrillas. A few even climbed to the top party posts through hard work, intelligence and personal sacrifice (Ibid, 226).

MCP women lived in the same jungle camps as male guerillas, though “only a handful” were fighters (Musa 2013, 236). There was one platoon “comprised entirely of teenage girls,” but otherwise women and girls fought in mixed gender units, some with Women’s Sections (Ibid 2013, 242) and others on “Ambush Teams” (Hack 2008, 185). Estimates of front-line women in each camp range from 7-10% of all fighters (Ibid). MCP women “laid landmines and participated in military exercises and conflict,” (Tan 2008, 13), and MCP women were killed in action or captured by British forces (Ibid; Musa 2013). Female fighters generated significant media attention, especially during combatant Lee Meng’s trial for hand grenade possession and several murders (The Straits Times 1952).

Women’s non-combat work was essential to the MCP. For example, “the party communication system depended on female couriers since they were less likely to be subjected to close searches by police or the army. This saw the recruitment of many women” in clandestine networks (Musa 2013, 239). Women also participated in MCP strategizing, organizing operations, spying, political education, cultural education, recruitment, propaganda, and healthcare work like performing surgery (Koo 2004; Tan 2008; Musa 2013, 2014). Reportedly, “it was a Chinese woman who was responsible for directing and strategising all MCP activities in Singapore in the early 1950s, until she was caught by authorities in October 1953” (Musa 2014, 208).

For the MCP, women were key mobilizers and organizers because they worked among people in female-dominated industries (Ibid). Women also participated in the MCP army's "civil wing," the Anti-Japanese Union (AJU) (Ibid, 207). Women represented the AJU in the relief committee, registering refugees (Ibid). There was an associated women's political organization (League of Aware Women, the women's wing of the Malay Nationalist Party), but while clearly affiliated with the MCP, it is not clear that they were an official organ of the organization.

Women held leadership positions, including a wife-husband team who led the militant North Johor Brigade, women in command positions, and those in the senior officer corp (Musa 2013). Women also participated in political leadership, including on the group's central committee and as diplomatic liaisons. Their successes inspired Malay women to join the MCP (Ibid). Still, "women generally occupied a lower position in the MCP hierarchy, except for a few brave and intelligent ones" (Ibid, 240). Musa (2014, 213) contends,

[...] few MPA women comrades managed to move up to higher positions in the organization [...] The majority of women comrades remained as lower grade combatants with only a few being able to secure important senior positions.

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Movement for Development and Democracy (MDD), Chad

Women's participation is not verified.

Movement for Democracy and Justice in Chad (MDJT), Chad

Women's participation is not verified.

The MDJT reportedly included girl soldiers within its ranks. Though the majority of child soldiers in the organization are male, ten girls between 10-17 were released by the group in 2010 (UN Security Council 2011).

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Mujahedin-e Khalq (People's Mujahedin of Iran) (MeK), Iran

Women composed “nearly half” of the MEK’s membership in exile (Hassani 2017, 283). The group viewed women as “full partners” in the movement rather than secondary members segregated by rank or role (Ibid). According to Abrahamian (1989), the MEK’s early internal documentation suggested women composed 15% of rank-and-file members and approximately 9% of leadership. The group then expanded women’s participation in response- in 2005 women composed an estimated 30% of MEK’s military wing (Cafarella 2005).

MEK is known for its female leadership because, according to Hassani (2017, 281), reportedly the group’s “leadership consists entirely of women.” Indeed, the group’s Leadership Council consisted of 24 members, all of whom are women (Cafarella 2005). Half of the group’s political organization was composed of women, as were two thirds of military commanders (Ibid). MEK women led military and political units, including commanding military operations (Mohanty, Russo and Torres 1991; Hassani 2017; Etehad 2019). Women and men appear to have performed non-combat labor in tandem (c.f. Hussain and Cole 2020)

The MEK “has long been led jointly by husband-and-wife team Massoud and Maryam Rajavi, and is reputedly the largest militant Iranian opposition group committed to the overthrow of the Islamic Republic (Masters 2014, 1).

Some observers view the MEK as a ‘cult.’ For example, Rubin (2011, 1), concludes,

When I arrived at Camp Ashraf, the base of the group’s operations, in April 2003, I thought I’d entered a fictional world of female worker bees. Everywhere I saw women dressed exactly alike, in khaki uniforms and mud-colored head scarves, driving back and forth in white pickup trucks, staring ahead in a daze as if they were working at a factory in Maoist China. I met dozens of young women buried in the mouths of tanks, busily tinkering with the

engines. One by one, the girls bounded up to me and my two minders to recite their transformations from human beings to acolytes of Ms. Rajavi. One said she had been suicidal in Iran until she found Ms. Rajavi on the Internet.

At Camp Ashraf, 40 miles north of Baghdad, near the Iranian border, 3,400 members of the militant group reside in total isolation on a 14-square-mile tract of harsh desert land. Access to the Internet, phones and information about the outside world is prohibited. Posters of Ms. Rajavi and her smiling green eyes abound. Meanwhile, she lives in luxury in France; her husband has remained in hiding since the United States occupied Iraq in 2003 [...]

Friendships and all emotional relationships are forbidden. From the time they are toddlers, boys and girls are not allowed to speak to each other. Each day at Camp Ashraf you had to report your dreams and thoughts.

If a man was turned on by the scent of a woman or a whiff of perfume, he had to confess. Members had to attend weekly ideological cleansings in which they publicly confessed their sexual desires. Members were even forced to divorce and take a vow of lifelong celibacy to ensure that all their energy and love would be directed toward Maryam and Massoud.

Some defectors report torture, forced sterilization, emotional and psychological abuse, and sexual violence within the group (Hussain and Cole 2020). Similarly, some female defectors suggest that

[...] the apparent prominence of women in the group has less to do with equity than with furthering its leaders' desire for control. They say that what looks like empowering women is more about suppressing men, who Massoud Rajavi and those around him view as the more serious threat. It also has to do with MEK leaders' attempts to intimidate and control the group's hundreds of female members (Ibid, n.p).

The MEK's political wing, the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), includes a Women's Committee. Maryam Rajavi is the President-elect of the NCRI. The Women's Committee, according to its outreach materials, "works extensively with Iranian women outside the country and maintains a permanent contact with women inside Iran. The Women's Committee is actively involved with many women's rights organizations, NGOs, and the Iranian diaspora" (NCRI Women Committee n.d., n.p.). The Women's Committee publishes monthly reports on the state of women's rights in Iran (Ibid).

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Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC), Senegal

While a significant body of literature documents women’s role in peacebuilding in the Casamance, less work has been done on the role of women in the MFDC. Still, Leyendecker and Miscoiu (2018) estimate that 1 out of 10 MFDC combatants were women.

Mostly, discussions of women in the group have emphasized their spiritual/traditional roles. Women were present at MFDC marches, wearing traditional clothing and providing spiritual guidance for men (Stam 2009). According to Jeng (2018, 12-13),

When the Casamance conflict erupted, women played a significant role in supporting the movement for independence. The role of women in secession conflicts has always been underreported. However, in Casamance, the MFDC could not have been enduring for such a long time without the support of the women-folk. The women did not only undertake the mystical and traditional preparation of new recruits, but they had also planted mines in the dense forests in Casamance.

A photographer documenting the Casamance conflict provided the following caption for a photo: “Senegalese women affiliated to the political wing of the MFDC sit on the porch of the movement’s headquarter before an animist pray to bless the fighters in the jungle” (Brabo n.d.). We could not identify other sources that verify women’s membership in the political wing of the MFDC.

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Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), Philippines

Hall and Hoare (2015) contend that women have been "active" in the MILF "in a variety of combat and non-combat roles," including healthcare, education, and fundraising. Duque Salazar (2019, 16) similarly suggests, "the MILF has recruited women, but most of them play supporter roles rather than combatant roles." Reports suggest that the organization may have had fewer female combatants than the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), from which the MILF split, or at least more unrecognized women on the front-line (Dwyer and Cagoco-Guiam 2012).

The MILF had "women's units organized as auxiliaries responsible for medical services, fundraising and education," the Bangsamoro Islamic Women Auxiliary Brigade (BIWAB) (Ibid). The BIWAB's "main mission was to ensure the safety of the combatants by attending to their medical and other basic needs and also serving as the reserve force" (UNFPA Philippines 2020, n.p). The organization's training included "activities like jungle survival, self-defense and first aid" which "all took place in the forests without any documentation to ensure no traces of activities were left behind and discovered" (Conciliation Resources 2015). One former BIWAB member recalls, "We were not allowed in the firing line, but we were the reserve force. If something happened to the men in the field, we were next in line" (Cabusao 2019, n.p). BIWAB participants did not otherwise fight in combat (Lundström and Marhaban 2016).

The organization operated different units, for example, the Training and Education Department, with female leadership (LSE Centre for Women, Peace and Security and Berghof Foundation 2020). Women also reportedly were battalion commanders for the BIWAB (Cabusao 2019). After the peace agreement, some women affiliated with BIWAB became active in civil society (Ibid; Conciliation Resources 2015).

There is some disconnect between how some women see their own contributions and how others perceive them. For example, some women who participated as doctors, nurses, communications workers, and cooks were seen by the group and public as civilians while men performing these same jobs are viewed as MILF soldiers. But women viewed themselves as part of the rebel movement (Hall and Smith 2016).

One of the five MILF delegates negotiating the peace deal was a woman (Santiago 2015; Council on Foreign Relations 2019). The 2014 agreement included specific provisions for decommissioning MILF women auxiliaries and reintegrating them into the labor force (Hall and Hoare 2015).

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Mindanao Independence Movement (MIM), Philippines

Women's participation is not verified.

Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), Peru

Women’s participation in the MIR and other 1960s movements was reportedly “limited” compared with the later Shining Path and MRTA in Peru (Romero-Delgado 2020, 81). Still, there were “women fighting with at least one MIR unit, and the imprisonment of the wives of MIR leaders by the government aroused international concern” (Jaquette 1973, 348-349).

Women also worked as couriers between the MIR and related offices in major cities (Brown 2017). University women reportedly joined the MIR's Youth League (La Serna 2020).

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Movement for Justice and Peace (MJP), Côte d'Ivoire

Women's participation is not verified.

There is evidence of women in FN, of which MJP is part, but the specific groups within FN are not noted in the sources (see *Forces Nouvelles (FN)*).

Maoist Communist Party (MKP), Turkey

Reports suggest that women fought for the MKP as combatants, were 'leaders' in the party's political activities, and were incarcerated as political prisoners. Several women were killed in combat, as recently as 2017 (Reuters 2010; OFPRA 2018; ANF News 2020a, ANF News 2020b). Women MKP prisoners went on hunger strike between 2000-2001.

A pamphlet published to honor 'Rosa,' a "leading member of the [MKP]" notes that women held political meetings to determine how, on the "front-line of ideological struggle to make women not only participating, but leading the people's war and the Maoist Communist Parties" (Banned Thought, n.d., 27). It concludes that women were "really present in the Party and in its battles, including armed struggles," and that "for many years the majority of combatants were women" (Ibid, 11).

MKP women also formed mass political organizations, and possibly a women's union. Women are implicated in couriering and other logistic activities: 4 people, including 1 woman, were

arrested in 2003 transporting supplies – including sanitary napkins- to MKP camp (BBC via Nexis Uni 2003).

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Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC), DR Congo

Women's participation is not verified.

Tupamaros (MLN/Tupamaros), Uruguay

Estimates suggest that women composed between 25% (Reif 1986) and 39% (Brum 2014) of the Tupamaros. This proportion could be even higher- Lopez-Alves (1989, 237) argues that “from 1969 to 1972, the percentage of females increased from 39 per cent to 77 per cent.” But women reportedly composed fewer than 16% of arrested cadre (Perlstein and Vetter 1990).

Women were involved at all levels on the front-line, in non-combat roles, and in leadership (Gonzalez-Perez 2006; Brum 2014). All Tupamaros squads included at least one or two women, and cadres’ duties included both combat and auxiliary work (Reif 1986; Randall 2015). Former women rebels suggest that men and women assumed risk and performed many tasks equally (Vidaurrazaga Aránguiz 2019). Women participated in kidnappings, robberies, and led an assault on the prison that freed twelve female Tupamaros (Ibid). They were also incarcerated and tortured (Randall 2015).

Women also worked as officers guarding the organizations' prisoners, sewed clothes for fighters, prepared meals, assembled, and disassembled weapons, took photographs for and assembled fake passports, worked as medics, scouted meeting and hiding places, and ferried weapons and supplies (Churchill 2010). Churchill (2010, 118) concludes, "Due to the fact that mainstream Uruguayan society stereotyped women as innocuous and non-violent, Tupamaras [women members] infiltrated neighborhoods and secure buildings with ease. The allegedly innocent appearance of Tupamaras also allowed for the transmission of messages and objects such as weapons in purses and bags."

Emilia Carlevaro, a former member, recalls,

And so, in 1966 or 1967 many of us joined the recently formed MLN. Until I was taken prisoner for the first time, in 1969, I participated legally, through my professional association. But at the same time I was functioning underground, building infrastructure and working on logistics [...] Look, to affect a believable cover, I often had to be the 'woman,' 'girlfriend,' or such for comrades when we used hotels where couples went to make love [...] I was captured for the first time in 1969, when the police raided a house where we were working. It was a place where explosives were being made (quoted in Randall 2015, 121)

While women's involvement in auxiliary and combat roles was widespread, reportedly few women received leadership roles, and many of them were romantically involved with male members (Ibid). Vidaurrazaga Aránguiz (2019, 18) notes that "there [were] fewer women in the organization in the positions of power and in military tasks" than other roles. One former female rebel recalls that leadership roles for women were "very few, very few...there was a woman as a commando at some point" (Ibid, 19). Individual women who reached high levels of command are well known. For example, Lucía Topolansky was a Tupamaros leader and became the first woman Vice President of Uruguay (Ibid). Some women in leadership roles were in relationships with or otherwise associated with male leaders (Churchill 2010).

Like many other organizations, "The Tupamaros used popular societal stereotypes about women as harmless in order to help them in armed missions" (Churchill 2014, 153). For example, "incarcerated Tupamara usually functioned as an arm of propaganda for the organization" (Ibid). At the same time, Churchill (2014, 153) notes, internally "[The Tupamaros] expected female militants to 'lose' their femininity and especially reject motherhood as their inspiration for revolution."

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Myanmar Nationalities Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), Myanmar (Burma)

Women's participation is not verified.

According to one report, there were no women on the rebels' central executive committee (Kolås and Meitei 2019).

Sources

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Mizo National Front (MNF), India

MNF literature and former rebels' testimonies suggest that women did participate in the organization, though the extent is difficult to verify. The MNF's 1961 constitution designated a Women's Front (Mizo National Front, n.d.). Vanlalthanpuii (2019, 5) writes,

There were female volunteers in the MNF movement when the insurgency broke out in 1966. They fought alongside the men and suffered with the men. However, there is no written record of the numbers of female volunteers in the movement even though hundreds of women submitted their names to the MNF movement according [...] to a male volunteer.

Still, Vanlalthanpuii (2019, 15-17) concludes that “the female volunteers in the MNF, unlike women in earlier revolutionary movements in Bengal, played only supporting roles” and “did not engage in direct action,” though some did receive military training alongside men. One former MNF rebel suggests that there were “many” women who joined the organization (Northeast Review 2015). The former rebel also suggests that “most” MNF were not active combatants (Ibid).

Vanlalthanpuii (2019, 16) summarizes:

In the underground camps, most women worked as nurses and/or performed other supporting roles, such as cooking, mending clothes and collecting wood for fuel, and so on [...] they worked hard to roll cigarettes for men and performed the duties of ‘mothers’ in the camp [...] The best educated women became office clerks and typists.

Women also trained nurses and doctors, were message couriers, and worked as office staff (Northeast Review 2015; Vanlalthanpuii 2019).

Sources

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Niger Movement for Justice (MNJ), Niger

Women's participation is not verified.

Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), Philippines

Women have been active and public-facing members of the MNLF, occupying a wide range of roles. According to Batistiana (2009, 186), “the women participants positioned themselves, based on their believed rights, duties, and obligations, as cadres of the MNLF and active participants of the struggle for the self-determination of the Bangsamoro.”

Women who worked with the armed wing of the MNLF more often filled auxiliary roles, but they sometimes received weapons training or even engaged in combat (Angeles 1996; 1998). According to one report (Kubota and Takashi 2016, 22),

Muslim women’s role and space in the private and public spheres also increased through exposure to new roles and experiences as combatants and auxiliaries of the MNLF and MILF. In Barangay Kibleg, some women in their 50s shared their experiences of training and fighting as MNLF combatants, recalling that a limited number of women, those deemed sufficiently physically and mentally strong, were recruited as combatants by the MNLF, with some even picked to lead male combatants.

According to Coughlin (2000, 237), “[W]hile the MNLF did not plan to send women to the more combat-active areas, scores of female guerillas fought when necessary [...] the wife of an MNLF commander led 150 men in armed conflict after her husband died in combat.”

One report claims that the MNLF recruited women to attend a peace rally, but upon arrival they were given weapons (GMA News 2013). Women further assisted the MNLF armed and political wings by serving as long-distance couriers, smuggling weapons and other supplies, making uniforms, cooking meals for combatants, collecting finances, and assisting with recruitment efforts (Angeles 1998; Santos et al 2010; Angeles 1996, 137; Hall and Hoare 2015, 95).

Throughout the 1970s, women played an important role in supporting the MNLF. They provided communication between MNLF members in urban areas and those in rural areas; delivered supplies, information, and weapons; made uniforms; prepared food; collected financial contributions; and helped with recruitment and raising awareness of the MNLF’s cause. Women received weapons training from the MNLF, and the MNLF also established the Women’s Committee as well as a women’s auxiliary group for the Bangsa Moro Army (BMA) (Stanford 2015).

Women also participated in ideological and governmental roles in the MNLF. Women were involved in the formation of discussion groups that spread MNLF ideology (Angeles 1996, 133-134). Angeles (1996, 138) notes that “Women also played a role in the MNLF negotiations with the government [...] although they focused mainly on providing clerical support, doing research and disseminating propaganda materials.” Women were “included in the organization structure of the MNLF,” and were “particularly active in economic affairs, finance, health, sanitation and social welfare committees” (Angeles 1996, 140). According to Angeles (2017, 76),

In 1972, the MNLF created the Women's Committee, whose main function was to support the MNLF and to perform whatever duties they would be called upon. The leadership of this committee came from the women who had been actively involved in the MNLF since its inception – among them Eleonora Tan and Bainon Caron. Their primary concern in the early years, aside from supporting the MNLF, was recruitment and consciousness-raising among the women in Mindanao.

Women do not seem to have filled high-level leadership roles, though there are reports of women serving as commanders in the MNLF. One female interviewee reports taking up arms and eventually becoming a “female commander” after she became widowed and lost her children after attacks by the state military (Conciliation Resources 2016, 9).

Women have been targets of demilitarization efforts (The New Humanitarian 2008; Ramos-Araenta 2018) and have also played roles in the peace process (Buenaobra 2011.. Hall and Smith (2016, n.p) reports that “In Bangsamoro, women in Moro National Liberation Front working as auxiliary personnel have not been included in the combatant quotas for post-conflict security force, putting at risk their reintegration or normalization.”

Sources

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Moro National Liberation Front – Habier Malik faction (MNLF – HM), Philippines

Women's participation is not verified.

Moro National Liberation Front - Nur Misuari faction (MNLF-NM), Philippines

Women's participation is not verified.

Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), Liberia

MODEL was a short-lived faction, splitting from the LURD only six months before the ceasefire (Specht 2005). Pugel (2007, 31) finds in a representative sample of Liberian ex-combatants that women composed a greater proportion of MODEL than other groups: “Approximately 20% of the sample of ex-combatants were female, and across the four factions, this percentage generally held true except for MODEL. The MODEL sample indicated a percentage of almost 40% female.” But women in MODEL likely participated primarily in non-combat roles. Käihkö (2018, 797) concludes in her research on the organization, “Several interviewees noted that few women overall held arms, and that there were no female commanders in either LIMA or MODEL.”

Many girl soldiers were also forcibly recruited by MODEL (Specht 2005).

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Montoneros, Argentina

Women constituted about 30% of Montoneros participants (Lewis 2002). Women actively participated on the front-line and as political activists; Hollander (1977, 191) calls women a “good proportion” of cadre who were an “integral part of [...] labor struggles and in the armed guerilla groups.” Female Montoneros recall being tortured by Argentine security forces and participated in the Comando Camilo Torres, an armed brigade that also focused on propaganda (Cosse 2014). But Manzano (2014) concludes that few women actually made it to the front.

In 1974, the Montoneros created a women’s political wing, Agrupacion Evita, arguing for “women’s active participation” in the movement (quoted in Grammatico 2010, 134; Noguera 2020). The group helped the Montoneros shift away from “clandestine work and armed struggle” and into politics (Grammatico 2010, 125). But “the female militants in the group—for the most part middle-class students—could not accept that domestic life was the sole fate of women, and many considered being assigned to Agrupacion Evita a punishment” (Cosse 2014, 439).

Grammático (2010, 135) notes that “The areas in which the members of Agrupacion Evita worked were fundamentally linked to helping children, mothers, and families. They engaged in a wide variety of activities, including organizing camps for children, cleaning and channeling streams in poor neighborhoods, repairing schools, and giving talks on women’s and children’s health [...]” (see also: Noguera 2021). Women of the group were also deeply involved in labor activism for women (Noguera 2021).

But while women fought in combat and participated in support roles, no women rose to Montoneros national leadership and few women reached any leadership positions (Grammatico 2010; Lewis 2002; Manzano 2014). Women did hold leadership roles in Agrupacion Evita (Grammatico 2010). Moreover, Esther Norma Arrostito co-founded the Montoneros and “served as its chief ideologist” until Argentine security forces murdered her (La Nacion 2008, n.p; Saidon 2012).

The group prioritized class struggle over gender politics, noting “here there are no men and women, there are exploiters and exploited” (Grammático 2010, 130). Still the group regulated some sexual relationships between heterosexual cadre (Cosse 2014).

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Movement for the National Salvation of Chad (MOSANAT), Chad

Women's participation is not verified.

Popular Movement of Azawad (MPA), Mali

Women's participation is not verified.

Republic of Anjouan (MPA), Comoros

Women's participation is not verified.

Patriotic Movement of Côte d'Ivoire (MPCI), Côte d'Ivoire

Women's participation is not verified.

There are many reports of women's involvement with MPCI as sexual slaves and victims. There is one report that highlights the potential overlap between these two categories, but there is no information about women's contributions to armed group activities. Amnesty International (2007, 15) reported one woman's experience:

The rebels caught me. There were some other young girls who had also been captured. On the way they told us to put on some of their combat uniforms. They started to beat us. Some of us took off our wraps in order to put on the uniforms. Others refused to change. They were killed there on the road. Once inside the camp the rebels began to maltreat us. They would hit me with pieces of iron, pieces of wood. Sometimes I would faint. The rebels raped us from the first day. For the first two days all of them raped the women. Later they shared out the girls among the rebels and after it was one person who raped a woman. They kept us there for a long time. Sometimes we would go out to the camp with the rebels.

There is evidence of women in FN, of which MPCI is part, but the specific groups within FN are not noted in the sources (see FN).

Women reportedly participated in rebel organizations in the Ivory Coast, though their participation in MPCCI specifically is not verified. Badmus (2009, 832) concludes,

Aside from being forcibly conscripted, other group of women voluntarily joined the armed factions and fight to protect themselves and other women from rape and murder, and as a survival strategy. To this group of women, becoming a soldier was a matter of kill or to be killed. Also in this category, others voluntarily chose to go into battlefield for ideological reason [sic] and to prove their equality with males.

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Ivorian Popular Movement of The Great West (MPIGO), Côte d'Ivoire

Women's participation is not verified.

There is evidence of women in FN, of which MPIGO is part, but the specific groups within FN are not noted in the sources (see *Forces Nouvelles (FN)*).

Women reportedly participated in rebel organizations in the Ivory Coast, though their participation in MPIGO specifically is not verified. Badmus (2009, 832) concludes,

Aside from being forcibly conscripted, other group of women voluntarily joined the armed factions and fight to protect themselves and other women from rape and murder, and as a survival strategy. To this group of women, becoming a soldier was a matter of kill or to be killed. Also in this category, others voluntarily chose to go into battlefield for ideological reason [sic] and to prove their equality with males.

MPIGO abducted women and sexually violated them, holding some for long periods of time. Some women abducted and kept as 'sex slaves' were abducted as children (HRW 2007).

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People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), Angola

According to Ducados (2004, 58), “There are no figures on how many women participated in the MPLA guerrilla army but oral testimonies indicate a substantial number.” Some of the coverage of women in the MPLA centers on the killing of five young female rebels by rival forces (Ayah 2020). One report suggests that women in the group were subject to more scrutiny than their male counterparts; for example, during the “morning formation and drill,” an MPLA leader “criticized the students, particularly the girls, for making too much noise, for being lax in discipline and forgetting they were in a war” (Barnett 1970, 9). Women in the camps were also reportedly involved in singing at night, where they performed “MPLA and traditional songs” (Ibid, 10).

The rebels articulated a commitment to gender equality as a part of their broader political project (Campbell 1998). As one female member, Comandante Dibala, stated “We consider that if we do not struggle for the freedom of women we would not be struggling for our own freedom. We consider that no one can be free when one oppresses others” (Dibala 1976, 57).

Despite this ideological commitment, only one woman served on the Central Committee (Deolinda Rodrigues de Almedia, who also helped found the Organization of Angolan Women [OMA]) and, as a political party in the 1980s, just 10% of the organization’s leadership was female (Makana 2017 and Ducados 2000). Makana (2017, 362) notes that though motherhood was a powerful motivating frame for women in the nationalist struggle in Angola generally, the MPLA adopted a much more militant version of motherhood than the other nationalist groups: “a patriotic mother within the MPLA was a revolutionary mother, one who was ready to fight for the revolution with her baby on her back and a rifle on her shoulder.” Furthermore, there are reports of “predatory attitudes” by the MPLA towards civilian women (Spall 2020, 38).

The MPLA included the Organization of Angolan Women (OMA); this women’s wing was established one year after the start of the conflict (Ducados 2000). There is also a report of “a female religious group named Santa Cecilia, which purported to be an apolitical youth group for the petite bourgeoisie among assimilated urban black Angolans” but which “Ultimately [...] doubled as a philanthropic organization and a clandestine MPLA cell” (Ayah 2020, n.p). There was also reportedly a women’s brigade engaged in military operations (MPLA 1971; Good 2014).

The female leaders of OMA “ mostly comprised educated women who had a strong link with the mainstream political leadership of the MPLA” (Ducados 2000, 15). Women in OMA were involved in mobilizing the civilian population, serving as porters of arms and food, and producing food for the army (Ducados 2000). OMA also helped raise awareness about the

MPLA's cause both among Angolans and the international community: OMA ran a radio program from Tanzania that was broadcast into Angola, published articles in Portuguese and English, and sought humanitarian aid (Ducados 2000). According to Berberoglu (2009, 101) "the women's organization facilitated their involvement on all levels of the struggle and served as a link between women and other sectors of the movement." The OMA hosted seminars to politicize women, provide them with "basic organizational training" and to mobilize support for the MPLA (Ibid). OMA also hosted a delegation of the Women's International Democratic Federation (MPLA 1971).

There are reports of abductions of girls by Angolan rebel groups and abuse against these abductees (including sexual violence), though the groups are not listed by name (Stavrou 2004).

Though specific groups are not named Makana (2017, 69) notes that in Angola, "Women who desired to enter and participate in the liberation struggles as combatants had to find some quasi-military roles such as transporting guns, engaging in espionage, and working in other clandestine activities. Their roles were, therefore, multidimensional and often contradictory as many were involved in various aspects of armed struggle as perpetrators, actors, porters, spies, bodyguards, and human shields."

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Patriotic Salvation Movement (MPS), Chad

Women's participation is not verified.

Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), Pakistan

Women have participated in MQM since its inception. More recently, women's participation in certain roles, particularly leadership, appears to have increased. When MQM first emerged in the 1980s, women formed a massive base of their support. For example, Farrukh (1994) notes that in 1989, 7500 women workers enlisted in MQM in a single day, which at time was possibly the largest ever mobilization of female workers in a single city. Yet women's roles were limited compared to those of men, despite the group having a women's wing (Haroon 2001).

Initially women were not allowed to serve in MQM as frontline combatants (De Mel 2002,103). But this did not mean women were not assigned dangerous tasks adjacent to combat, despite this running in contradiction to social gender norms. According to Haroon (2001, 185), "There were all sorts of stories of women being involved as couriers, protecting militants, running torture cells, transferring arms and hiding guns for their men in demonstrations. How far this is true and to what extent they were involved [...] remains an enigma."

A female leader of the faction MQM-L has been reportedly orchestrating a targeted killing network since 2017 (Southeast Asian Terrorism Portal n.d; Khan 2017). Women also collected dead militants' bodies and attended violent demonstrations (Haroon 2001, 188). According to Haroon (Ibid, 187),

Even in the most violent phase of MQM it was not established that women were playing an active militant role. They were fully aware that their men used guns but they were not involved in any planning. At that time, no woman ever admitted to being used to transfer arms. The allegations of torture cells being run under their patronage was vehemently denied by women publicly and privately.

In 1988, women MQM activists stormed a Karachi police station and freed 18 arrested persons (Southeast Asian Terrorism Portal n.d.). At least one female MQM member, part of the women's wing, was "disappeared," allegedly by law enforcement (Amnesty International 1996, 16). Exposing women to violence served a tactical role; Pakistani police were criticized for shooting at the women who attended MQM marches (Verkaaik 2004, 149).

Women took on less dangerous auxiliary tasks for the group as well; during a political crisis within the group during the early 1990's, women took over more administrative responsibilities in the party's headquarters as men were forced underground (Haroon 2001, 186). In 2016, six female MQM members, including a leader of the Women's Wing, were arrested by Pakistani authorities for vandalizing a media house (Khan 2016).

Women's leadership within MQM has grown over time. Haroon (2001, 183) contends that while MQM managed to gather extensive female membership in its early days, "[women] were not involved at all in the decision-making [...] Their opinion was not sought, their voices never heard, they were just there to implement." One of the few MQM women during leadership at the time expressed contentment with the limited role that women played, attributing it to women's lack of education, and stated that there was "no specific agenda" for women's equality although "Our leader [Altaf Hussain] always make it a point to address women especially and praise their role in the struggle" (Haroon 2001, 188).

Women seem to be more involved in leadership and political roles in the 2010s-2020s than during the group's earlier years. One report notes that "The Karachi-based Muttahida Qaumi Movement has fielded seven female candidates (up from five in 2008) out of a total of 81 [or almost 9 percent]" (Yusuf 2013, 1). Recently, women have served as National Assembly members (Dunya News 2018) and on city council (The News 2021). This increase of women in leadership positions coincides with a revitalizing and sharpening of the group's women's rights platform. The group hosts large rallies and conventions promising to bring women from the confines of the domestic into the public sphere (Zakaria 2012; Samaa TV 2012). In 2012, MQM chief and founder Altaf Hussain addressed one such rally claiming that women were "treated less than animals" (Deccan Herald 2012, n.p). According to New Communique World (2020, n.p), in 2020 MQM leader Tariq Jawaid declared,

In the whole of Pakistan particularly in oppressed provinces the role of women is not equal to men. They are suppressed. MQM is struggling to give equal rights to women as of men. There should be no discrimination due to gender an there would not be any kind of black law against women. Since the inception of MQM, we have given role to women [sic]. The awakening is growing in all oppressed women. They are also struggling with us. We are very much positive and optimistic that women will be with us shoulder to shoulder as a freedom fighter.

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Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA), Peru

According to Romero-Delgado (2020, 83), MRTA, lacking a women's wing, "failed to 'attract' as many women" as its rival rebel group, the PCP-SL (Shining Path). However, a female MRTA member interviewed by the Independent on Sunday (1997, n.p) asserted that women comprised about 50 of 150 MRTA members (33 percent), and that "MRTA has always tried to develop the role of women, to give them a place [...] And unlike in the Sendero Luminoso, they are encouraged to be feminists. They defend the right to do what they want with their bodies." Another report (Reuters 1997) claims that around 30% of MRTA's 200 estimated members were women. Women were also amongst the group of MRTA members who broke out of a Peruvian prison (Scott 1990).

Women and girls regularly participated in combat roles in MRTA (Friedman 2018; Romero-Delgado 2020). One female MRTA member claims that while "intellectual" women serve as leaders within the group, younger, poorer girls tend to serve as combatants because "They are poor. They have nothing to lose. They learn to live quickly and intensely" (Independent on

Sunday 1997, n.p). For example, female MRTA members, including teenage girls, participated in the hostage-taking attack on the Japanese Embassy in Lima (Derechos Human Rights 1997).

MRTA women also participated widely in non-combat roles. They guarded and engaged with journalists, were scouts and propagandists, hosted MRTA radio, and organized abductions and hostage-taking, among other activities (La Serna 2020). An American woman made headlines after she was arrested and jailed for decades in Peru for allegedly collaborating with MRTA, despite her claims that she did not know the extent of the group's tactics (Thompson 1997; Zarate and Neuman 2015).

Some women held leadership roles in MRTA. Jimenez Bacca (2000, quoted in Ortega 2012, 91) claims that "six women were reported on a police list among the 40 most prominent command cadres" (15 percent) of MRTA.

La Serna (2020) follows the lives of two female MRTA members: a woman who became the only female MRTA member to lead a guerilla army, and a low-level combatant whose experience is more representative of women in MRTA. Ultimately, he argues that while women were officially members of the group and that the group readily publicized the participation of women, women experienced hardships moving up in the ranks and more generally gaining unofficial acceptance amongst their male counterparts. Several articles cite anonymous "high-ranking" female members of MRTA (Friedman 2017, 170; Independent on Sunday 1997).

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Mong Tai Army (MTA), Myanmar (Burma)

The MTA formed when the Shan United Revolutionary Army (SURA) merged with other armed groups. While women had been “actively recruited as rank and file soldiers” into the SURA, the MTA “barred women from being foot soldiers” and previously front-line women were “demoted” to support roles in the organization (Ferguson 2013, 9). The MTA operated an extensive network of factories, schools, shops, and maintained a troop base of around 15,000 soldiers. Former SURA female fighters worked in the factories to build furniture, educated children in the schools and worked as nurses (Ibid; Ferguson 2021). Women in the MTA also established an organization called the Women's Association of Shan State, particularly to help protect Shan women from trafficking (Lang 1995).

Women’s leadership participation in the MTA is not verified. Ferguson (2013, 6) contends that even in SURA, “the actual ranking officials within the military hierarchy were invariably men.” While not MTA specific, Laungaramsri (2006, 81) writes,

Shan women joined the rebel army either as wives of Shan soldiers who were trained once a week or single females who were full-time soldiers. Female soldiers were trained to work in five different sections: food provision and nursing, accounting and clothing, personnel listing, armed combat, and public relations and outreach. In practice, very few female soldiers were assigned roles in or sent to the front-line while the majority was responsible for non-armed duties including nursing, food provision, maintenance of equipment, and communication.

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Togolese Movement for Democracy (MTD), Government of Togo

Women's participation is not verified.

Movement for Oneness and Jihad (MUJAO), Mali

A 2015 Swedish Defence Research Agency report concludes, "In Gao, some older girls had supported MUJAO against the MNLA and were fighting together with young men. Initially, MUJAO accepted girls among their ranks, but, soon after they had established their presence, they imposed Sharia law and restricted, among other things, the freedom of movement of girls and women" (Lackenbauer, Lindell, and Ingerstad 2015, 64).

In 2013, French security forces raided a MUJAO workshop where suicide bomb vests were made. Reportedly, local, forcibly recruited women sewed the vests (Ngono and Duri 2016).

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Mukti Bahini, Pakistan

The extent of women's participation in Mukti Bahini is unclear, but available evidence suggests women were involved in combat and non-combat roles. Rahman (2014, 93) references a Lembuchhara Female Guerilla Squad made up of eight women trained in "modern arms." Female fighters appear important to collective memory of the Liberation War: the 2011 film *Guerilla* follows a female combatant of Mukti Bahini (Akhter 2016). But while there are various photos of armed Mukti Bahini women and accounts of individual freedom fighters (Autograph ABP 2008), it seems that female combatants were not common. Mookherjee (2003, 164) estimates that there were a few hundred women who were armed members of the group, and even fewer of those saw actual combat.

There is evidence of women serving in auxiliary roles related to combat; according to Jahan (1975, 8), women worked as nurses and teachers in the group's hospitals and camps. Rahman (2014) notes that women gathered intel on the Pakistan Army and collected arms, in addition to nursing, cooking, and providing emotional support to fighters.

Mukti Bahini did have a Women's Wing (Tambs-Lyche 2018, 23), but there is little information about it available. Niazi (1998), former lieutenant-general of the Pakistan Army, contends that Mukti Bahini's Women's Wing served merely propagandistic purposes. This coheres theoretically with Mookherjee's account of the symbolic importance of women in the Liberation War: women's support was seen as legitimizing Mukti Bahini's cause, as women and their bodies were associated with the Bengali 'motherland' (Mookherjee 2008). However it is possible that the Women's Wing was more actionable than Niazi alleges, given his critical stance against Mukti Bahini.

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Muslim Brotherhood, Syria

Women were active participants in the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, yet evidence suggests that they struggled to rise in ranks within the group. There is little evidence of women participating in combatant roles, though according to Conduit (2016, 220), there are reports on the 1982 Hama massacre that note “young women fighting alongside Brotherhood fighters, female suicide bombers, and grief-stricken women in long black cloaks.”

Women and girls have been most active in organizational roles in the Muslim Brotherhood. Sawah (2017) estimates that around 10% of the Muslim Brotherhood’s youth branch are young women and girls. According to (Conduit 2018, 187), in 2015 there were around 100 female members in the Muslim Brotherhood. The Muslim Brotherhood has a women’s wing called the Syrian Sisters that has historically participated in recruitment, organizing, and sometimes, leadership (Kannout 2016). Lefèvre (2013) writes,

The roots of Syrian women’s involvement into the Muslim Brotherhood go back to the early 1950s when the young activist Amina Sheikha met Mustapha al-Sibai, the Syrian group’s charismatic leader, and then decided to set up a Syrian Sisterhood tasked with recruiting female members. At the time, the Syrian Sisters reportedly held a leading role in terms of organization and influence at the top echelons of the Muslim Brotherhood’s decision-making circles, but the brutal state repression of the late seventies and early eighties put a temporary break on their activities.

Lefèvre (2013) explains that women’s participation made a resurgence in the early 2000s, particularly in terms of directing charitable efforts:

[...] the Syrian Sisters took on a more prominent role in the group’s growing philanthropic and charitable activities — setting up civil society organizations to provide services to the exiled Syrian community. When the Arab Spring reached Syria and turned violent, pushing many to seek refuge abroad, these charities formed the backbone of the Muslim Brotherhood’s relief efforts—which have helped women heighten their profile within the organization and reach leadership positions.

Indeed, a few women do occupy leadership positions within the group contemporaneously. In 2013, six of the 40 women (15 percent) on the group’s Shura Council were women, as a result from pressure from the more progressive youth wing of the group (Lefèvre 2013, 10; Kannout 2016). Lund (2013, n.p) however, characterizes women’s influence on the group as “negligible.” Conduit (2018, 187) reaffirms this, explaining that in her interviews, when she asked for referrals to female group members, the only women recommended were wives of senior leaders, and that aside from the Shura Council, the only female leader in the group was the head of the women’s office. According to Díaz (2018, 140), men in the Muslim Brotherhood “tend to focus on highlighting [women’s] social functions over the political ones.”

Still, gender equality has been a recurrent theme in the group’s political agenda. The Muslim Brotherhood released a manifesto, the “Political Project for Future Syria,” which contained a

chapter dedicated to women that described women as “the core of humanity and the source of creation [...] equal in dignity, humanity and responsibility,” also asserting “women are the equal halves of men and the main principle in Islamic teachings is the equality between both apart from a very few exceptions stated clearly by Allah Almighty, for objective reasons and factors” (Sawah 2017, n.p). However, according to Conduit (2018, 187), “Although the 2005 Political Project had recognised the right of women to hold public office, and made a commitment to a limited sort of gender equality ‘apart from a very few number of exceptions,’ the 2012 Covenant and Charter made no mention of gender.”

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National Democratic Front (NDF), North Yemen/Yemen

Women's participation is not verified.

National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), India

Women participated in the NDFB when it was still named the Bodo Security Force and up until it split into multiple factions, but there is limited available, specific information about their involvement.

Women were reportedly militarily trained by military wing leaders (Saksena 2018). They transported messages and weapons (including disguising arms as a pregnancy bump), planned operations, nursed wounded soldiers, recruited new members, and gathered intelligence (Ibid). Women also held leadership positions: Saksena (2018, 160) interviews a female Lance Corporal

who joined in the group's early days and recalls, "I miss the adventurous life I had when I was in the NDFB."

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National Democratic Front of Bodoland- Ranjan Daimary (NDFB-RD), India

The NDFB-RD had an estimated 500 cadre in 2013, including 70 women (14%) (Times of India 2013). Security forces contended the group was armed with "sophisticated weapons" (Ibid, n.p). A 2016 report similarly concludes that the faction "drew both women and men" into "the armed movement" (Hindustan Times 2016, n.p).

Incident monitoring reports suggest that NDFB-RD women trained militarily in Bangladesh, and that many women were arrested by security forces (South Asia Terrorism Portal n.d.). For example, four women associated with the group were arrested when "documents containing plans of bomb blast were found in their possession" (Hindustan Times 2010, n.p).

While she does not distinguish between Bodo groups, Sen (1999, 7) concludes,

[W]omen had a lot of role to play in the Bodo movement. They protected other (male) activists, nursed the injured, protected the village property, and even participated in armed training. They did important errands, spread political and health awareness, and even led one women's organization during the movement. However, except in this woman's organization, they were never in the forefront of leadership. The most prominent leaders of the Bodo movement like Upendranath Brahma were positively inclined to women's participation. Yet, in the leadership hierarchy they were seldom on the top.

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National Democratic Front of Bodoland-Songbijit (NDFB-S), India

Women participate in the NDFB-S in front-line and non-combat roles. In 2016, reportedly 22 of the 100 NDFB-S cadres on Assam police’s ‘most wanted’ list were women (22%) (Saksena 2018). In 2015, security forces estimated that the group included around 15 armed female combatants (Assam Tribune 2010). A 2018 similarly report contends that the NDFB-S had around 10-12 women and estimates total group size as 500 (Anwasha Dutta 2018). A 2020 report similarly puts the total number of cadres at 450 (Karmakar 2020), suggesting that women composed approximately 2.5% of NDFB-S cadres.

The group reportedly trained women in their military training camps, where women and men also worked cutting firewood, fixing barrack walls and repairing roofs. Women worked in intelligence, as spies, hiding and couriering weapons, guarding armories, cooking, but even women performing auxiliary jobs were armed for self-defense (Ibid; Saksena 2018).

Indeed, Dutta (2018, 2) concludes that NDFB(s) women participate in a myriad of roles:

During my research stay from January to May 2015, some villagers told me that in the December 2014 conflict when NDFB(S) militants targeted adivasis in Kokrajha and Chirang districts, they saw female militants for the first time. While local journalists, and officers in the district and state administration of Assam (including the police, forest department) acknowledge the involvement of women, they maintain that women mostly work as messengers for the rebels or act as ‘link-persons’. Some women are active recruits as reported in local newspapers, but not much is known about them. However, the profile picture on a facebook page by the name NDFB(S) is that of five young women holding assault rifles. During a field visit, I was shown a photograph of a group of young women dressed in ‘army’ clothes and holding rifles. At first they looked like women training to join the India Army or its allied forces, but my interlocutor said that he had received this photo from NDFB(S), indicating full-fledged recruitment drive and training camp for women cadres. They are no longer messengers but training to be soldiers. Given the lack of educational and economic prospects, joining the rebel group is not just an economic but also a moral and ideological incentive.

Most information on women in the NDFB-S comes from arrest reports. Arrests of women cadre in 2014 signaled for apparently the first time that the organization recruited women members. Security forces detained 16 girls and women on suspicion of rebel participation- the police concluded that “since girls are not suspected easily as militants by security forces, the outfit is now using them as over ground workers” (Telegraph 2015, n.p). Photos of those arrested indicate that they are likely young, possibly teenagers.

Women cadre have been apprehended carrying weapons, handsets, and organizational documents (The Sentinel 2015, 2016). A 2019 report indicates that a “woman leader” of NDFB-S was arrested as well, though it is not clear if this refers to military or noncombat leadership (The Sentinel).

While she does not distinguish between Bodo groups, Sen (1999, 7) concludes,

[W]omen had a lot of role to play in the Bodo movement. They protected other (male) activists, nursed the injured, protected the village property, and even participated in armed training. They did important errands, spread political and health awareness, and even led one women's organization during the movement. However, except in this woman's organization, they were never in the forefront of leadership. The most prominent leaders of the Bodo movement like Upendranath Brahma were positively inclined to women's participation. Yet, in the leadership hierarchy they were seldom on the top.

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National Liberation Front (NLF/FNL), Vietnam (South Vietnam)

Women participated in combatant and noncombatant roles within the NLF, the insurgent communist forces within the US-backed South Vietnam. Some sources estimate that “around 30 per cent of female revolutionaries in certain provinces were part of the NLF,” but Taylor asserts that orders sent from various NLF headquarters “constantly stressed the need for further efforts, maintaining that 30 per cent was the goal, not the current membership” (Taylor 1998, 68). This

suggests that even though female NLF membership was not widespread across all regions, recruiting women was a priority for the group.

The NLF included women combatants in its ranks. Women typically fought in all-female units with some exceptions (Taylor 1998). There are reports of female guerrillas working in tunnels, such as “a teen-ager named Vo Thi Mo, who ate rats to stay alive and says she calmly dispatched American soldiers with bullets from her AK-47” (Barclay 1985, n.p). Apparently, the NLF preferred women to fight the South Vietnamese forces rather than the Americans; according to Taylor (1998, 67), “one can only speculate regarding this structure: perhaps it was to protect them from retaliation, or perhaps through fear that they lacked training and skill to take on the much larger and better-armed Americans.”

Data obtained by Davison (1967, 82) for counterinsurgency purposes corroborates Taylor’s (1998) claim that the NLF prioritized women’s recruitment, including in the armed forces:

The Viet Cong high command was well aware of the importance of women as a source of military manpower. A document captured in April 1966, dealing with an unspecified area, prescribed that 50% of the guerrilla force should be composed of women. It also gave the number of women at that time involved in the Front military or paramilitary forces in the same (unidentified) area:

Guerrillas: 3,304 (including 1,266 women)
Secret guerrillas: 94 women
Self-defense force 17,009: (including 9,334 women).

However, for many women it was difficult to enlist as combatants because they could not leave their families (Taylor 1998). As such, women were more prominent in auxiliary roles. While at first the NLF restricted its membership to men only, by 1963 the group began recruiting women for logistics (Donnell 1967). Women also served as nurses and political educators (Ibid). Further reports indicate that women provided food and shelter, prepared ambushes, and repaired trails (Taylor 1998). Women took care of male soldiers through organizations for women such as the Foster Sisters’ Association and the Foster Mothers’ Association (Davison 1968). In addition to the more traditional “women’s work,” women also participated in intelligence gathering and couriering appearances (Ibid, 53). According to Taylor (1998, 63):

They could observe the actions of the government and ARVN, the Army of the Republic of Vietnam, virtually unnoticed. They passed information from the market-place to other villages and to the Viet Cong cadres, who found it invaluable. Pike knew the term, 'market mouth', which was used by the Vietnamese themselves to describe the women's actions, and American intelligence officers knew it too. However, catching them in the act of transmitting knowledge was another matter. In addition to their utility in the market-place, women were very useful to the National Liberation Front in counterintelligence, since they were good at ferreting out ARVN spies in their midst.

Women were recruited for the NLF “through the Women’s Liberation Associations or Youth Leagues which actively sought to mobilise support for the NLF through the dissemination of leaflets and through agitation and demonstrations against the South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) and the US soldiers” (Trouble & Strife 2000, n.p). Women were also active as informal recruiters for the NLF. The NLF reportedly referred to this as “information soldiering” (Taylor 1998, 66). According to Donnell (1967, xvi),

The personal approach, the special lure, the use of all manner of ruses by which to entrap the individual in a commitment he may not have foreseen or desired -- these are characteristic of some of the most effective techniques by which the Viet Cong wins followers without resorting to force. Also in this category is the subtle use of women, who are respected in Vietnamese society for character and intelligence as well as charm, and whose judgment and valor can be expected to have a powerful psychological effect and moral influence on the young men to whom they are exposed. (Numerous interviewees spoke of having been persuaded by women, influenced by their noble example, or moved to join the movement to impress the girls of their village.)

As Zukas (2017, 4) notes:

In 1960, as a result of indiscriminate oppression, looting, and murder by government troops in South Vietnam, women of all ages joined the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam (NLF) to protect themselves, their homes, and continue the struggle against patriarchy and colonial domination. The People’s Liberation Armed Forces (PLAF) was founded as the armed wing of the NLF. That same year, signally the beginning of a general insurrection, thousands of women demonstrated for independence in the Ben Tre Province. A band of 10 female insurgents under the leadership of Nguyen Thi Dinh usurped power from local government officials in the Mo Cay district of Ben Tre Province. Dinh was promoted to the rank of general and made deputy commander in chief of the PLAF. Quickly becoming known as the “Long-Haired Army,” women in rural areas and cities became full-time members of the PLAF, and some 40% of regimental commanders were women. The majority of women joined regional militias and guerrilla forces; they were called upon to support local battles by fortifying trenches and setting booby traps around villages. All women in the North received military training, and they engaged in every aspect of defense, including the use of anti-aircraft weapons and hand-to-hand combat. They protected homes, families, and supply lines.

FNL recruits report joining the organization out of fear that they would be “ridiculed” by the young women in their village (Donnell 1967, 22). Donnell (1967, 109) continues:

The Viet Cong is skillful in exploiting the appeal of girls and the prestige of woman revolutionaries, using them chiefly in recruiting and indoctrination, but also in hamlet and village guerrilla units, and occasionally even, it is said, in combat operations involving local VC forces. Women are expected to inspire a man, to challenge his pride by their own valor and the strength of their revolutionary commitment, and to charm them with

their femininity. The Viet Cong's moral code precludes the promise or actual use of sexual intimacy as a means of attracting recruits, and, with rare exceptions, it is observed.

Women do appear to have held leadership roles for the FNL. Nguyen Thi Dinh, for example, was a founding senior member of the FNL as well as the head of the Women's Liberation Association (Saxon 1992).

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Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), Nigeria

Women participate in the NDPVF. Oriola (2012, 546) notes,

Young women are [...] involved as 'gunmen' in the insurgency, participating in gun duels with security agencies. Interestingly, of all insurgents interviewed during the course of this study, only those from the NDPVF confirmed that women participate in active combat and also live at the creeks with male insurgents. As other male-only creeks require, such women do not cook for insurgents and must have no sexual relationship with insurgents who are not off-duty. Anecdotal evidence suggests that such women are required to leave the camp as their menstruation approaches. As may be expected, insurgents offer very terse explanations for this and seem uncomfortable discussing it.

Oriola (2012) also notes that the NDPVF has involved post-menopausal for women spiritual purposes.

At least one woman appears to have held a leadership position; General Egberima “ joined the struggle for self-determination in the Delta in her late twenties. She worked with Chief Alhaji Mujaheed Asari Dokubo, leader of the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NPVF)” (Ugor 2015, 140).

Reports of women’s participation in the Niger Delta often does not discuss women’s participation in specific groups. For example, Oriola (2012, 550) notes of women in the Niger Delta, broadly,

Post-menopausal women help to sanctify the physical and spiritual space in the creeks. They also provide the necessary spiritual ablution believed to sanctify insurgents. They offer insurgents a mixture of concoctions and gels in a public bath in the creeks for protection against gunshots. Insurgents strongly believe that such an exercise helps their bodies to repel bullets in confrontations with state security agents. When post-menopausal women complete these exercises, the creeks become an abominable space for other women within the reproductive age. Non-menopausal women are forbidden from entering the creeks, as their mere presence and, in particular, their menstrual blood are believed to defile the grounds at the creeks, thus endangering insurgents. Women can thus conceal weapons and bullets in their culturally prescribed clothing [...] and food items without much scrutiny from security agents, who sometimes find the mere presence of the women titillating. Women insurgents also display incredible genius in executing their assignment. The sheer ingenuity, guile and cunning of the women help to deceive security operatives or divert their attention from performing their assigned duties.

Oriola (2012, 2016) also concludes that women in the Niger Delta have been involved in gun running, conflict mediation, protests, emissaries, and communications activities, and also domestic activities. Fejokwu (2014, 75) concludes that women are often conscripted into the militias, where they serve “as mediators, combatants, caregivers and even economic providers for the family accounts for their roles during the crisis.”

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Ninjas, Republic of Congo

Women's participation is not verified.

National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT), India

The NLFT recruited women at low levels until 2005, when the group publicly announced they would not recruit more women because male and female rebels regularly attempted to elope (BBC News 2005). Government reports in 2011 suggest that “about 300 militants including about 25 women of the NLFT had been undergoing training in Sajek hills and Tawolakantai of Bangladesh and Shan province of Myanmar” (SATP n.d., n.p). The organization reportedly recruited around 70 women between 2000-2005 (Ibid). With an estimated total strength around this period of 800 (START n.d.), women constituted approximately 9% of cadre. In 2004, 72 cadres surrendered, including 22 women (31%) (BBC News 2004).

Moreover, “reports say NLFT is training its ‘armed women's wing’ under Lara Darlong in Thouhantaimaoi, Khagracherri, Bangladesh” (SATP n.d., n.p).

Women in the NLFP reportedly joined the participated in the group voluntarily, including in doing sex work to make and distribute pornography to raise funds for group activities (Henshaw 2016). Other women were forcibly recruited for this purpose. Female collaborators were also arrested with “incriminating documents, extortion notes and cash” (SATP n.d, n.p.).

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National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT-B), India

Women's participation is not verified.

New Mon State Party (NMSP), Myanmar (Burma)

Women participate in the NMSP and have contributed to the organization in official capacities since its inception in 1958 (Smith et. al. 2020).

Reportedly, in the contemporary group, “Young people and women are being promoted more quickly to leadership positions, and the organisation is making serious efforts to ensure it remains fit for purpose in the 21st-century” (Smith et al 2020, 27). Kolås (2019) estimated suggested that 37% of NMSP cadres were women. NMSP women were previously organized into an all-female military unit; South (2003, 176) noted that “for many years, there was a regular MNLA [Mon National Liberation Army] woman's company, which saw front-line duty on a number of occasions, but was disbanded in the 1990s.” Furthermore, in their military positions, women were reportedly involved with the signals intelligence (SIGINT) work (South 2003).

Human Rights Watch reporting further notes that women are active in military trainings run by the NMSP’s armed wing; though the report contends that in one session “there were 200 trainees including 30 women, all of whom went to the health department” (15%) (Heppner 2007, 112). Indeed, South (2003) notes that female party members generally work in the Health or Education Department.

The NMSP organized the Mon Women’s Organization (MWO) in the 1980s (Murage 2017). There are reportedly two MWO organizations -- one that is incorporated within the NMSP (Murage 2017; Jolliffe 2015; South 2003 suggests that the organization was a component of the NMSP education department) and one that broke away as an independent organization. The MWO is responsible for a number of tasks, including advocating for women’s issues and providing services. The MWO “has a solid structure and system in place to maintain transparency and accountability” and “has also formed women’s groups in the villages and conducts surveys and interviews to systematically collect the views of communities” (Takeda and Yamahata 2021, 333).

Murage (2017, 17) observes that “CSOs [civil society organizations] are involved in NMSP’s administration work as collaborators, observers, and watchdogs. Mon Women Organization successfully pushed for a female administrator in the NMSP court system and CSO’s inclusion in the court system administered by NMSP.” MWO has established adult literacy programs and community outreach and development programs, including programs for displaced people, (South 2003; Saunders 2005; Kyed and Gravers 2014; Takeda and Yamahata 2021) and liased with the international community (Geneva Call 2016). Compared to Karen women’s organizations, the MSO’s international engagement is reportedly more limited (Takeda and Yamahata 2021).

There is some evidence that the MWO has helped push women’s issues within the NMSP. According to Murage (2017, 17):

In 2006, the Mon Women Organization started advocating for a quota system within the NMSP. Although this idea was not embraced, CSOs' efforts resulted to the election of a woman in the Central Executive Committee (CEC). CSOs have also been pushing for Mi Sar Dar, the only women in the NMSP CEC and a member of the Mon Women's Network, to be included in the delegation team at the Union Peace Conference. One of the Network's members believes that without CSOs' persistence in advocacy on this, she would never have had the opportunity to attend high level meetings.

This also underlines the (limited) presence of women in leadership positions in the organization (Murage 2017).

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Naga National Council (NNC), India

Women composed approximately 15% of the NNC (Manchanda 2005). Manchanda (2005, 8) concludes,

Initially, the NNC was reluctant to give young women arms or training, but much had changed since the historical time when it was taboo for women to touch weapons. After women had been attacked while taking refuge in a church, the leadership determined that it was time for women to receive arms and training [...] the Women's Federation of the NNC, a women's military and political wing, was formed in the late 1960s.

NNC women traveled to military bases in China - a journey that reportedly took eight months - to train militarily, including in light arms and making IEDs (Saksena 2018). Saksena (2018) contends that women joined the army and received the same training as men, but were not sent into front-line operations. Women's combat activity appears largely defensive (Manchanda 2005).

Much of the women's wing's work involved intelligence operations like serving as lookouts, fundraising, training new recruits, education, and opening weaving centers (Manchanda 2005). Women also contributed as guards, medics, and weapons couriers; women received medical training at camps in China (Saksena 2018).

Women held military and political leadership positions in the women's wing "as well as in the ministerial positions of the underground government," but "they have not generally been afforded decision-making power" (Manchanda 2005, 8; Misra 1978; Saksena 2018; Times of India 2019).

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National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), Liberia

Women participated in the NPFL in front-line, non-combat, and leadership roles. Aning (1998, 50) concludes that women were "prominent as combatants," but estimates for women's front-line participation range widely. Utas (2005) cites sources suggesting women composed one out of 10 soldiers (10%), while Pugel's (2007, 31) "representative" survey of ex-combatants in Liberia finds that approximately 20% of the NPFL sample was women. According to Utas (2005, 405), "During the civil war, women soldiers were known to be at least as fierce as their male counterparts; men and women alike committed atrocities."

The NPFL reportedly included “special female units comprised of, in the words of ex-NPFL leader and ex-president Charles Taylor, “not just gun-toting women” but women who were “highly trained” and “an important part of our fighting force” (Huband 1998, 76).

Aning (1998, 47) contends,

Women played diverse roles in the process and provided what can be termed the primary infrastructure of resistance [...] women provided crucial political support, access to centrally placed regional political actors, courier services, and, in certain cases, intelligence to assist the NPFL’s early efforts [...] and] sanctuary for those in need of it, especially officials of the NPFL.

Women also contributed as fund-raisers, political liaisons, and bodyguards (Ibid; Badmus 2009; Vastapuu 2018). Pugel (2007, 7) also suggests that “female combatants were found to serve in logistical roles more often than their male counterparts.”

NPFL women were field commanders, and also participated in political leadership in top positions including as diplomatic representatives, delegation leaders, and in ministry jobs (Aning 1997; Badmus 2009; Vastapuu 2018). Badmus (2009, 820) also highlights “the active involvement of women in war decision-making” in the NPFL.

In 2014, Belgium indicted and arrested Martina Johnson, an artillery commander and one of Charles Taylor’s personal bodyguards, for war crimes (Linton 2016). She “is suspected in particular of participating in ‘Operation Octopus,’ an infamous 1992 NPFL attack on the Liberian capital Monrovia which left scores of civilians dead” (Linton 2016, 170).

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National Resistance Movement/Army (NRA), Uganda

Women were a critical part of the NRA and their integration into local communities. Wakoko and Lobao (1996, 313) suggest that one “factor that facilitated women's participation was the NRM's long-term, mass-based mobilizing strategy.” When the NRA won the war and took power there were reportedly 800 women troops in the organization (Mugambe 2000). Tripp (2015, 53), though, estimates the number of female fighters in the NRA as “around 100.” Though women reportedly did not join the group in the beginning, after about a year of fighting women joined in “large numbers” and deployed into most major battles, in part because many male fighters were killed fighting (Ibid; Wakoko and Lobao 1996; Schubert 2006). Schubert (2006, 105) contends that “women were not permitted to participate in the deployments of mobile guerrilla units [...] justified with the argument that women fighters had to be protected from special risks.” But NRA women were reportedly killed in combat.

NRA women also took on important non-combat roles. This included intelligence and other clandestine operations, smuggling and couriering, nursing, working as traditional medics and birth attendants, growing food, and recruiting (Mugambe 2000; Tripp 2000; Schubert 2006). Schubert (2006, 105) contends, “Although these feminized spaces had less battle prestige, they were nevertheless extremely dangerous. It was often women in the NRA, for example, who spied on government unit positions.” Similarly, Mugambe (2000, 10) suggests that the “greater majority of women” were engaged in mobilization work and that they were “very instrumental” in “convincing [others] to join or support the ‘guerrilla’ forces.” Women, more than men, were responsible for quality of life activities like farming and obtaining food.

The NRA held elections for civilians to vote in group officials in areas under their control. This included women candidates (Kasfir 2005).

Women also formed part of the Officer Corps of the NRA High Command and some held platoon and second-in command roles (Mugambe 2000; Tripp 2000). Indeed, as Wakoko and Lobao (1996, 313) conclude, women “commanded platoons, guarded prisons, and tracked down traitors who were releasing information to the government forces. Women of all ages participated.” A woman, Brig. Proscovia Nalweyiso, “became the highest-ranking army officer and led the women’s wing of the NRA from the time of the Bush War in 1983 until 2001” (Tripp 2015, 53; Kato n.d.).

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National Redemption Front (NRF), Sudan

Women's participation is not verified.

National Socialist Council of Nagaland Isak-Muviah Faction (NSCM-IM), India

While "women in the NSCN-IM have little to do with arms now," the organization previously trained women in overseas training camps and "relies on women's labor across roles" (Saksena 2018, 107). The chairperson of the NSCN-IM's women's wing claimed that women made up 20-30% of cadres (Manchanda and Kakran 2017). One woman, trained in the mid-1970s in the NSCN-IM's predecessor organization who then joined the group, notes that when the organization trekked to a military camp in China there were 375 men and twenty women (5%). Only 12 people survived the months-long journey, and four of them were women (Saksena 2018). They received small arms training and learned to make bombs. Another woman, who undertook NSCN-IM military training in the late 1980s, recalled that women made up 33% (10 of 30) of her group (Ibid). Photographs of NSCM-IM events and from their headquarters, Camp Hebron, show armed women cadre in fatigues (Getty Images 2014; Mimmiza News 2015).

In the 1970s, the organization also relied on women's supportive labor. Women worked as medics, educators, weapons and message couriers, and intelligence workers (Zingkhai 2019). One member recalls that when she was a child her mother was so involved in the Naga struggle that "she had no time to cook or take care of her children" (Ibid, 112). Security forces have arrested NSCN-IM-affiliated women on extortion charges and for providing safe-haven to terrorists (SATP n.d.).

Because the NSCN-IM functions as its own government in territory under its control, there were administrative jobs that women often took on, including as accountants, office assistants, and working in legal positions (Saksena 2018).

The group operated a women's wing, the NSCN (I-M) Ladies' Unit (Women Military Wing) (Zingkhai 2019). Women were also organized in a political wing as the National Socialist Women's Organisation of Nagalim (NSWON) "under the parent umbrella of GPRN-NSCN (I-M)" (Ibid, 23).

Women compose the leadership of NSWON and the Ladies' Unit. Only unmarried women are permitted in the Ladies Unit, and married women can participate in NSWON (Ibid). Women also have positions on the NSCN-IM Steering Committee, and a woman is the third senior-most leader in the organization's national council (Saksena 2018).

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National Socialist Council of Nagaland - K (NSCN-K), Myanmar (Burma)

Women participate in the different NSCN factions, including NSCN-K (Choudhury 2016). There is less information about women in this group than other factions, and most available information comes from arrest and other incident reports. In their study of women in armed ethnic organizations in Myanmar, Kolås and Meitei (2019) identify no women cadres nor women on the Central Executive Committee (CEC). But according to Bhattacharyya (2019, 1), "The NSCN(K) resorted to a system of military conscription making it mandatory for all able-bodied male and women [sic] to serve the army for at least three years. Officials called 'Ranapiu' and 'Rajapiu' are entrusted with the task of recruitment from every village." While this may suggest female recruiters, we cannot presently verify this type of participation.

In 2001, security forces arrested two female NSCN-K cadres and recovered "some extortion notes, cameras, photos, Myanmar currency and incriminating documents" (SATP n.d., n.p). In 2015, security forces killed a female participant during a firefight (Anurag 2015).

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National Salvation Front/Lebanese National Movement (NSF/LNM), Lebanon

According to the UCDP (n.d.), the National Salvation Front (NSF) became the Lebanese National Movement (LNM), and

“the NSF was an umbrella (‘front’) organization, and although member groups were mainly Muslim in composition, it would be an oversimplification to say that the movement was purely Muslim in orientation. Membership groups were instead mainly socialist and/or nationalist Arab. The LNM was composed of several different groups throughout the years of its existence, but the most important contributors were PSP (Progressive Socialist Party; mainly Druze), LCP (Communist Party of Lebanon), Baath party, SSNP (Syrian Social Nationalist Party) and the Independent Nasserite Movement (also known as the al-Mourabitoun)” (n.p.)

Women fighters in the SSNP participated as suicide bombers (Eggert 2017), including Sana'a Mehadli and other well-known female fighters. Women participated in 5 of the SSNP's known 12 suicide bombings (Bloom 2020).

Shehadeh (1999) estimates that women composed between 5-10 percent of the PSP. Eggert (2018) suggests that the PSP excluded women fighters officially, but some women found ways to receive military training and participate unofficially. Women composed an estimated 20 to 60 percent of the LCP and up to 15 percent of fighters (Eggert 2017). And as Eggert (2018, 15) notes, the organizations' individual pre-conflict characteristics influenced the scope of women's participation:

“it is telling that both the LCP and Kataeb, two parties who had had separate women's units or unions for a long time before the war started, were joined by female fighters whereas Amal and PSP, whose women's units were not founded until much later, were not.”

The Progressive Women's Union was the PSP's women's wing and it worked “for better conditions for women through legal reform, change in the workplace, more educational opportunities, family planning, and support for mothers and children” (Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2002, n.p.). The LCP and PSP also included separate women's combat wings (Eggert 2018).

Women participated in non-combat roles, including smuggling explosives (Eggert 2017). A former fighter with LCP and Fatah contended, “[m]ost of the roles that were given to women were in intelligence, because their movement was much easier. They could pass through checkpoints much easier without raising suspicion” (Ibid, 256). Women also moved weapons (Ibid).

As Eggert (2018, 8) writes:

Women were involved in all of the militias that fought in the Lebanese civil war. In most cases, their participation was supportive in nature, seeing them take on traditional gender roles. For example, female members cooked for their male counterparts washed their clothes, or transported weapons or other military equipment. Women were also involved in intelligence, communications, and administrative support.

Women held leadership positions within NSF/LNM: they were military commanders in the LCP, though they “were underrepresented in leadership roles” (Ibid, 274). Indeed, “[...] the percentage of women in leadership roles (even in the militias of the left) remained limited [...] In the parties, female leaders were often the sister or wife of a respected member of the party (Ibid, 284).

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Ntsiloulous, Republic of Congo

Women's participation is not verified.

National Union Front (NUF), Lebanon

According to the UCDP (n.d., n.p), “NUF was created on 2 July 1985, as NSF (a primarily left-wing/pan-Arab umbrella group) joined forces with Amal, one of Lebanon’s largest Shiite militias. As such, NUF included groups that had been part of NSF, including the PSP (Progressive Socialist Party, a mainly Druze outfit), the LCP (Lebanese Communist Party), the Communist Action Organization, the SSNP (Syrian Social Nationalist Party), and Baath parties (both pro-Syrian and pro-Iraqi).”

Women fighters in the SSNP participated as suicide bombers (Eggert 2017), including Sana'a Mehadli and other well-known female fighters. Women reportedly participated in five of the SSNP’s 12 suicide bombings (Bloom 2020).

Shehadeh (1999) estimates that women composed between 5-10% of the PSP. Eggert (2018) suggests that the PSP excluded women fighters officially, but some women found ways to receive military training and participate unofficially. Women composed an estimated 20 to 60% of the LCP and up to 15% of fighters (Eggert 2017).

And as Eggert (2018, 15) notes, the organizations’ individual pre-conflict characteristics influenced the scope of women’s participation:

[I]t is telling that both the LCP and Kataeb, two parties who had had separate women’s units or unions for a long time before the war started, were joined by female fighters whereas Amal and PSP, whose women’s units were not founded until much later, were not.

The Progressive Women's Union was the PSP’s women’s wing and it worked “for better conditions for women through legal reform, change in the workplace, more educational opportunities, family planning, and support for mothers and children” (Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2002, n.p).

Women participated in non-combat roles, including smuggling explosives for the LCP (Eggert 2017). A former fighter with LCP and Fatah contended, “[m]ost of the roles that were given to women were in intelligence, because their movement was much easier. They could pass through checkpoints much easier without raising suspicion” (Ibid, 256). Women also moved weapons (Ibid).

Women held leadership positions within NSF/LNM: they were military commanders in the LCP, though they “were underrepresented in leadership roles” (Ibid, 274). Indeed, “[T]he percentage of women in leadership roles (even in the militias of the left) remained limited [...] In the parties, female leaders were often the sister or wife of a respected member of the party” (Ibid, 284).

Estimates of women’s participation vary in Amal. For example, Schulze (1998) contends that women made up 30% of Amal, but Holt (1990, 190) concludes that women’s participation in the group’s activities were “limited.” Amal reportedly permitted women to fight on the front-lines

sparingly, and only if the “situation [became] desperate” (Ibid). There was at least one female suicide bomber used by the group, in an attack against Israeli soldiers in 1985 (Schulze 1998). Eggert (2018a) notes that women combatants were deployed against Israel when its military invaded South Lebanon in 1978, but notes elsewhere that the proportion of female fighters was “probably very low” in Amal (Eggert 2017, 16). Women participated in almost exclusively non-combat roles (Schulze 1998; Shehadeh 1999; Holt 1999; Eggert 2018a). As Shehadeh notes (1999, 152):

Women may not have been the model citizen- soldiers in Amal and Hizballah, but they were the home front helpmates, they were the ‘Spartan Mothers’ whose civic duties and identities were inseparable from their fighting sons. Many women accompanied the combatants to provide them with food. The main duty of women, according to one woman from Amal, was to prepare their sons for the Jihad (Holy War), for the jihad (struggle/endeavor) of the woman is to make her family virtuous and, in so doing, make society virtuous as well.

One Amal member recalled in an interview,

I now lecture to women groups in the movement who ask me why we don’t train them to carry arms... If we have to carry arms, then of course, we will; otherwise our role is primarily social and educational. When the men were out fighting we were explaining to families and neighbors what was going on.... We offered them various services and ran special courses to teach them how to cope with the war situation. We also taught them religion and the place of women in Islam (quoted in Shaaban 1988, 86).

Other studies emphasized that women lobbied to play active roles in the organization (Eggert 2018b). Women in Amal supplied ammunition, worked as lookouts and staged diversions for men to get away from security forces. They smuggled weapons and provisions, often by feigning pregnancy, cooked and cleaned for fellow members of Amal and were involved in intelligence gathering, communications, and administrative support. (Holt 1999, Eggert 2018b). Amal included a Women’s Affairs Department with female leadership (Shaaban 1988). The WAD remained subordinate to the Executive Council (Shulze 1998).

As Eggert (2018, 8) writes:

“Women were involved in all of the militias that fought in the Lebanese civil war. In most cases, their participation was supportive in nature, seeing them take on traditional gender roles. For example, female members cooked for their male counterparts washed their clothes, or transported weapons or other military equipment. Women were also involved in intelligence, communications, and administrative support.”

The LCP and PSP also included separate women’s combat wings (Eggert 2018b).

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Ogaden Liberation Front (OLF), Ethiopia

According to Kumasa (1998, 158-160), “many Oromo women took up arms and joined the OLF guerilla units.” She estimates that women fighters number in the “hundreds.” Kumasa (Ibid, 160) discusses female OLF fighters she knows personally and notes that they all had to “undergo the required political and military training to become members of the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA).” News media (Getty Images 2006) and former child soldiers interviewed by Child Soldiers International (2001) also confirm women’s participation. Female OLF fighters were killed in battle against the Ethiopian Army and competing rebellions. They were not organized in gender-exclusive units, instead fighting alongside men, and were arrested, imprisoned, and tortured for their activities (Kumasa 1998). In the army, women and men equally worked in combat and non-combat roles with little to no sexual division of labor (Isa 2016).

OLF women organized cultural events, produced and circulated propaganda - including radio programming - worked intelligence operations, worked as medics and in healthcare, and participated as political cadres in mobilization work and education (Kumsa 1998). Reportedly “women traders, because of their mobility, were suspected of supporting the OLF with food and money. As a result, they are subject to frequent imprisonment and other forms of violence” (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 1994, 1).

A female, former OLF member recalls that she arranged diplomatic contacts between the OLF and foreign entities (Isa 2016). She contends, “Many Oromo women have provided the bulk of the logistics to the struggle for freedom. They have allowed their houses as meeting places, fed and sheltered the freedom fighters, relayed information and materials, took the responsibility of bringing up the children and taking care of the elderly members of the absentees” (quoted in Ibid, n.p).

Kumsa (1998) highlights the difficulties of identifying ‘membership’ in the OLF because, as he writes,

Women are the invisible social base on which the OLF was organized and carried out its struggle. Every activity has been performed with the participation of Oromo women. But when it comes to the question of membership, most women did not find themselves anywhere in the structure [...] women are regarded as members only when their services are needed for providing material, emotional and spiritual support. They have been considered as members when there was a need to take security risks, or to provide support and protection to actual members [...] women are] pushed into or out of membership at the convenience of the men in the OLF (164-165).

OLF women also served in military leadership as platoon commanders and non-military leadership as trainers and political officials. In 1983, the first woman fighter was elected to the OLF’s Central Committee, and she was “responsible for the propaganda section of the political department” (Kumsa 1998, 161). Still, in later years the OLF restricted women from political leadership positions (Ibid). Oromo women have protested OLF discrimination against women, especially at the political, decision-making level. The OLF resisted setting up a women’s department, despite women organizing as the National Organization of Oromo Women (Ibid). The group reportedly “appealed mostly to the wives, sisters, daughters, mothers, and women-in-laws of prominent OLF compatriots” (Ibid, 167).

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Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), Ethiopia

Van Hauwermeiren (2012, 47) concludes that "many women are fighting in the Ogaden for the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF). These women were mainly pushed into the ONLF by circumstances," including state violence. In fact, in his interviews "many of the respondents stated proudly that women were the backbone of the Ogaden war" (Ibid, 16). Women are trained militarily and participate in political committees (Van Hauwermeiren 2012).

Some women who joined the group's predecessor, the WSLF's youth wing, remained during the transition into the ONLF. In a 2008 Al Jazeera video report, armed female combatants discuss their motivations for joining the ONLF. The report concludes that "many women" are fighting with the ONLF and more broadly in the Ogaden region, and notes that women fight while also taking care of their children, tending livestock, and performing traditional songs and prayers for male fighters (2008, n.p).

The ONLF's official political programme (n.d., 7) declares,

[...] without the active participation of women in our struggle for national self determination and reconstruction we will not be able to fully implement our people's aspiration. The Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) affirms that we shall not discriminate based on gender in the administration of our organization and that we shall actively seek out and recruit women to take their rightful place in our struggle for national self-determination.

The military arrested and incarcerated women and girls who they argued were ONLF supporters (Radike and Levin 2008). Security forces "also detain and torture women believed to be affiliated with the Ogaden Women's Democratic Association or relatives of ONLF members" (Rogstad et. al. eds. 2015, 30). Relatedly OWDA women have been arrested because of their "suspected of involvement with armed opposition groups, such as the ONLF" (Amnesty International 1999, n.p). This includes targeting women suspected of ONLF links – and other civilians - with sexual violence (Ross and Mawson 2008). Security forces shot some women, though their armed status is not clear (Radike and Levin 2008).

The organization reportedly receives support from the Ogaden Women's Association (OWA) and the Ogaden Youth and Student Union (OYSU)" (UK Home Office 2020). According to Shinn (2009, 7), ONLF leadership "includes few, if any, women." A female leader heads the Ogaden Women's Democratic Alliance/Association (OWDA) (Khalif and Doornbos 2002). In

2010, women ONLF members attended the signing ceremony between an ONLF faction and the government (Maasho 2010).

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Chimères (OP Lavalas), Haiti

Women's participation is not verified.

However, Benedetta (2014, 62) suggests that women are active in "the majority of the armed groups except for the political ones" in Haiti.

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Free Papua Movement (OPM), Indonesia

Women reportedly comprise “a significant proportion of the troops” in OPM’s armed wing, Papanal (Gault-Williams 1987, 37). A 2014 UNPO report similarly concludes, “West Papuan men and women organized in a guerilla movement (OPM as Umbrella Organization), are presently resisting the Indonesian Army” (n.p) In the 1980s, a Dutch television news team filmed “hundreds of men and women in training” at an OPM camp: “most carried weapons and they shouted anti-Indonesian slogans” (Osborne 1985, 88).

Women also participate in non-combat roles. For example, women participated in a 1977 operation where the OPM killed 44 Indonesia soldiers by providing “food and intelligence networks” (Ondawame 2000, 152). In the 1980s, Indonesian security forces arrested women who the OPM claimed were members of the “underground Papuan Women’s Intelligence Group” (Osborne 1985, 84). The OPM operates an official women’s administrative department (Ondawame 2000).

Women reportedly serve in leadership roles in the broader political movement; in one interview a woman affiliated with OPM stated “Women are in leadership positions and telling men what to do, so we’re already there [...] playing positions of leadership in the movement” (Jones 2013).

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Revolutionary Organization of Armed People (ORPA), Guatemala

Women participated in the ORPA’s first public action. Bibler (2014, 10) summarizes,

On September 18, 1979, a group of armed men and women descended from the protective cover of the surrounding hills and mountains to the coffee plantation at Mujulia, near the city of Quetzaltenango in western Guatemala. The guerrillas called the workers to a meeting during which they shared a political message and distributed a pamphlet titled

“The Necessary and Inevitable War,” then retreated to the security of the densely forested highlands.

According to Bibler (2014, 121), “The organization maintained that women, representing approximately half of the population, must play a fundamental role within the revolutionary movement, as well as within society more broadly.” The ORPA regularly called on women to join the organization and fight alongside men in its publications (Ibid). Women ex-fighters from the ORPA recall women and men being treated equally in the group (Hauge 2008).

Luciak (2001, 28) concludes that, “Most female combatants were active in communications, logistics, and rear-guard activities. Traditional domestic activities, however, such as preparing meals, washing clothes, cutting fire wood, or cleaning, were more equally shared between the sexes.” Luciak (Ibid) also contends that in the ORPA, “the wives of commanders formed a tight network that enabled them to exercise influence. Mid-level commanders resented the informal power that their status and networking granted the women.” But women also held formal leadership positions in the military, including as lieutenants (Bibler 2014).

The ORPA composed approximately 8.5% of the URNG (Luciak 2001).

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African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), Guinea-Bissau

The PAIGC fought in the Guinea-Bissau War of Independence (1963-1974) before becoming the ruling party of the newly sovereign state. Women actively participated in the PAIGC during the war; the group’s primary leaders stressed “the need for equality between men and women in the context of the revolution, ensuring that women occupied leadership positions” (Ly 2015, 362; Urdang 1979). The group reportedly “accepted into its ranks a large number of women who had left their villages and fled to the guerrilla bases in order to avoid a forced marriage or to leave their husband” (Urdang 1979, 141). Silva (2018, n.p), suggests that women “carried out war missions.” Similarly, Godinho Gomes (2016, 82) calls women “an integral part of the military corps on the fronts.”

Women underwent military and political training (Ibid) and lived together in camps (Ly 2014). Women and girls fought on the frontlines, including maritime operations but composed the minority of fighters. One teenage girl recalls being the only girl among 30 in her unit (Ibid). Silva (2018, n.p) suggests that “many” women were trained and carried out militant missions. Women also had a “formal role in governing liberated zones. Women served on village committees tasked with activities such as rice collecting, supervising the militias, developing political awareness and military training, but they still lacked real political or social authority” (Ly 2015, 370). Ly (2014, 31) writes,

From 1961 to 1974 PAIGC all women participants had charge of so-called “women’s tasks”, such as cooking, laundry, weapons transport, spying, and nursing care. Throughout different periods of the war and for different reasons, women were assigned “male tasks”, such as participating in full combat operations, working as sentinels in guerrilla camps and protecting liberated zones. From 1967-1972 the PAIGC adopted a policy of explicitly forbidding combat by women. Most PAIGC fighters argue that the Party discontinued women’s participation in direct combat operations because of physical weakness and a lack of courage enough to participate in direct combat operations. Alternatively, leaders felt that the female population must be preserved for population reproduction and growth for the post-war period.

One former female fighter contends, “As a doctor myself, I gave medical assistance to war commanders... On the front-line, there are different ways of fighting” (quoted in Shryock 2021, n.p).

Women joined the PAIGC in its early years and worked “clandestinely,” arranging homes for PAIGC meetings, preparing and distributing propaganda, and cooking for militants (Godinho Gomes 2016, 79). Women were also very involved in mobilization work. Urdang (1975, 30) recalls that by the mid-1970s, women composed “half” of speakers at PAIGC educational meetings and men and women attended “in equal numbers.” Elsewhere, Urdang (1978, 27) contends that “There were, however, a good number of women among the first people mobilized” by the PAIGC.

The group established a women’s wing, the União Democrática das Mulheres da Guiné e Cabo Verde (UDEMU – Democratic Union of Women of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde), which was primarily tasked with mobilization and political work. Moreover, “Women PAIGC and UDEMU members defined several objectives for the women’s organization. The first goal was to mobilize all women for effective participation in the struggle against the Portuguese colonial system” (Ibid, 363). Silva (2018, n.p.) calls the UDEMU “one of the main arms of the PAIGC in the context of the struggle for political emancipation.” Ly (2015, 363) writes,

[...] the creation of the UDEMU was also a way to internationalize the Guinea-Bissau conflict. The Bissau Guinean women’s organization participated in international Pan-African women’s conferences, such the Pan African Women Organization. UDEMU participation in international meetings connected the women of Guinea Bissau with other women around the world. These international platforms permitted the women of Guinea-

Bissau to explain the difficult conditions in which they lived because of the colonial system.

However, the PAIGC disbanded the UDEMU in 1966, during the independence war; it was not fully supported by male leadership. Women report sexist barriers and misogynistic attitudes from male fighters (Ly 2014).

Some women had leadership roles in the PAIGC, including, famously, Teodora Gomes who commanded a unit of 95 women (Shryock 2021). Women also composed the leadership of the UDEMU (Ly 2015).

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Palipehutu- Forces for National Liberation (Palipehutu-FNL), Burundi

Muvumba Sellström (2019, 276) concludes, "An unknown, but observable, minority within [the FNL] were women." Approximately 11,000 Palipehutu-FNL combatants demobilized by April 2011, including 1,000 women (9%) (IRIN News 2009). IRIN News (2010, n.p) concludes that there were "thousands" of women in the group. And of the approximately 22,000 ex-combatants who went through the DDR process in Burundi, approximately 3,015 were women (14%) (Maiden 2014). This included women in the Palipehutu-FNL and other organizations. Other

estimates place women members in Burundian rebel groups, broadly, at 30% or greater (Maiden 2014).

Some women who fought on the frontline for the organization completed basic military training, some within two weeks of joining the group (IRIN News 2010). Women and girls are also “implicated in the transportation of small arms and smuggled goods” for the organization (Henshaw 2013, n.p) and took on other support roles. This included taking food to the front-line, gathering firewood or fetching water and sheltering combatants (IRIN News 2010). Women also smuggled Palipehutu propaganda into the country because “they were less suspected of political activities by the security forces” (Burihabwa and Curtis 2019, 570).

According to Amnesty International (2004, 11), “both children and women are widely reported to be used to evacuate wounded or dead combatants during operations as well as to assist in the transport of stolen goods.” Aase (2013, 128) reports girls were tasked with both fighting and “other tasks.” One teenager that was coerced into the organization reported being tasked with porting (Amnesty International 2004). Similarly, one report notes that “compared to other armed groups in Burundi the FNL used more guerrilla tactics and support of civilians. These civilians often did not partake in direct combat, but supported with transport, food, housing, etc. This group consisted of 11,000 people, of which 1,000 are women” (Willems et al 2010, 11).

The organization operated a women’s wing, the Movement of Patriotic Hutu Women (MFPH), which helped spread the group’s ideology (Palipehutu-FNL 1980; Van Acker 2016). According to a UN Security Council (2009) report, Burundi’s government established a demobilization program for the women’s wing to operate as a political party. Van Acker (2016, 27) notes that the MFPH was a part of a set of institutions that Palipehutu leadership “saw as the vanguard of a new political system in Burundi.” Van Acker (Ibid) contends that women had organized in their own group since the FNL began operating and also notes how the men and women empowered by the rebels during the war went on to exercise leadership positions after the war (c.f. the discussion of *imboneza*). According to Wittig (2016), these institutions and approach to managing women and youth were inspired by the Union for National Progress (UPRONA). While women likely composed the MFPH’s leadership, we cannot presently verify this type of participation.

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Party for Action and the Reconstruction of the Congo-Allelujah Armed Forces (PARC-FAAL), Democratic Republic of the Congo

Women’s participation is not verified.

Patani insurgents, Thailand

UCDP designates several groups collectively as ‘Patanti insurgents,’ including the BRN-Coordinate (BRN- Coordinate), Barisan Islam Pembebasan Patani / Islamic Liberation Front of Patani (BIPP), BRN (Barisan Revolusi Nasional/ National Revolutionary Front), Pertubuhan Perpaduan Pembebasan Patani, Patani United Liberation Organisation (PULO), New PULO, and Gerakan Mujahideen Islami Patani/Islamic Mujahideen Movement of Pattani (GMIP).

Women “appear to play a significant role” in at least one Patani faction, BRN-Coordinate (Helbardt 2014, 41). Women and men reportedly train separately (Ibid). Female members were active in the group’s predecessor guerilla movement in the 1970s (Ibid; Human Rights Watch 2007). Women also participated in Patani community militias, including in the ‘Iron Lady Unit,’ initiated in 2005. This unit’s objective is to “train women in Pattani province in self-protection and use of firearms” (Sarosi and Sombutpoonsiri 2009, 392).

The BRN-Coordinate operates a women’s affairs unit for “political work and recruitment” (Human Rights Watch 2007, n.p). Another report concludes of the Pattani region, “Intelligence

officials believe an active women's wing of the separatist movement has cells in hundreds of villages and is deployed systematically for [...] protests" (International Crisis Group 2007, 10). Women participants in the Patani insurgency take on other non-combat roles. They provide "crucial logistical services for the military wing," transport weapons, smuggle goods, prepare food and shelter, perform reconnaissance and other intelligence activities, assess attack logistics, and are trained as nurses (Helbardt 2014, 48). One BRN-Coordinate member recalls that at least 100 other women trained with her in nursing in one month (Ibid). Some Patani nurses have been captured by Thai security forces.

Another BRN-Coordinate participants contends,

I think that women play a very important role. After entering the group we were divided according to our capabilities: some of the more beautiful women received training in intelligence. They were taught how to flirt with Thai soldiers and squeeze information out of them without arousing their suspicion. Women, like me, who were good in financial stuff, joined the economic work and raise money. Women who have an ability to speak are asked to mobilise other women who have not yet become members (Ibid, 42).

At least one woman, the wife of a committee chief, "took on a leadership role in the economic section" in fundraising, though other women make clear that this is rare (Ibid, 42).

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Pathet Lao/Lao People's Liberation Army (LPLA), Laos

Women in Pathet Lao appear to have participated in many roles, and "some women were conscripted for fighting" (Zasloff 1973, 67). Pathet Lao discussed women fighters on their radio station:

For example, a broadcast of April 24, 1967, stated that 'during the first three months of this year, 100 young women volunteered for the army in Southern Laos ... in Sam Neua, already 40 women enrolled in the LPLA.' A broadcast in June 1967 noted that Xieng Khouang Province 'now has its own women guerrilla platoons and squads.' Another broadcast in October 1968 speaks of 'militia women' who 'fought the enemy with the

very weapons they had captured from them.’ In the NLHS pamphlet, Phoukout Stronghold, there is a story of Xinma, a Meo guerrilla leader whose leadership ability led to her promotion ‘as a political commissar of her village militia,’ and there is mention of ‘six women of the militia-platoon of village X’ who ‘put ten enemy troops out of action’ (Zasloff 1973, 81-82).

Female combatants were awarded high military honors for their contributions to Pathet Lao (Pholsena 2013).

Women also contributed greatly off of the front-line. “Many” women were part of underground cells, working as spies, informants, weapons and message couriers, nurses and doctors, propagandists, recruiters and mobilizers, and food and water securers, supporters for war widows, and cooks (Pholsena 2013, 208; Ireson-Doolittle and Moreno-Black 2004). This included a “women’s secret organization” (Pholsena 2013, 208). Zasloff (1973, 59) concluded,

Since a large proportion of the men in most areas are in the army, the young women's organization frequently assumes the greatest importance in the village. The girls prepare small gifts and food and work at other schemes to lift the morale of the soldiers. Political indoctrination is given at all meetings, with encouragement to teach the lessons to others, and a self-criticism session is conducted prior to the close of the meeting.

Pathet Lao’s organizing principles include fostering and recruiting women cadre “so as to mobilize all the capabilities of women for the revolutionary cause of the whole country” (quoted in Zasloff 1973, 125).

Wives of Pathet Lao’s Central Committee members founded the Lao Patriotic Women’s Association (LPWA) in the 1950s. They worked as an “women’s auxiliary” unit for Pathet Lao and its political wing in its early years (Ireson-Doolittle and Moreno-Black 2004, 20). The LPWA organized local, mass women’s organizations (Zasloff 1973; Ireson-Doolittle and Moreno-Black 2004). They “educated, mobilized, and united women for the struggle” (Ireson-Doolittle and Moreno-Black 2004, 21). Women held the leadership positions in the LPWA and on Pathet Lao’s Central Committee (Ngaosyvathn 1995).

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Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP), Bangladesh

Reportedly “only very few women have joined” the PBCP (Arens 2014, 154). The South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) records at least one incident involving a female participant: security forces killed a woman cadre named Shanti (n.d.).

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Purba Banglar Communist Party - Janajudhha Faction (PBCP-J), Bangladesh

Reports on PBCP-J activity suggest that women participated in the organization but they do not assess the extent of their involvement or scope of activities. At least one female PBCP-J cadre was arrested while in possession of guns and bombs (South Asia Terrorism Portal n.d.). Sources also suggest the group has a women’s wing, where “women operatives wear veils and easily hide arms under it without raising suspicion” (Daily Star 2008, n.p). The leader of the women’s wing is reportedly a woman (South Asia Terrorism Portal 2008).

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People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), Afghanistan

The PDPA operated as an insurgency between 1965-1973 and became the government in 1978. According to Dupree (1981, 7), the PDPA vigorously promoted their objective “to awaken the political consciousness of women.” Moghadam (2007) similarly contends that the PDPA pressured the government to end forced marriages and *walwar*, a payment made by a prospective husband to a woman’s parents.

Women participated during the insurgency period in service provision and in political wings. For example, Dupree (1981, 6) writes of one female member:

Dr. Anahita [Ratebzad] had joined Noor Mohanunad Taraki's leftist PDPA after it was launched on 1 January 1965. During the period of a relatively free press (1965-1973) she wrote for the weekly Parcham (first published on 14 March 1968) until it was banned in July 1969. Her major assignment within the PDPA, however, was the formation of the DOAW (Democratic Organization of Afghan Women) in 1965 to counter the establishment's Women's Welfare Association, a non-political organization offering education and employment opportunities to women, among other supportive activities [...] The PDPA accused the Welfare Association of being run by aristocratic women for their personal satisfaction without concern for the real issues facing women. Dr. Anahita was rewarded for her loyal party work in 1976 when she was appointed to the Central Committee of the PDPA and reelected in 1977. After the Saur Revolution she was elected to the Revolutionary Council of the DRA and appointed Minister of Social Affairs.

Ratebzad also served as a leader in the DOAW from its creation in 1966. The DOAW's primary function was to "expand the base of the PDPA among women" (Moghdam 2007, 61). The DOAW was a significant undertaking, and the "main objectives of this women's group was to eliminate illiteracy among women, ban forced marriages, and do away with bride price (Ahmed-Ghosh 2003, 6). According to Saba and Sulehria (2018, 24), "DOAW in 1965 was instrumental in organising on 8 March, International Women's Day, for the first time." Lichter (2009) also discusses Suraya Parlika who joined the PDPA before the revolution and became a high-profile feminist activist in the organization.

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Patriotic Front (PF), Zimbabwe

The PF was “formed from a merger of the two main liberation groups in Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia), ZANU and ZAPU, on 9 October 1976” (UCDP n.d, n.p).

Women fought side by side with men in ZANU’s liberation struggle. Women were front-line fighters who trained in camps both within Rhodesia and across state borders and were ‘more active’ in military roles than in neighboring anti-colonial revolutions (Lyons 2004). An estimated 25-33% of ZANU’s membership were women (Nhiwatiwa 1979; Gonzalez-Perez 2021) Zvobgo (1986) estimates that there were an estimated 1,500-2,000 trained female fighters in ZANU. ZANU trained women and men together.

At war’s end, 10% of demobilized soldiers were women who worked in the Women’s Brigade. This included front-line fighters but also engineers, women commanders, nurses, smugglers, and communications logisticians (Lyons 2004; Gonzalez-Perez 2021). Moorcraft and McLaughlin (1982, 129) argue that ZANU overstated women’s front-line roles for propaganda value, but they call women’s combat participation “considerable.”

Mudeka (2014, 94-95) summarizes,

With the war’s climax between 1976 and 1979, ZANLA recruited thousands of women for combat; to sew and nurse and the women developed chirenje relations with peasants. Chirenje was a barter trade where female combatants exchanged with peasants the clothes they sewed or received from donors with food for the forces. Songs sung by guerillas during night meetings valorized women’s chirenje; Comrade chirenje, (Comrade it’s that barter trade) Kutakura gidi chirenje, (To carry this gun it’s that barter trade) Kurova bhunu chirenje, (To hit the white oppressor it’s that barter trade) Kutora Zimbabwe chirenje, (To retake Zimbabwe it’s that barter trade) Ukatamba nemugoti wechirenje (If you belittle the cooking stick of that barter trade) Tinokutongera pakaoma, (we will punish you severely) Ukatamba nanyakubika chirenje (If you belittle the cook of the food from barter trade) Tinokurova nemboma (we will beat you up with a hippo hide Sjambok) Chorus: Chirenje amaiwe-e, (It’s that barter trade, mother) Chirenje amaiwe-e (It’s that barter trade, mother) Chirenje amaiwe-e (It’s that barter trade, mother)... A popular slogan denoting the strategic role of women combatants was ‘pamberi nehondo yerusununguko, pamberi nemugoti!’ This translated to, ‘forward with the liberation war, forward with the cooking stick!’ While to some, this slogan denotes confinement of women to ‘traditional roles’, one could alternatively see it as a concession to the indispensability of the “feminine” roles.

Indeed, female ZANU participants worked in auxiliary roles: women were couriers, messengers, intelligence workers (including hiding security documents), administrators, healthcare workers, teachers, cooks, mobilizers, and they provided shelter and clothes for fighters (Lyons 2004; Nhongo-Simbanegavi 2000; Manyame -Tazarurwa 2009; Mudeka 2014). According to Lyons (2004) women’s main tasks included ferrying ammunition to the frontline and working as instructors. This was reportedly a key role for the women’s wing: Mudeka (2014, 91) contends,

“The Women’s Detachment undertook assignments such as soliciting information and travelling long and highly dangerous journeys to bring weapons from the rear to the front.”

An estimated 18,000 women worked in supportive roles: the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association estimates that at least 20% of war veterans from both ZANU and ZAPU were women, mostly in non-combat roles (Lyons 2004). They did not distinguish between the groups. But Lyons (2004) makes clear that there are few records and a wide range of estimations for women’s participation in ZANU and in ZAPU.

Women worked in leadership roles within ZANU’s political operation, including attempts to shape legislation in post-independence Zimbabwe, and some served as military commanders (Gonzalez-Perez 2021, 12). For example, “ZANLA women [...] rose to commanding ranks. Although they also worked with men, they had authority over the conduct and assignments of their own female units” (Mudeka 2014, 91). Women held “the highest-ranking positions among ZANU’s Central Committee and ZANLA’s [the military wing] General Staff, training both male and female cadres” (Gonzalez-Perez 2021, 614). Women made up the leadership of the group’s Department of Women’s Affairs (Mudeka 2014).

But Sadomba and Albert Dzinesa (2004, 54) argue that “despite much of the party rhetoric implying egalitarianism and the parallel recruitment and training of women alongside men, their deployment in leadership positions was not egalitarian.” Though women made up the highest levels of command there were few of them.

ZANU women report differential treatment and experiences based on class and background. Peasant women were reportedly the first to join, followed by elite women. And “[w]hen they got to the camps, the educated female combatants were given jobs that were different from the ones given to the less educated” (Manyame -Tazarurwa 2009, 105). One former combatant recalls,

The female comrades like in my case, I was responsible for the administration of ZANLA. I was responsible for the documentation. I was responsible for the finance, all the monies that was used by ZANLA; I was responsible for it. So whatever needed to be purchased, I was like the Finance Director of ZANLA (quoted in Manyame -Tazarurwa 2009, 105).

Women’s emancipation was part of ZANU’s socialist platform, though women members report feeling betrayed and dissatisfied with the group’s lack of commitment to women’s equality (Ibid). Manyame -Tazarurwa (2009, 111) argues, “ZANU leadership warned women who challenged gender issues that they risked official ostracism and consequently their political demise.” There were no women in ZANU’s negotiating delegation during the peace negotiations (Sadomba and Dzinesa 2004).

Women were also front-line fighters in ZAPU who trained in camps both within Rhodesia and across state borders and were more active in military roles than in neighboring anti-colonial revolutions (Lyons 2004). Unlike ZANU, which integrated women with men in existing battalions, ZAPU trained women separately in the all-female Victory Camp and Mkushi Camp.

The group was training over 1,000 women for military action when the war ended (Lyons 2004). Wood (2019) suggests that women composed around 10% of ZAPU's front-line and likely had less exposure to combat than women in ZANU. Lyons (2004) makes clear that there are few records and a wide range of estimations for women's participation in ZANU and in ZAPU. While estimates of women's participation are scarcer for ZAPU than ZANU, Sadomba and Dzinesa (2004, 53) conclude that "ZANLA [ZANU's armed wing] probably deployed more women fighters than ZIPRA [ZAPU's armed wing]." One female ZAPU member recalls, "We ZAPU women did not go to the front, but we were defending the camps [...] refugee camps like Mkushi. If an enemy came, they defended and actually shot and killed the enemy" (quoted in Ibid, 54). Alexander and McGregory (2004, 88) similarly conclude, "ZIPRA's women's battalion never left the camps."

Sadomba and Dzinesa (2004, 53) contend that ZAPU's "women combatants mostly engaged in support roles outside the country, including medical care and transportation [...] While men and women underwent similar military training, it was mostly the men who were deployed to the battlefield."

The organization did incorporate women in leadership roles, namely as commanders (Sadomba and Dzinesa 2004). ZAPU also operated a Women's Affairs Department that "with sections, branches, districts, provinces, and a national executive had facilitated the mobilisation of many women and helped build women's confidence in being chairpersons, office holders and in conducting meetings" (Geisler 2004, 47). Unlike ZANU, ZAPU was resistant to promoting women's participation and they admitted to difficulties retaining women members (Lyons 2004). Still, when ZAPU did recognize women, they explicitly linked women's emancipation with their revolutionary goals.

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Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO), Oman

Women participated on the front-lines in the PFLO (also known as the PFLOAG). Takriti (2013, 121) suggests that prior to the organized revolution in Oman, there were "hardly any female fighters," save for one memorably named 'Peninsular Moon.' Eventually, the organization established military training camps for women. In terms of women's prevalence in the PFLO, Takriti (2013, 122) notes,

We have no accurate figures on their participation in the PLA [official army]. Some accounts place it at 5% and others estimate that it was up to 30%. In the militia [less official, less professional fighters], it was significantly higher.

But the Omani Women's Organization, the PFLO women's political wing, concludes that for the first few years, women in the PFLO "primarily had played a prominent role in the military field of the liberation struggle" (News from Oman and Southern Arabia, 1980, n.p). This was reportedly because there was a "limited possibility of playing a prominent role in other fields of the struggle due to the lack of skills in reading and writing, political knowledge and experience" (Ibid). Reportedly says this was because many women were not educated before they joined the PFLO. Their roles later expanded to political and other ideological work (Ibid).

Women trained in PFLO camps, and at least one female fighter reported her combat injuries to a writer in the region (Goffman 2018). The PFLO operated a hospital, the "Fatima Ghanama hospital, a 50-bed installation named after an 18-year old woman guerrilla, killed in a 1973 clash with government forces" (Halliday 1978, 18). Relatedly, a 1973 British government memorandum (8-9) on the PFLO describes,

Women have been active in the rebel movement from the start, both as combattants [sic] and propagandists. Huda Salem, a women graduate of the American University of Beirut, who had joined the Dhofari rebels in 1964, represented the PFLOAG at the Arab Popular Conference in support of the Palestine Revolution in Beirut at the end of November, 1972. On February 15, 1971, the Beirut newspaper al-Hurriya interviewed two PFLOAG girl guerrillas, called Aminah and Tafoul, aged respectively 12 and 15, who were being trained at the Revolutionary Camp in Hauf as part of the first women's contingent in the People's Liberation Army... Evidence given at the trial in Muscat in June 1973 when 69

men and 7 women were charged with plotting to overthrow the government, said the defendants were members of PFLOAG some of whom had received special training abroad in the use of arms supplied by other countries and they aimed to establish a Marxist regime in Oman.

Still, Takriti (2013, 121) concludes that “women [...] largely played a supportive role, aiding and feeding male fighters.” A 1972 CIA report similarly contends that most PFLO members are “primarily occupied with raising funds and with political indoctrination, rather than with armed subversion.” Indeed, the OWO mobilized women to establish a mass base to support the Omani liberation struggle. Women also educated children in PFLO-run schools and worked in reconnaissance (Ibid; National Library and Archives of the UAE 1973). In 1979, the OWO announced a residential center for educating women:

OWO has also taken the initiative in building up a centre for women in Al Gheida which represents a great step forward in the mobilization of women. Women living isolated will be able to attend educational, cultural and political activities, and simultaneously the children can be looked after at the same place. The number of activities will be increased and include for instance sewing and typewriting, and there will be a maternity and child welfare clinic (News from Oman and Southern Arabia, 1980, n.p).

Women did occupy leadership positions in the PFLO, though the extent of this participation is unclear. For example, Huda Salem “was appointed the women’s political commissar in the Revolution Camp” and organized political activities, education, and other quality of life undertakings (Takriti 2013, 124). She also worked in the organization’s Political Office on foreign relations and publicity, working with Bahraini leadership on a regular PFLO publication (*9th of June*) and represented the group internationally (Ibid).

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Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Palestine

The PFLP is one of the few PLO factions that militarily trained women. For example, Leila Khaled, who later hijacked two airplanes on behalf of the organization, trained with 20 other women in a camp in Lebanon (Cragin and Daly 2009). At least one female foreign fighter, a Dutch citizen, traveled to Yemen to train in a PFLP camp in 1976 (Bakker and de Leede 2015). The PFLP's mixed gender camps were reportedly controversial: Sayigh (1981) argues that parents unsupportive of women's military involvement were torn between support for the resistance and their feelings towards their daughters.

Eggert (2018) estimates that women may have composed up to 15% of PFLP fighters between 1975-1990. PFLP women interviewed by Antonius (1975, 42) at the time similarly concluded that there "are lots of girls in the training camps and fighting" during Lebanon's civil war. PFLP posters regularly link women's combat participation with national liberation, though Sayigh (1981) argues this representation is not reflected in PFLP praxis. Similarly, Peteet (1992) suggests that the PLO trained women in military camps but did not regularly incorporate them as fighters. Kawar (1994) and Gonzalez-Perez (2008, 99), too conclude that "Palestinian armed conflict, as well as leadership and policy-making, is carried out exclusively by men" (see also: Khaled 1973). Other accounts (see below) suggest that "exclusively" is an overstatement, but that women do primarily work in non-combat and supportive roles.

There are a few documented attacks committed by women for the PFLP (Margolin 2016) CPOST data from Soules (2020) suggests that women perpetrated 1 of 11 (9%) PFLP suicide bombings committed between 1974-2016.

Off of the front-lines, women contributed immensely to PFLP activities. For example, during the first Intifada, the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees (UPWC), a women's group with female leaders affiliated with the rebels, advocated the PFLP's political program with thousands of members (Hiltermann 1991). The UPWC's stated mission is "to empower Palestinian women on all levels and to contribute in the Palestinian national struggle against the Israeli military illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories" (NGO Monitor 2021, 1). As of 2021 the group is still affiliated with the PFLP and operating "21 preschools and day-care centers in the poorest communities in the West Bank" (Ibid, 1). The group holds seminars and events for the PFLP and to commemorate PFLP fighters. In 2019, Israeli security forces reportedly "confiscated seven computers, four hard drives, camera memory cards, an external hard drive and a projector" (Ibid, 3).

Hiltermann (1991, 51-52) writes of the UPWC and other women's wings in the Intifada period,

[They] stepped up their efforts to mobilize their own members and sympathizers and to absorb new recruits. Concentrating on the areas of their greatest strength, they extended the schedules of child care centers to accommodate women active in the uprising, and geared health education classes to first aid as casualties mounted in the neighborhoods, especially as a result of beatings and tear gas [...] Women's committee activists would join local popular committee members in organizing relief or emergency services after

Israeli army raids, paying solidarity visits to the families of martyrs and detainees, and providing material assistance whenever necessary. Working on behalf of prisoners and their families, they would contact lawyers, collect clothing for prisoners, and arrange prison visits via the Red Cross. Women also distributed leaflets, discussed politics openly (often for the first time), and urged people who remained unconvinced to participate in the uprising.

Parkinson (2013) similarly documents female-dominated clandestine supply, financial, and information networks in 1980s Lebanon working on behalf of the PFLP and other PLO factions. Still, she suggests that these networks functioned in a period of organizational fragmentation after the 1982 Israeli invasion into South Lebanon. Parkinson (2013, 425) writes of one former PFLP member:

Munadileh, a PFLP cadre with brothers and an uncle in other leftist organizations, noted, 'For women, there was a social role and a military role.' Military roles, by her definition, included gathering intelligence on the IDF, making food, sewing clothing, and smuggling all of the above to male guerrillas operating in the Shouf and around the southern camps. Women like Munidileh were particularly valuable in this context; as a nurse, she not only provided essential medical care but she was also already well known and trusted by the guerillas.

Other women who joined the PFLP produced art and literature for the organization. As one PFLP recalled, "One of these [art] actions got me arrested in Copenhagen in 1969 - I spent a month in prison there and then was expelled - but they were secret and I still can't talk about them" (quoted in Antonius 1975, 41).

Women occupied leadership roles within the PFLP's political structure. According to Kawar (1996), there were top-ranking women in each PLO faction, including distinct women's groups in the PFLP and Fatah. In 1996 women in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine "represent[ed] 10% of the Central Committee" (Jabali 2009, 6).

It is worth noting that there may be other forms and degrees of women's participation that occurred, but because they were described as being in support of armed groups generally (rather than the PFLP specifically), they are not included (c.f. Cave 1994).

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Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (PFLP-GC), Palestine, Israel

Women's participation is not verified.

Information on women's contributions to the PFLP-GC is limited compared with other Palestinian factions. But Kawar (1996, 142) notes, "Not all the PLO factions showed genuine interest in recruiting women. Some, like al-Saiqa and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command (a splinter of the Popular Front) were essentially bands of militias affiliated with Syria."

The PFLP-GC's operations reportedly included smuggling bombs into unsuspecting women's luggage in attempts to blow up airliners (Dolnik 2007).

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Popular Front for National Renaissance (PFNR), Chad

Women's participation is not verified.

Popular Front of Tajikistan (PFT), Tajikistan

Women's participation is not verified.

Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), Palestine

The PIJ incorporate women as suicide bombers and in auxiliary roles. While initially it was “especially difficult” for women to take on fighting roles in the conservative organization, by 2003 “PIJ believed the operational gains outweighed the social costs and began actively recruiting women for suicide bombings” (Stack-O’Connor 2007, 97; see also Gonzalez-Perez 2011). There are competing scholarly representations of the PIJ’s inclusion -- Fighel (2003) contends that the group launched a public campaign to recruit women, while Gonzalez-Perez (2011, 48) concludes that “while the PIJ claimed not to actively recruit women for these operations, it admitted that it would permit them.” Women PIJ combatants perpetrated at least five suicide bombings between 2003-2006 (de Leede 2018), and CPOST data from Soules (2020) suggests that women perpetrated 3 of 44 (6%) of PIJ suicide bombings committed between 1974-2016.

Women also perform auxiliary work for the group, including logistics in the West Bank and fundraising for activities (Von Knop 2007). There are a “number of women’s organizations affiliated with [...] Islamic Jihad” (Allabadi 2008, 183). This reportedly includes the “Islamic Women’s Association, a charity operated by Ataf Alian, who had been an Israeli administrative detainee and an Islamic Jihad member” (Ganor 2009, 135). These organizations are involved in education and job-training programs, and encouraging women to finish school and attend university, yet at the same time restricting their legal rights to those laid out in the Qur’an (Ibid). According to Levitt (2005, n.p), “Islamic Jihad does run a small number of dawa (social welfare and religious indoctrination) organizations that fill logistical and financial support functions and

build grassroots support for the group.” Two women were detained during a crackdown on an NGO called Al Bara’a for purported linkages with PIJ and other extremist groups (AFP 2011).

According to Hamas, Israel security forces have arrested and incarcerated PIJ women because of their affiliations or on suspicion they were planning attacks (c.f. Qassam 2009; 2014).

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Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), United Kingdom

According to Provisionals leadership in 1987, women in front-line and non-combat roles composed approximately 25% of participants (quoted in Smith 1987). As front-line fighters (called Volunteers), Provisional IRA women participated in bombings, shootings, and assassinations (Irish News 1976; Belfast Telegraph 1977; The Globe and Mail 1981). Women likely composed between 5-10% of Volunteers: Bloom and colleagues (2012) suggest that the highest density of known female volunteers was in 1989, when women composed 6.3% of identified front-line fighters.

Women were also widely involved in Sinn Féin, the Provisional IRA’s political wing in this period. In 1988, Sinn Féin – the group’s political wing - noted that women were “now

represented at every level” of the group and that women had “forged an increasingly active role for themselves and determined that role in opposition to some of their male comrades” (Sinn Féin Women’s Department 1988, 22).

Women Provisionals, including those in Cumann na mBan (the women’s auxiliary wing), participated in auxiliary positions, including smuggling explosives and messages, intelligence gathering, posing as decoys, fundraising, operating safe houses, and bomb-making (Reinisch 2016; Wahidin 2016; Cumann na mBan: The Women's Army 2019; Gilmartin 2017, 2017b). Former Volunteers testify that women were highly effective spies and intelligence couriers (Bloom, Gill, and Horgan 2013; Cumann na mBan: The Women's Army 2019). Women reportedly had the primary responsibility for concealing and transporting small arms because security forces were unlikely to stop or search them (Alison 2009). Numerous women were arrested on weapons charges for gun possession or transport. Women often drove IRA members across the border or accompanied them in order to deflect suspicion from security forces (Keefe 2019).

PIRA women were arrested and detained as part of the British government’s internment strategy. As one former member recalls, “There were many of us who suffered in the jails, on hunger strikes, in the no wash protest [...] but few are willing to talk about their experiences. They let the men take the lead” (quoted in Bloom, Gill, and Horgan 2012, 61). Prison guards subjected PIRA and suspected republican prisoners to regular, invasive strip searches. Between 1982-1983, 24 women were strip searched an average of 772 times, meaning guards searched each woman an average of 8 times per month (de Brun 1988). Wahidin (2016, 51) argues that “in the case of prison, the level of violence against women... was tolerated and normalised as part of the organisational behavior of prison officers, the RUC, and the British Army.” Women resisted strip search efforts, which resulted in security forces holding female prisoners down and beating them as they ripped off their clothes (Ibid).

Women held high-ranking positions in Cumann na mBan (which is structured hierarchically with a command structure) and Sinn Féin. Máire Drumm was the vice president of Sinn Féin and a commander in Cumann na mBan when loyalists assassinated her in 1976. By the mid-1990s, Sinn Féin leadership included more women than any other political party in Northern Ireland. When the war ended in 1998, women candidates representing Sinn Féin rose from 10 to 11% (Gilmartin 2019). Sinn Féin Women’s Department members established service provision centers for women experiencing domestic violence, state violence, and other issues, including one in a Sinn Féin building (Gilmartin 2017a).

Female Volunteers also held leadership roles, namely commanding other women. Eileen Hickey and Mairéad Farrell both served as commanding officers within Armagh prison (Keefe 2019). According to Keefe (2019), Dolours Price – a Volunteer – was also in charge of the Unknowns, a small special operations unit. Those under her command – lieutenants and below – reported to her.

Sinn Féin first formed a Women’s Coordinating Committee in 1979. It became Sinn Féin’s Women’s Department in 1980. According to Mairead Keane, head of the Women’s Department

in the early 1990s, the group was established to “serve as support for women within the party” to advocate for gender equality in Northern Ireland (quoted in Lyons and Keane 1992, 265). The Women’s Department worked to enshrine public support for Sinn Féin and militant republicans through gendered narratives about violence and security. For example, Sinn Féin was centrally involved in publicizing and protesting guards’ treatment of republican women, including Volunteers and Cumann na mBan members, incarcerated in Armagh jail in the 1980s. Sinn Féin Women’s Department members further established service provision centers for women experiencing domestic violence, state violence, and other issues, including one in a Sinn Féin building (Gilmartin 2017a). Encouraged by the Women’s Department, Sinn Féin began providing child care or paying child care costs for members to participate in the organizations’ functions in the 1980s (Ibid).

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Kurdistan Party of Free Life (PJAK), Iran

About half of PJAK forces were women and the organization publicly embraced “radical feminism” as part of its platform (Wood 2006, n.p; Renard 2008; Hevian 2013; Gunter 2020). The PJAK has a women’s organization, the Yerjerika (HPJ) that is led by a woman (Brandon 2006). The HPJ is referred to as the Women’s Defense Forces and its leader contends that women “play a part in all our operations [...] there are many military operations that women have taken part in” (Geneva Call 2015; Brandon 2006). Other sources identify Eastern Kurdistan Women's Union (YJRK) as another women’s wing affiliated with PJAK (Cagaptay and Eroglu 2007). Politically, the PJAK requires a 40% quota for women’s seats and representation on committees (Henry 2009).

Zurutuza (2019, n.p) notes the PJAK’s “gender parity in the hierarchy of command” in her interviews with female fighters and “co-leaders” of the group. A *Vice* interview with a woman in PJAK noted that female fighters were active in mobilizing and educating civilians. Despite the reported prevalence of women within PJAK, there is little information about the nature of their contributions.

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Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), Turkey

Approximately 40% of PKK members are women and they participate in combat, non-combat, and leadership roles (Szekley 2020). Women and men fighters are largely integrated, and women make up between 22% (Cragin and Daily 2009) and 40% of fighters (Trisko Darden, Henshaw, and Szekley 2019). Tezcu`r (2020, 729) estimates, “In the most recent period, 28% of recruits and 21% of deceased militants were women. The actual percentage of women in the PKK ranks could be higher as women were more likely to be assigned to non-combat positions and tasks in camps.”

Female combatants also take on suicide missions. A PKK member perpetrated the first documented instance of a suicide bombing in Turkey, feigning pregnancy to hide the bomb (Rodoplu, Arnold, and Ersoy 2003). Women reportedly commit about 73% of PKK suicide bombings (Altinary 2013). Women also serve widely in command positions and lead mixed-gender combat units (Szekley 2020). Haner and colleagues (2019, 290) write,

Basic guerilla war tactics training usually lasts 3–4 months, after which guerillas are assigned to their duty stations. Based on their performance during the training period, they are placed into one of the two main groups—saboteur or operation. Women play direct and active roles in both groups. However, they are often assigned to carry out assassination missions within the saboteur groups as they have proved themselves effective in these kinds of missions.

Women in the PKK contribute in non-combat roles as recruiters, fundraisers, and smugglers (Cragin and Daly 2009). Women and men cadre reportedly perform combat and non-combat roles in tandem at similar levels, and that the labor is often shared (Trisko Darden, Henshaw, and Szekley 2019).

There is also a significant number of women in political leadership (Harner, Cullen, and Benson 2019); the organization’s charter mandates a 40% minimum quota for women (Szekley 2020). There was a woman founder, Sakine Cansiz (Vinocur and Butler 2013). The PKK includes a number of women’s organizations. The Free Women’s Units (YJA STAR) is the women’s military wing. The first women’s organization, the Patriotic Women Union of Kurdistan, was created in 1987 (Dryaz n.d.).

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People's Liberation Army of Manipur (PLA), India

The PLA has included and trained women and girls since the early 1980s. PLA women train and live in the same camps as men, and there are strict codes of conduct governing their interactions (Saksena 2018). Saksena (2018, 183-184) concludes, "Women are in the ranks of all of the several extremist groups operating in Manipur." She further suggests (Ibid, 183-184) that the PLA "had women in their cadre since the 1980s," and that "PLA women were obviously taking part in combat by the 1990s." Saksena (Ibid, 184) contends that there are a "large number of women ultras" in the group but notes that women in the PLA are private and resistant to reporters or other documentation of their activities.

In the 1990s, the Indian army shot dead two female PLA combatants on patrol (Ibid). There are also reports of women PLA cadre arrested by security forces (South Asia Terrorism Portal n.d.). Other captured PLA women reported doing non-combat work like extortion, couriers, organizing protests and working in publicity (Ibid, Rahul 2012). Moreover, the Indian military is implicated in torturing and killing suspected female PLA insurgents. For example, Chakravarti (2010, 48) reports,

At 3.30 am on 11 July 2004 in Bamon Kampu, Imphal East District in the northeastern state of Manipur, three members of the Indian National Army stormed the house of 32-year-old Thangjam Manorama Devi. They beat her up along with her relatives and her elderly mother. Havildar Suresh Kumar, an army man, signed a memo stating that he was arresting Manorama for being 'a suspected insurgent, explosives expert and hard-core member' of the banned People's Liberation Army (PLA). The memo also stated that no incriminating evidence had been found in her house or on her person. The army men told the family that Manorama would be handed over to the Irilbung police in the morning. Less than three hours later, Manorama's lifeless body was discovered four kilometres from her house with torn clothes and bearing scratch marks all over, a wound on her thigh, probably inflicted by a knife, and bullet wounds on her back, upper buttock and

vagina. One of her nipples had been plucked off... Contradicting the earlier memo that had asserted that no incriminating evidence had been found in her house or on her person, a spokesperson for the army claimed that Manorama had a hand grenade and a wireless set.

In a governmental assessment of rebel groups in the Manipur region, the Human Development Society (2010, 29) concludes of the KCP, the PLA and UNLF,

Every underground organisation has its female wing in which many young women cadres have been enrolled. The women cadres are utilised for cooking, housekeeping, watch and ward, and nursing tasks in the camps of organisations. The women members are also utilised for gathering intelligence and for brain washing of girls and women to enlarge the support-base of their organisation in general public. During operation of the security forces, the women sympathisers are made to come forward while the men folk stay behind so that security forces are prevented from launching offensives. During agitation backed by the underground activists, the women sympathisers turn out massively to make the agitation look broad-based and spectacular. There is hardly any instance where a woman cadre has risen to the hierarchy and command structure of an insurgent organisation in Manipur.

Still, some women reportedly served in leadership roles as lance corporals and commanders (South Asia Terrorism Portal n.d). The group reportedly “created a ‘government in exile’ in Myanmar and maintained a women’s wing led by Lily Leima” in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Uppsala Conflict Data Program n.d., n.p.). An Assam Tribune article (2012, n.p) notes that Leima is also “is suspected to be the publicity secretary of PLA.”

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Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), Palestine

Women participated extensively in the PLO and related Palestinian resistance. The PLO has reportedly trained some women in military training camps where girls and women learn to handle small arms and explosives and are taught about revolutionary movements. Occasionally, women have committed suicide attacks and other front-line actions in the name of PLO organizations, largely Fatah and the PFLP (Margolin 2016).

Eggert (2018) estimates that women may have composed up to 15% of PFLP fighters between 1975-1990. PFLP women interviewed by Antonius (1975, 42) at the time similarly concluded that there “are lots of girls in the training camps and fighting” during Lebanon’s civil war. PFLP posters regularly link women’s combat participation with national liberation, though Sayigh (1981) argues this representation is not reflected in PFLP praxis. Similarly, Peteet (1992) suggests that the PLO trained women in military camps but did not regularly incorporate them as fighters. Kawar (1994) and Gonzalez-Perez (2008, 99), too conclude that “Palestinian armed conflict, as well as leadership and policy-making, is carried out exclusively by men” (see also: Khaled 1973). Other accounts (see below) suggest that “exclusively” is an overstatement, but that women do primarily work in non-combat and supportive roles.

The DFLP published several posters featuring armed female fighters (Palestine Poster Project Archives), but according to Gonzalez-Perez (2008, 100), “[e]ven within the secular DFLP, women remained in support roles due to the gender restrictions imposed on most girls and women” and only a small number of Palestinian women engaged in ‘mixed-gender activities.’

The PLO’s women’s branch, the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW), “focused on coordinating [...] support work [...] organizing charities, building orphanages, hospitals, schools, and providing classes in sewing, nursing, and adult literacy” (Ibid, 99). According to (Rubenberg 1983, 73-74), writing on the GUPW in the 1970s and 1980s,

The Women's Union is active in the West Bank and Gaza, although it is prohibited there. The goals of the union are to organize and represent Palestinian women in all facets of the PLO and to raise both the status and the consciousness of Palestinian women. The union puts great stress on educating women in a formal sense, and in training them to be self-reliant and independent individuals. The union operates more than 90 women's centers in the refugee camps where women of all ages are taught vocational skills, such as typing and shorthand, needlepoint and embroidery, and language skills. These centers also have intense literacy programs that attempt to reach older women who have not had the opportunity for formal education. The Women's Union also teaches preventive medicine, hygiene, and nutrition. A large portion of the union's membership is working mothers, for whom it has established day care centers and nurseries. Although banned there, the Women's Union in the occupied territories works with the International Committee of the Red Cross to focus attention on the plight of the more than 400 Palestinian women inside Israeli jails, and to provide social services to the families of individuals imprisoned by Israeli authorities. The union operates 125 literacy centers in

the West Bank and Gaza, and generally lends what support it can to Palestinians living under occupation.

Similarly, the PLO-allied Palestinian Federation of Women's Action Committees (PFWAC) organizes support networks. Women provide direct support for front-line fighters as well: for example, women participated in clandestine activity against Lebanese forces in the late 1960s (Sayigh 1998; Kavar 1996). During the 1978 Intifada, women smuggled leaflets to shopkeepers, fundraised, smuggled money, and helped coordinate mass action against Israeli security forces. In 1988, Palestinian women organized approximately 115 demonstrations per week (Cragin and Daly 2009). Parkinson (2013) similarly documents female-dominated clandestine supply, financial, and information networks in 1980s Lebanon working on behalf of PLO factions. Still, she suggests that these networks functioned in a period of organizational fragmentation after the 1982 Israeli invasion into South Lebanon. Parkinson (2013, 425) writes of one former PFLP member:

Munadileh, a PFLP cadre with brothers and an uncle in other leftist organizations, noted, 'For women, there was a social role and a military role.' Military roles, by her definition, included gathering intelligence on the IDF, making food, sewing clothing, and smuggling all of the above to male guerrillas operating in the Shouf and around the southern camps. Women like Munidileh were particularly valuable in this context; as a nurse, she not only provided essential medical care but she was also already well known and trusted by the guerillas

During the First Intifada, women contributed immensely to PLO factions' activities:

The largest of the successor organizations are the Federation of Palestinian Women's Action Committees (FPWAC), which identifies with the political program of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), and the Union of Palestinian Working Women's Committees (UPWWC), which leans toward the Palestine Communist Party. These are followed by the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees (UPWC), which adheres to the political program of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and finally, the Women's Committee for Social Work (WCSW), which supports Fateh. The committees all have memberships in the thousands; the FPWAC alone claims to have some 10,000 active members (Hiltermann (1991, 50).

Hiltermann (1991, 51-52) writes women's wings of PLO groups in this period,

[They] stepped up their efforts to mobilize their own members and sympathizers and to absorb new recruits. Concentrating on the areas of their greatest strength, they extended the schedules of child care centers to accommodate women active in the uprising, and geared health education classes to first aid as casualties mounted in the neighborhoods, especially as a result of beatings and tear gas... Women's committee activists would join local popular committee members in organizing relief or emergency services after Israeli army raids, paying solidarity visits to the families of martyrs and detainees, and providing material assistance whenever necessary. Working on behalf of prisoners and their

families, they would contact lawyers, collect clothing for prisoners, and arrange prison visits via the Red Cross. Women also distributed leaflets, discussed politics openly (often for the first time), and urged people who remained unconvinced to participate in the uprising.

The DFLP was also affiliated with a women's organization, the Palestinian Federation of Women's Action Committees (PFWAC). In the late 1980s, the PFWAC "was the largest and most influential women's organization in the territories, and women were distinctly powerful in the DFLP as well" (Hasso 1998, 442). Its Executive Committee was made up primarily of DFLP women (Ibid), though it remained "relatively independence" of the DFLP and was not a "women's auxiliary" (Ibid, 445). PFWAC women "gave lectures, operated literacy projects, and provided sewing and knitting courses, all of which are primarily supportive and gender-related roles" (Gonzalez-Perez 2008, 100).

Women occupy leadership roles within PLO organizations, within and beyond women's wing. When the PLO was formed, "Palestinian women obtained a 'quota' in the National Assembly, ranging from 2% in 1964 to 7.5% in the Council session held in Gaza in 1996" (Samaroo 2018, 7). Indeed, according to Kawar (1996), were are top-ranking women in each PLO faction, including distinct women's groups in the PFLP and Fatah. Women made up at least 8% of the total members on the PLO's Palestinian National Council and there is 1 woman, of 18 members, on the PLO's Executive Committee (5.5%) (UN Women n.d.).

These numbers were similar to the mid-1990s: women composed 7.5% of Palestinian National Council members in 1996 (Jabali 2009). This does vary by PLO faction. In 1996, women made up "5% of the members of the Central Committee of Fatah movement [...] in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine women represent[ed] 10% of the Central Committee" (Jabali 2009, 6). Women also held leadership roles in publicity and propaganda- at least one woman was in charge of the Plastic Arts section in 1979. She noted at the time that she was the only woman running a department in the PLO (Antonius 1979). The DFLP fostered women's leadership "at all levels" (Hasso 2005).

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Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic (PMR), Moldova

A Women’s Strike Committee engaged in political protests against the Moldovan state during the Transnistrian War (Isachenko 2012, 56), although this does not appear to be an official entity incorporated into the PMR. The Transnistrian Supreme Council celebrated the anniversary of the Committee in 2016, saying,

The assets of the Committee today, tens thousands of women, but in reality it includes all the mothers, wives and daughters. Legitimate organization, but it is not registered. This is the solution of Pridnestrovians defenders. The members actively participate in the social life of the republic. Pridnestrovie is still shrouded in maternal care (Supreme Council of the Pridnestrovian Republic 2016, n.p.).

There are also several references to women’s participation in leadership roles in the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic, also known as Transnistria. While a report by Freedom House (2018, n.p) claims that “[f]ew women are included in the political elite” in the Transnistrian government, women have occupied prominent and public-facing positions such as the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic 2015).

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Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro (Polisario, or Polisario Front), Western Sahara

Allan (2010, 198) suggests that “[f]rom 1973 onwards, huge numbers of women started to incorporate themselves into the ranks of the Polisario,” primarily in non-combat roles. Still, according to Lippert (1992, 642), “some” women took up arms in Polisario’s army, the Sahrawi Popular Liberation Army (SPLA), in the mid-1970s. Similarly, Mundy (2007, 280) concludes that “From the very beginning, women were members of Polisario cells (*al-khaliyah*) in the fight against the Spanish.” At least one woman died in these battles (Lippert 1992). A 2011 National Union of Sahrawi Women (NUSW) (the women’s wing) book called “Women’s Strength: The Experience of Sahrawi Women,” includes a photograph of armed women soldiers training to “defend the [Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, governed by Polisario]” in the 1970s when the Sahrawis were displaced to Algeria (Solana 2020).

Polisario established schools for women to educate them into the movement (Lippert 1992). Women “played a vital role behind the scenes, preparing food and seizing medicine” and contributing “extremely significant material aid” (Allan 2010, 198). Women smuggled rebel material, guarded prisoners, organized clandestine meetings, sewed uniforms, contributed livestock, prepared flags and banners, recruited, organized protests, and worked in other administrative roles (Lippert 1992; Allen 2010; Solana 2020). Women militants also reportedly turned their homes into organizing centers (Allan 2010). According to Wilson (2020, 625),

[...] Polisario introduced [...] Popular Committees so that committees of ‘the people’ would run public services in health care, education, rations distribution, small-scale production and dispute resolution. In the wartime period, when most men served in the SPLA, women staffed these Popular Committees.

Allan (2010, 197-198) recalls an interview with one Polisario leader:

A Polisario leader affirms that ‘women did more than men’ for the cause, as he recalls an episode in which, fleeing from Spanish authorities, he was forced to spend 26 days in hiding under a bed in a Saharawi family home; ‘the woman was the one who facilitated

that, and convinced her husband to give me that possibility. I feel she was caring. Women really were at the heart of it, since the beginning of the struggle.'

Allan (2010, 189) further concludes that "assertions of gender equality are central to Polisario (emancipatory and revolutionary) discourse." Polisario (1999) similarly articulated women's emancipation as one of the group's aims in their publications. The organization called on Saharawi women and men to participate in liberation as activists (Solana 2020; Allan 2010). Polisario also included images of women activists in their visual publicity (Allan 2010). The group operates a women's wing, NUSW, which was and remains led by women and organized nonmilitary Polisario activities (Lippert 1992). The NUSW also administered refugee camps in all aspects, including healthcare, logistics, and education. Mundy (2007, 289-290) writes that women had "dominant" roles in Polisario camps:

In the war, women even received military training, as radio operators, drivers, medics, and in light arms (e.g. AK-47s and bazookas). Given the near-total mobilisation of all able-bodied men in the [armed forces], the camps were 80% women during the war. Thus camp management - 'women's work' - was dictated by necessity as much as by Polisario's acclaimed 'progressive' attitudes towards gender. In numbers alone, women's participation has been impressive even if they have been excluded from the elite core of Polisario.

Women make up approximately 90% of the "base congresses" that contribute to the group's national congress, and consequently parts of Polisario's political leadership included "significant numbers of women" (Ibid, 645; Mundy 2007). Women further composed the "overwhelming majority" of local committees and leadership positions (Mundy 2007, 290). In 1987, "of the twenty-seven members of the Political Bureau, three were women;" (11%) the Sahrawi National Council also included two women (14%) in the early 2000s (Lippert 1992, 646; Mundy 2007). Rossetti (2012, 338) concludes,

Due to this high female representational base, many local and national policies have been influenced by the presence of women; for instance, they organised military training for women, established a women's boarding school, and approved the participation of women as *cadi* (judge) on judicial committee to settle family differences.

In 2008, 18 women were part of the 53-member Sahrawi National Council (SNC), Polisario's legislative body, including three seats reserved for the Women's Union (Wilson 2020).

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Popular Resistance Committees (PRC), Palestine/Israel

The PRC is a “loose alliance of former members and dissidents from several other Palestinian factions, such as Fatah, Hamas, PFLP, and PIJ” (UCDP n.d., n.p) Hezbollah’s television channel in Lebanon, Al-Manar, reported in 2015 that women had joined the al-Nasser Salah al-Deen Brigades – the PRC’s armed wing – and were training with weapons and explosive devices. The report notes that more than 40 women had graduated from the training while forty others were still being trained, and it shows and interviews around ten women taking war strategy lessons and training with weapons, including an RPG. One woman says in this report she is an instructor. One woman also notes, “Our training focuses on women, without men.” A man, presumably a trainer, with the armed women says, “[t]he women bear arms and are on the battlefield,” (Ibid) though reports of women’s involvement in attacks are not verified.

The report suggests that women also do communications work and that there are “mujahid women’s units” (Al-Manar 2015, n.p).

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People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK), India

PREPAK was reportedly the first rebel group in Manipur to recruit women, and Saksena (2018, 183) contends that women militants are “common” in the region. Women worked as guards, including for PREPAK’s founder (Ibid), and trained militarily (South Asia Terrorism Portal n.d.).

News reports suggest that security forces have arrested multiple female PREPAK cadre (e.g. The Times of India 2016; The Northeast Today 2021). For example, police “arrested two female cadres of PREPAK along with four IED weighing 10 kilograms, eight lethod bomb shells and a mobile handset” (South Asia Terrorism Portal n.d., n.p).

Women in PREPAK also report participating in extortion, recruiting, weapons and messages couriering, and in rebel governance activities like tax collection (South Asia Terrorism Portal n.d.; Hindustan Times 2012; Saksena 2018).

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Palaung State Liberation Front (PSLF) / Ta'ang National Liberation Force/Army (TNLF/A), Myanmar (Burma)

The PSLF’s armed wing is the Ta'ang National Liberation Force/Army (TNLF/A). According to Weng (2020, n.p.), “It is built in part on a TNLA policy that at least one person from every Ta’ang family – usually a man, but sometimes a woman – has to serve in the TNLA.” A Radio Free Asia (RFA) report (2018) suggests that “about 500 women have joined TNLA forces.” In 2020, the TNLA had approximately 10,000 members (Weng 2020), suggesting that women compose an estimated 5 percent of forces. The RFA report includes video footage of armed training, and interviews several of the cadres (RFA 2018). One woman notes that she joined the TNLA to become a medic to eventually provide healthcare to women in her community (Ibid).

There are also photographs of armed TNLA women marching in the 2015 Armed Forces Day (Weng 2018).

Reports suggest that women work as medics in the TNLA (Network Media Group 2018), and that some female medics have been murdered by the military (Weng 2018). Reportedly, the military seized guns from the medics before killing them (Ibid).

The Palaung Women's Organization (PWO) is to be an all-women's organization reportedly associated with the rebels that helps to raise awareness, advocate for the ethnic minority, and generate support domestically and internationally (Yamahata et al 2021; Burma Link 2015; Kan Thar 2020). The group includes female leadership (Ibid).

There is also a report of one woman serving in the TNLA's central executive committee (Kolås and Meitei 2019).

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Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), Iraq

Reportedly, a "women's peshmerga unit was established by the PUK in 1996 but remained quite small, including only about five to six hundred fighters, in comparison to as many as one hundred thousand male fighters" (Trisko Darden, Henshaw, and Szekely 2019, 45). Brown and Romano (2006, 58) similarly suggest there is a PUK "Female Peshmerga Force" that by 2006 had approximately 500 members and fought "on the front-lines" in the early 2000s.

According to Fischer-Tahir (2012, 97), women fought for the PUK during the Anfal campaign years: “Women stood at the margins of this world: a number of armed women in the units of the ICP and PUK and the many women who joined their peshmerga husbands or fathers.” She further notes, “Interestingly, numerous wives and daughters spent years with peshmerga units, whereas a wide range of men who counted as peshmerga joined the units for a short period only, sometimes for no more than a few months” (Ibid). But as Trisko Darden, Henshaw, and Szekely (2019, 45) conclude, “neither the PUK nor the KDP have prioritized the recruitment of female soldiers.” By 2015, the Iraqi Kurdistan authorities stopped recruiting female fighters, though women are trained for the peshmerga’s military force (Ibid).

Still, writing on the post-2014 period, Bagheri concludes (2022, 4) that “Kurdish women were considered to be part of the KRG’s [Kurdish Regional Government’s] militia and they undoubtedly played a key role in the war with Islamic State, which indisputably demonstrated the female fighters’ exceptional combat skills and leadership.”

The Women’s Union of Kurdistan (Yekêti Jinanî Kurdistan) is linked to the PUK. Reportedly,

Formal women’s organisations do not exist outside the political arena and women for the most part have been excluded from political discussion and decisions. The military and political agenda has coopted any opportunities for social change. In particular, the Kurdistan Women’s Union (Yeketi Afretani Kurdistan) (KWU) is linked to the KDP and the Women’s Union of Kurdistan (Yeketi Jinanii Kurdistan) is linked to the PUK (Asylum Aid 2002, 14).

The Women’s Union of Kurdistan sponsored “[l]arge numbers of women’s activities, organizations, initiatives or events” (Al-Ali and Pratt 2011, 345). The group also ran a women’s shelter (Asylum Aid 2002).

Women secured Parliament seats as PUK representatives (McDonald 2001). But Dadparvar (2013, 149) contends,

Political representation of women at senior levels in either of the two largest political parties, KDP and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), is poor. While there is a quota to ensure that 25% of seats in the Kurdistan National Assembly (KNA) are held by women, many are not genuinely independent and have been placed in their positions by the KDP and PUK, which, despite having formed a unified KRG, still view each other suspiciously.

In the mid-2000s, the Minister of State for Women in Iraq was reportedly a former PUK peshmerga (Brown and Romano 2006). According to Mazurana (2004, 34), some women in the PUK “serve as high ranking members of the movement’s political wing.” Still, Bagheri (2022, 5) contends that in the post-2017 period, the KRG has “not been successful in entrenching women’s political participation” because of “the lack of a genuine democracy, or a solid process towards genuine democracy. The weak powersharing arrangement between the two prominent parties in Iraqi Kurdistan—namely the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of

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People's United Liberation Front (PULF), India

Women participated in the PULF, though the scope and scale of their involvement is difficult to confirm. Security forces have arrested several women PULF cadre (South Asia Terrorism Portal n.d.; One India 2006; Hindustan Times 2009). Female PULF participants were also reportedly involved in extortion, finance, and weapons couriership (South Asia Terrorism Portal n.d.).

While the scale of women’s leadership is difficult to assess, news reporting suggests that women did take on these positions. For example, the Times of India (2011, n.p.) reported that security forces arrested four PULF militants, including “a woman who is learnt to be the leader of the group.”

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People’s War Group (PWG), India

Women’s participation in the PWG grew over time -- Mukherjee (2004) estimates that women composed 15% of the organization in 1994 but 35% by 2002. Women combatants trained with men to use weapons, set up landmines, and conduct ambush operations (Ibid). Security forces regularly arrested women PWG cadre who composed part of mixed-gender units and some carried rewards offered by police (South Asia Terrorism Portal n.d.). The PWG also included an all-women militia. Security forces killed women PWG cadre in combat. For example, in 2000, police killed two women in Warangal District (Refugee Review Tribunal 2005).

Women contributed widely in non-combat roles to the many Naxalite and Maoist groups in this conflict, many of whom merged into other units over time. Specific information on women in the PWG is limited, though PWG women launched a women’s magazine (Mukherjee 2004). Lata (2019, 6) contends that the PWG “also formed a separate women’s organisation in 1982.” The Krantikari Adivasi Mahila Sangathan (KAMS), today a banned group in India, was also reportedly a PWG women’s mass association (The Hindu 2005). KAMS has historically been a large organization and included women leaders; KAMS later affiliated with CPI-Maoist as the armed groups evolved (Roy 2010). According to the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP, n.d, n.p.), the Nari Mukti Sangharsh Samiti (NMSS, Women’s Liberation Struggle Association) was also a “front” for the PWG, and later the CPI-Maoist. Sen (2017, 60) notes that “The purpose of mass organizations,” including the NMSS, “is to sow the seeds of radicalism among the supporters and middle-of-the-roaders, who will eventually nurture and rally around guerrilla forces when they confront the state.” NMSS women organised conferences and collective action advancing women’s rights (Omvedt, Gala, and Kelkar 1988).

While women made up a large proportion of the PWG, a smaller number of women participated at the decision-making level. Women cadre and feminist groups pressured the organization to address patriarchal issues in their ranks (Parashar and Shah 2016). Women composed an estimated 10% of delegates in the PWG Congress, and they are drawn from lower, military leadership positions (Mukherjee 2004). Maheshwari (2018, 5) recalls one PWG cadre who was the “first woman commander of ‘Central Reorganization Committee’” and who was promoted as a central military instructor after the PWG merged to become CPI-Maoist.

Anuradha Ghandy, a “Maoist feminist intellectual” was reportedly “instrumental in the formation of the People’s War Group” (Karma 2013, n.p.)

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People's Protection Units of the Democratic Union Party- PYD (YPG/YPJ), Syria

YPJ (the PYD's armed female wing) women famously fought the Islamic State in Syria, but women are well integrated into Kurdish struggle at all levels. Women composed an estimated 40% of the PYD, including approximately 40% of combatants (~24,000 of 60,000 total), and the group "explicitly advocates women's empowerment" (Trisko Darden, Henshaw, and Szekely 2019, 44). Other estimates put women's participation in the combat units at 35% (Re in Shekhawat 2013; PRI 2013) Women worked widely in command roles, though most women officers reportedly commanded all-women units because of the training and fighting structure.

Women contributed immensely to the PYD outside of combat, largely through their participation in civil society in Rojava, the section of northern Syria that the PYD governed. Knapp et. al (2016, 69), contend, "in Afrin, 65% of the civil society, political, and military institutions consist of women [...] in the 44 municipal institutions, 55% of the workers are women. In the

agricultural sector, it's 56%, and in the Kurdish-language institutes and in the teachers' union, the proportion of women is 70%.”

Women involved in the PYD-led government are also members of Kongreya Star, the women's organization in Rojava. Further, the PYD runs a Women's Office, which is “responsible for supervising the organisational work of women within the Party in Rojava, Syria and abroad. The main task of the Office is to inform and educate women about women's rights, liberty and democratic politics and practices” (PYD 2015, n.p).

All political roles in the organization are held jointly by a woman and a man. The PYD's Charter of the Social Contract mandates that “the proportion of the representation of both genders in all institutions, administrations, and bodies is of at least 40%” (2014, n.p).

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Rally of Democratic Forces (RAFD), Chad

Women's participation is not verified.

Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD), Democratic Republic of the Congo

There are multiple RCD factions, but our source materials generally consider them in the aggregate. Women are involved in RCD activity in front-line and non-combat roles. For example, Marks (2019, 17) identifies 97 “ex-RCD women” in a social network analysis and identifies them as “ex-combatants.”

In one notorious case, Aziza Kulsum Gulamali headed an arms and natural resources trafficking ring in order to finance and arm the RCD in Goma, the DR Congo (The New Humanitarian 2002; Cuvelier and Bashwira 2016). She facilitated this through her private business. She also previously “served as a major business partner of the FDD” (Lemarchand 2003, 56).

Reports of men RCD fighters demobilizing often note “wives” defecting with them or living in rebel camps (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs 2002, n.p). It is not clear from this reporting if and how women are participating in rebel activities.

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Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS) / Shan State Army – South (SSAS), Myanmar (Burma)

Though there is some evidence that women received military training in the RCSS/SSA-S, they do not appear to have participated in combat. A Human Rights Watch (2007, 105-106) report relayed that “in literature and video footage seen by Human Rights Watch, teenage girls and young women are seen wearing SSA-S uniforms and carrying assault weapons during ceremonies. Officials contend that this is just ‘fashion,’ but admit that a program called *nang harn* (‘brave girls’) does exist to give basic military training (including rudimentary weapons training) for teenage girls. They claim these girls are never used in a combat role, and this program is an adjunct to regular schooling.” This alludes to the use of women and gender norms to galvanize recruitment, which is also reflected in popular culture (Jirattikorn 2011).

Women have contributed in a non-combat capacity. For example, recruitment and inspirational music is produced by SSA-S soldiers and their wives: “The lyrics are a mixture of love songs and nationalist ballads. While the love songs sung by female singers give moral support to Shan soldiers on the front, nationalist songs talk about fighting, war, and call for Shans to join hands to fight for the revolution” (Jirattikorn 2011, 34).

Kolås and Meitei (2019) identify no women cadres and note that there are no women on the RCSS Central Committee. The organization's leadership is reportedly male dominated (Khen and Nyoï 2014).

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Rejectionist Front, Palestine/Israel

The PFLP, DFLP, Palestinian Popular Struggle Front (PPSF), PFLP-GC, as-Saiqa, the Arab Liberation Front, and other groups were part of the Rejectionist Front. The front formed in 1974 to reject the PLO's Fatah-led Ten Point Program by groups who viewed it as a move towards a two-state solution rather than a single Palestinian state. Consequently, women's participation in these organizations after 1974 comprised participation in the Rejectionist Front.

Eggert (2018) estimates that women may have composed up to 15% of PFLP fighters between 1975-1990. PFLP women interviewed by Antonius (1975, 42) at the time similarly concluded that there "are lots of girls in the training camps and fighting" in Lebanon's civil war. PFLP posters regularly link women's liberation with national liberation, though Sayigh (1981) argues these arguments are not reflected in PFLP praxis. Similarly, Peteet (1992) suggests that the PLO trained women in military camps but did not regularly incorporate them as fighters. Kawar (1994) and Gonzalez-Perez (2008, 99), too conclude that "Palestinian armed conflict, as well as leadership and policy-making, is carried out exclusively by men" (see also: Khaled 1973). Other accounts suggest that "exclusively" is an overstatement, but that women do primarily work in non-combat and supportive roles.

There are few documented attacks committed by women for the PFLP (Margolin 2016). CPOST data from Soules (2020) suggests that women perpetrated 1 of the 11 (9%) PFLP suicide bombings committed between 1974-2016.

The DFLP published several posters featuring armed female fighters (see: Palestine Poster Project Archives), but according to Gonzalez-Perez (2008, 100), "Even within the secular DFLP, women remained in support roles due to the 'gender restrictions imposed on most girls and women' and only a small number of Palestinian women engaged in 'mixed-gender activities.'"

Off of the front-lines, women contributed immensely to PFLP activities. For example, during the first Intifada, the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees (UPWC), a women's group affiliated with the militants, advocated the PFLP's political program with thousands of members (Hiltermann 1991). The UPWC's stated mission was "to empower Palestinian women on all levels and to contribute in the Palestinian national struggle against the Israeli military illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories" (NGO Monitor 2021, 1). In 2012 the group was still affiliated with the PFLP and operating "21 preschools and day-care centers in the poorest communities in the West Bank" (Ibid, 1). The group holds seminars and events for the PFLP and to commemorate PFLP fighters. In 2019, Israeli security forces reportedly "confiscated seven computers, four hard drives, camera memory cards, an external hard drive and a projector" (Ibid, 3).

Hiltermann (1991, 51-52) writes of the UPWC and other women's wings in the Intifada period,

[They] stepped up their efforts to mobilize their own members and sympathizers and to absorb new recruits. Concentrating on the areas of their greatest strength, they extended the schedules of child care centers to accommodate women active in the uprising, and geared health education classes to first aid as casualties mounted in the neighborhoods, especially as a result of beatings and tear gas [...] Women's committee activists would join local popular committee members in organizing relief or emergency services after Israeli army raids, paying solidarity visits to the families of martyrs and detainees, and providing material assistance whenever necessary. Working on behalf of prisoners and their families, they would contact lawyers, collect clothing for prisoners, and arrange prison visits via the Red Cross. Women also distributed leaflets, discussed politics openly (often for the first time), and urged people who remained unconvinced to participate in the uprising.

Parkinson (2013) similarly documents female-dominated clandestine supply, financial, and information networks in 1980s Lebanon working on behalf of the PFLP and other PLO factions. Still, she suggests that these networks functioned in a period of organizational fragmentation after the 1982 Israeli invasion into South Lebanon. Parkinson (2013, 425) writes of one former PFLP member:

Munadileh, a PFLP cadre with brothers and an uncle in other leftist organizations, noted, "For women, there was a social role and a military role." Military roles, by her definition, included gathering intelligence on the IDF, making food, sewing clothing, and smuggling all of the above to male guerrillas operating in the Shouf and around the southern camps. Women like Munidileh were particularly valuable in this context; as a nurse, she not only provided essential medical care but she was also already well known and trusted by the guerillas.

Other women who joined the PFLP produced art and literature for the organization. As one PFLP recalls, "One of these [art] actions got me arrested in Copenhagen in 1969 - I spent a month in

prison there and then was expelled - but they were secret and I still can't talk about them” (quoted in Antonius 1975, 41).

The DFLP was also affiliated with a women’s organization, the Palestinian Federation of Women’s Action Committees (PFWAC). In the late 1980s, the PFWAC “was the largest and most influential women’s organization in the territories, and women were distinctly powerful in the DFLP as well” (Hasso 1998, 442). Its Executive Committee was made up primarily of DFLP women (Ibid), though it remained “relatively independence” of the DFLP and was not a “women’s auxiliary” (Ibid, 445). PFWAC women “gave lectures, operated literacy projects, and provided sewing and knitting courses, all of which are primarily supportive and gender-related roles” (Gonzalez-Perez 2008, 100).

Women occupied leadership roles within the PFLP’s political structure. According to Kawar (1996), there were top-ranking women in each PLO faction, including distinct women’s groups in the PFLP and Fatah. In 1996 women in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine represent[ed] 10% of the Central Committee” (Jabali 2009, 6).

The DFLP fostered women’s leadership “at all levels” (Hasso 2005).

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Mozambican National Resistance (Renamo), Mozambique

Women participated in Renamo as combatants and non-combatants. The best quantitative estimates of women’s involvement on the front-line come from disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) data from the war, but many female combatants were not officially demobilized (Wiegnik 2020). Approximately 32,000 combatants officially presented for the demobilization program, and this included “only a few hundred women” (Wiegnik and Sprenkels 2020, 431). Yet, Wiegnik (2014, 134) suggests Renamo “recruited young men and women en masse.” Some civilians recall women soldiers in Renamo combat units, but Wiegnik and Sprenkels’ (2020) interviews with former Renamo members did not validate this.

Some women members report that they were militarily trained, but that the women’s detachment’s “tasks included cooking, tending the wounded, having involuntary sex and carrying military equipment” (Nordstrom 1991, 3). It is therefore unclear whether the ‘women’s battalions’ were composed of women fighters, or women participating in other ways. Other research highlights women’s work in smuggling, working in weapons depots, collecting intelligence, working as medics, recruiting, and acting as spirit mediums (Hall 1990; Coulter et. al. 2008; Wiegnik 2020). Indeed, “[i]n carrying out these activities, women contributed to the day-to-day functioning of Renamo” (Wiegnik 2014, 79). Many women also report sexual violence and other brutality within Renamo ranks, and many were reportedly kidnapped into the organization (Baden 1997).

In its insurgency years, Renamo established a Women’s Department/League which included women in leadership positions (Weigert 1995; Van Den Bergh 2009). Apparently the “creation of the Women’s Department was also fairly haphazard: the Women also made up some, if low-level, leadership in the military hierarchies: some women became commanders” (Schafer 1998, 214). The post-conflict period saw the continuation of female-only associations among female demobilized fighters; the head of the Zambezia Women’s Department reported that she heard an

advertisement on the radio for female demobilized soldiers, and when she responded, was “recruited” into the association (Ibid).

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Republic of Abkhazia, Georgia

During the Abkhaz-Georgian war (1992-1993), Abkhazian women “fought as combatants, worked in military hospitals as nurses and doctors, were correspondents on the front and helped refugees to survive. Definitely, there were women among those awarded honors and medals” (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe 2012, 1). Reportedly “[s]even Abkhazian women from Turkey also voluntarily went to Abkhazia to participate in the war,” and one participated in combat (Nil Doğan 2016, 145). Armed women posed for photo-journalists (Ibid).

One eyewitness recalls an incident in 1993:

Abkhazs, Cossacks, Chechens and Russians, along with the armed Abkhaz women, raided the village. All of them were armed with grenade launchers, mortar guns, automatic rifles backed by tanks and armored vehicles. They screamed at us saying that they would not leave the area until they would have drunk the blood of the last Georgian survivor. Even the slightest resistance would have caused immediate death. The girls

were forcefully driven by Abkhaz women into isolated rooms. I was with my baby and with my mothers and sisters. They threatened us that the Abkhaz men would rape us one by one (International Court of Justice 2009, 204).

In her research on Abkhaz mobilization during the war, Shesterinina interviewed women who participated in non-combat roles. She concludes that “combat [was] dominated by men and women represented in support and nonfighter roles” (2016, 415). But women participated in “small defense groups with their friends and family and joined the Special Regiment of Internal Forces (SRIF) forces, commonly referred to as the Abkhaz Guard, organized by the Abkhaz leaders prior to the war” (Shesterinina 2019, 9).

Women participated as war nurses, medics, engineers, logisticians, food procurers, and they washed dishes and took care of children (Nil Doğan 2016; Shesterinina 2016). Women in Abkhazia and South Ossetia reportedly smuggled goods for guerrilla groups before the 2003 Rose Revolution, including Zvadist groups (Kupatadze 2005).

But “despite their important roles during and after the war, women find themselves not represented in leadership and decision-making roles in the current political sphere” (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe 2012, 1). However, women in Abkhazia do occupy some political leadership positions. Between 1996-2002, multiple parliament deputies were women. Women are also members of town assemblies (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe 2012, 1). In 2012, one of six state committee heads was a woman and women composed two of nine departments under the Cabinet of Ministers. Women also headed two of eight ‘state’ funds (Ibid). However, “In the 2012 election women's representation in the de facto state of Abkhazia dropped from 11.4% to 2.8%, a fall from the highest to the lowest percentage of women in the parliament since 1991 in one election” (Ó Beacháin Stefanczak and Connolly 2015, 1).

There is presently a regional women’s association, the Association of Women of Abkhazia.

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Republic of Biafra, Nigeria

Women participated extensively in the Biafran conflict. Women enlisted in Biafra’s armed sectors, the Biafran Organization of Freedom Fighters (BOFF) and Special Task Force (STF), in armed and unarmed roles. When Biafran men were drafted into combat, women were trained in weapons use and became local police officers (Chuku 2018, 346). Achebe (2010, 800) notes that women served in the BOFF’s Research and Production Group, which comprised of “scientists, engineers and skilled technicians” with specialized knowledge such as of rockets. Achebe (2010, 802) also notes that

Two women each were represented in the Logistics, Operations, and Planning departments at the insistence of the coordinators. These young women learned not only the use of assault weapons but also how to infiltrate enemy territory. However, as the war intensified, most of them ended up in the technological section, where they helped to produce from local materials items of necessity for the everyday life of Biafrans (bowls, raffia mats, baskets, nuts and bolts, nails).

Chuku (2018, 346) further contends that although women provided critical support to the armed forces, they were “never placed on the Biafran payroll” and officially were not allowed to carry arms, despite a few women even unofficially serving as armed combatants against the Nigerian army.

Women provided other support beyond serving the armed forces. According to Achebe (2010, 801), “[t]heoretically, freedom fighters included all civilians in the Biafran-controlled territory, who were expected to help provide information and logistical support to the various operators because they had precise knowledge of the turf.” So while not all women who provided support were official enlistees in an armed wing, all of the work women contributed was considered as being part of the war effort. Achebe (2010, 793) lists the following activities:

[...] organizing the kitchens and transport for the Biafran forces, energizing the land army effort (to beef up food cultivation), collaborating with the International Red Cross, Caritas, the World Council of Churches, and other relief agencies, helping to transfer sick children for treatment to friendly countries overseas that had recognized Biafra, establishing schools for children, and keeping the markets open and the food supply trickling in despite the blockade [...]

Women further participated in “afia attacks,” which, “so called because of its war-like nature, mimics the military attack against an enemy stronghold” (Achebe 2010, 793). In these ‘attacks,’ women would venture across enemy lines to procure food, which Achebe posits was a means of recovering their role as society’s nurturers in the midst of food shortages in Biafra (Achebe 2010, 794). Women would wear disguises and befriend soldiers from the Nigerian and Biafran armies alike in order to make the treacherous crossings, a clandestine undertaking (Chuku 2018, 343). Some women died during these missions (Achebe 2010, 795; Uzokwe 2003, 58).

Biafran women apparently did not hold leadership positions during the war. Achebe (2010, 793) notes that “[w]omen were not represented in the political structure of government, and their once representative voice in politics paled in the face of other pressing matters and the constraints of the war.” There were a variety of Igbo women’s associations which supported Biafran independence during the war (Achebe 2010, 793), though these do not appear to be officially incorporated. There was however a Women’s Voluntary Service which for example cooked meals in what was referred to as the “Kitchen Battalion” (Chuku 2018, 345).

Women’s political support for Biafra continues today; in 2018, Director of Amnesty International Nigeria Osai Ojigho criticized the Nigerian government for the “arrest and mistreatment” of 114 pro-Biafra protestors (Okakwu 2018). In a 2020 interview, President of the Igbo Women’s Assembly Marie Okwo remarked, “On the roles women can play in a Biafran state, let me say, without fear of equivocation that without the contributions of women in governance, success will be difficult to achieve. Women have great potentials that should be harnessed in order to move the state forward” (Klomegah 2020, n.p).

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Republic of Croatia, Croatia

According to the UCDP (n.d., n.p), “The Republic of Croatia declared independence on 25 June 1991 and thus ignited the conflict against the two Serbian regions; the Serbian Republic of

Serbian autonomous Oblast of (SAO) Krajina and the Serbian autonomous region of (SAO) Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and western Symria [...] Croatian forces were composed mainly of the regular army of Croatia, the HV (Hrvatska Vojska, Croatian Armed Forces), and police forces.” Berdak (2013, 11) estimates that women composed approximately 5% of “the Croatian Army and volunteer and paramilitary units which were later incorporated into the state forces.” Croatian press published several articles about female soldiers between 1991 and 1994, and Žarkov (2007, 191) notes that there were “hundreds of reports from the front-line.” Women soldiers were reportedly part of the ‘Gardistice,’ the elite guard units (Ibid). In a press interview, one woman soldier notes, “[W]e swore that we were not here to join sanitary units, make coffee and tea, or do the dishes. We came as an active combat unit of the Croatian army, with the intention of bringing freedom to Croatia, with guns in our hands” (Ibid, 194).

Some women in the Croatian Army are implicated in war crimes. For example, Labenski (2017, 25, 143) summarizes:

Azra Bašić, who was arrested in Kentucky, US in 2011, was a Croatian national who was a former member of the Croatian army. After the conflict in Yugoslavia, Bašić immigrated to the US and settled in Kentucky, supporting herself by working in a sandwich factory while also taking jobs bathing elderly nursing home patients. The US authorities accused Bašić of committing war crimes at three different camps in Bosnia [...] The Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina sentenced Albina Terzic, a former member of the Croatian Defense Council, to five years in prison for crimes against Bosnian Serb civilians illegally detained in the northern Bosnian town of Odzak in 1992 (Ibid, 143).

Women also worked as “reporters, nurses and teachers” in Croatian armed organizations during the war (Berdak 2013, 11; Žarkov 2007). Some had “combat medic skills” (Žarkov 2007, 195). After the war, non-combatant women founded the Association of Women in the Homeland War to “demand some recognition for their role” (Berdak 2013, 11).

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Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, Government of Azerbaijan

Women have played an active role in the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh. Women not only served as fighters, “snipers and militants in Armenia as well as in Azerbaijan,” but also participated in “humanitarian-medical aid and general military labor” and worked in the “underground liberation movement” (Tskhvariashvili 2018, 62). Harris (1999, n.p.) suggests that women were allowed to join the standing army, but that they were “restricted to work in areas like administration and medical services.” Many women in the group played several distinct roles, for example, serving as a nurse and a fighter (Shahnazarian 2016).

Women reportedly were able to rise to positions of leadership within the Nagorno-Karabakh armed structure (Shahnazarian 2016) and have continued to serve in leadership positions in the rebel governance of the “renegade republic” (Ehlers 2018, n.p). Other accounts suggests that women play important administrative and leadership positions in the proto-government (Ehlers 2018).

Rebel leaders reportedly used the presence of women to galvanize men on the frontline, shaming men into participating in dangerous operations as to not be out-performed by a woman (Ibid). This is not to underplay the bravery of the women in the war; as one female veteran noted “It was terrifying for everyone, and for me, of course, but my teeth didn’t chatter. I, it seemed, had been born for war” (quoted in Ibid, 7). One report suggests that 100 women took part in the Karabakh War (Ibid), while another suggests that those who were involved had frequently lost family or friends in the fighting (Tskhvariashvili 2018).

There was reportedly a proposal for a women’s battalion in the organization, proposed by the “the Coordinating Council ‘Women for Karabakh’” (Shahnazarian 2016, 17). There is also a reference to the “First Women’s Division” with reference to a female fighter but little information of this organization’s tasks (Tskhvariashvili 2018, 66). Furthermore, there are reports of all-women’s groups in the South Caucasus region resisting the Soviets generally (Shahnazaryan et al. 2016) and evidence of women-centered NGOs operating in Nagorno-Karabakh (Gradlyan 2013).

Still, some women reported that they received resistance from the military when they tried to join the organization (Tskhvariashvili 2018). Zhanna Galstyan, an Assistant to the President for Cultural Affairs and a participant in the Nagorno-Karabakh war “captured her anti-feminist approach toward women’s solidarity in a short, but capacious phrase, ‘Why divide the nation into men and women?’” (Shahnazaryan et al. 2016, 20). Still, commentators connect women’s wartime participation to an acceptance of female leadership in the post-war era (Shahnazaryan et al. 2016). Women in Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Nagorno-Karabakh also supported the fighters by donating their gold jewelry (Shahnazaryan et al. 2016).

Life in Nagorno-Karabakh is an uncertain limbo, marked by compulsory military service and the potential for conflict recidivism (Stone 2018). The outbreak of war in 2020 underlined the precarity of residents’ lives. During this conflict, women “were doing everything possible: cleaning, baking, supporting the mothers of the soldiers” (Chichakyan 2020, n.p).

It is unclear to what degree women were fighters in the more recent hostilities. A news article by Chichakyan (2020, n.p) reported:

The war in 2020 was not the first war for Alla Arzumanyan. She participated in the first Karabakh war as a nurse. And 26 years later, when a new war raged, she decided to participate again, but was rejected. She was told that ‘this war is nothing like the previous one,’ and was suggested to stay in her hometown of Askeran and cook.

During the latest bout of fighting women were active participants in protest movement; as one activist living abroad asserted. “If men were fighting on the front-lines, women needed to tell their stories. That is how we started our protests and met with different ambassadors” (Chichakyan 2020, n.p).

One female veteran of the conflict (who worked as a nurse) now runs empowerment programs for women (Ibid). In a 21st century spin on rebel diplomacy, a young woman encourages youth to produce Wikipedia entries, often about Nagorno-Karabakh (Chichakyan 2020), though this does not appear to be group-directed activity.

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Republic of Slovenia, Serbia

According to Jelušić and Malešić (2003, 180), “Slovenia has a tradition of women soldiers that stems from their active role in the partisan units during the Second World War, and women fulfilled both combatant and command roles during the Ten-Day War.”

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Republic of South Ossetia, Georgia

Tensions between South Ossetia, an autonomous area within Georgia, and Georgia heightened in the late 1980s (UCDP n.d.). The South Ossetian nationalists movement South Ossetian Popular Front Ademon Nykhas (Popular Shrine) “formed a military wing in response to the growing tensions. Within only six months and with support from North Ossetia, the force grew from about 300 to 400 in early 1990 to 1,500 fighters and an additional force of 3,500 volunteers. While the situation between Georgian and Ossetian forces escalated on the ground during 1991, South Ossetia continued its struggle for independence from Georgia also politically” (Ibid). The extent of women’s participation in South Ossetia’s war in this period or the 2000s resumption of hostilities (with Russian involvement) is not clear. Though one news report includes a photograph of an armed female fighter from the 1990s (Radio Free Europe 2021), women’s front-line participation or military training is not verified.

Women in Abkhazia and South Ossetia reportedly smuggled goods for guerrilla groups, including Zvadtist groups (Kupatadze 2005). Today, many former smugglers for paramilitaries and rebels are now “petty traders” known as “women with bags” (Ibid, 69). Kupatadze (Ibid, 72) notes that “[...] in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the distinction among official security and police forces, criminals, and various armed militias is completely blurred.”

In South Ossetia, women participate in women’s associations and political leadership. This includes the Association of South Ossetian Women for Democracy and Human Rights and other organizations, including many gender-focused NGOs (Республика Южная Осетия 2007, n.p.)

In the late 2000s, South Ossetia had a “de facto Chairwoman of the Information and Press Committee” (International Court of Justice 2009, 188). Women have also been the Deputy Prime Minister in the South Ossetian government, the Education Minister, the chairwoman of South Ossetia's election commission (Washington Post 2011; Radio Free Europe 2019). However,

“While the South Ossetian government includes several women ministers, the interests of women and minority groups are not represented politically” (Freedom House 2021, n.p.)

Sources

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Republic of South Sudan, South Sudan

According to the UCDP (n.d., n.p), “The Republic of South[ern] Sudan refers to the autonomous region of southern Sudan, which was established in 2005 [after the peace agreement, the CPA] and existed until 9 July 2011, when it gained independence as South Sudan.” The SPLM/A governed the republic, in ostensible coordination with the government of Sudan, during this period until the independence referendum, and the “the forces of the Republic of South Sudan were drawn from the troops of the SPLM/A” (Ibid, n.p).

Women participated in the semi-autonomous zone’s government. According to Soma (2020, 18):

Following the signing of the CPA in 2005, women affiliated with the SPLM/A were appointed to various commissions and entities to prepare for establishment of the new southern Sudanese semiautonomous government [...] For example, Awut Deng Acuil’s engagement in the negotiating delegation led to her appointment as part of a delegation of ten southern Sudanese sent to Khartoum for a confidence-building initiative.

The Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan instituted a 25% quota for women’s participation in the Executive branch (Ibid). For example, Agnes Kwaje Losuba was the “Gender, Child and Social Welfare and representative of women in the government” (Sudan Tribune 2010, n.p).

Women held other leadership positions, including as governors, the Chairperson of the Anti-Corruption Commission, the Chairperson of the Southern Sudan Human Rights Commission, and as members of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (Soma 2020). Still, reportedly the republic's government did not fully implement the 25% quota policy (Washburne 2010).

Women participated in other non-combat roles in the republic. Washburne (2010, 229) writes,

In the 1970s the government in Khartoum formed a Women's Union and built three women's centres in the South. During the civil war a parallel association developed under the auspices of the SPLM. At the end of the war the goal was to bring the two associations together and harmonise the activities of all women's groups throughout the South, from the boma-level to the GoSS-level. Most women's groups at the boma-level were informal, not politically active and were involved in a number of activities focused on improving women's livelihoods through wealth generating, health, education, gender-based violence and general empowerment programmes. These groups were asked to assemble a committee and elect a leader. Their representative was sent to the payam-level, where the same process was replicated, and again at the county- and state-levels. Sixty representatives were sent from each state to the national conference. The whole congress was given the task of forming an executive body made up of seventeen women and a chairlady [...] This was one of the most comprehensive attempts at encouraging the development of one sector of civil society in Southern Sudan by the Southern government. Still, it was a far cry from an overarching governmental policy on civil society.

Similarly, Rolandsen (2007, 16) notes, “[S]ome of the local women organisations established during the civil war in SPLM controlled areas, often referred to as the Women's Federation, are still active.”

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Résistance Armée Tunisienne Tunisia

Women's participation is not verified.

Revolutionary Forces of 1 April, Chad

Women's participation is not verified.

Rally of Democratic Forces of Guinea (RFDG), Guinea

Women's participation is not verified.

Real Irish Republican Army (Real IRA, RIRA), Ireland/UK

Available reporting suggests women participated in the Real IRA. In 2002, security forces arrested a woman on terrorism charges linked to a Real IRA bombing campaign (CNN 2002). Women accused of Real IRA activities were also arrested on terrorism and weapons charges in 2003, 2012 and 2020, including “on charges of preparing acts of terrorism, possessing a rifle and ammunition, and attending a Real IRA training camp in secluded woods near Omagh” (Associated Press 2012, n.p; Lavery 2003; News Letter 2020).

It is possible that women occupy positions in the Real IRA’s leadership, particularly Bernadette Sands McKeivitt, founder of the 32 County Sovereignty Movement. Alison (2009, 187) concludes that Sands McKeivitt was “allegedly until a few years ago the third in command of the Real IRA.” News reporting from 2000 calls the 32 County Sovereignty Movement the RIRA’s “political wing” (Campbell and Thomas 2000, n.p) The U.S. government also lists the 32 County Sovereignty Movement as a foreign terrorist organization because the U.S. considers it the Real IRA’s political wing. According to the U.S. Department of State (2001, n.p), “evidence provided by both the British and Irish governments and open source materials demonstrate clearly that the individuals who created the real IRA also established these two entities to serve as the public face of the real IRA. These alias organizations engage in propaganda and fundraising on behalf of and in collaboration with the real IRA.” The RIRA and the 32 County Sovereignty Movement both deny this relationship (CAIN n.d).

Sands McKeivitt’s husband, Michael McKeivitt, is the former leader of the RIRA.

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Reformation and Jihad Front (RJF), Iraq

Women's participation is not verified.

Royalists, Yemen

Women's participation is not verified.

Rohingya Patriotic Front (RPF), Myanmar (Burma)

Women's participation not verified.

Rohingya Solidarity Organization (RSO), Myanmar (Burma)

Women's participation is not verified.

Revolutionary United Front (RUF), Sierra Leone

Demobilization records and surveys of ex-combatants suggest that women composed about 24% of the RUF; that of the 24,000 demobilized women, an estimated 10,000 women served as soldiers (42% of demobilized women); and that a substantial proportion may have been forcibly recruited (Coulter 2008; MacKenzie 2012; Cohen 2013). By 2002, an estimated 70,000 fighters had gone through DDR camps (Gberie 2005), meaning that if 10,000 women served as soldiers, they made up around 14% of demobilized combatants. Mazurana and Carlson (2004) puts the prevalence of demobilized adult, female ex-combatants closer to 7%. Women committed many types of violence, including sexual violence (Cohen 2013; Marks 2019).

MacKenzie (2012) estimates that 30-50% of all fighting forces active in the Sierra Leone Civil War were women, and concludes that in this conflict, the distinction between soldiers and auxiliary participants was extremely blurred, so much so that she suggests delineating between them is not useful. Many women performed both combat and 'support' roles. Within these supportive and non-combat roles, women were strategic in military reconnaissance missions and did chores in the camp. Women and girls produced and cooked food, cared for wounded and sick, courier messages between RUF camps, and worked in diamond mining (McKay 2005). Wives of commanders ran RUF camps and selected women for specific non-combat jobs (Lahai 2013). Women were integral to the RUF's governance structure through positions such as 'town mothers' and women's representatives at RUF meetings (Marks 2013). MacKenzie (2012, 54) recalls a female RUF scout reporting her role in the conflict as "[t]o caress pro-government commanders and slowly kill them with excess sex poisoning."

Mazurana and Carlson's (2004, 2) study of 50 girls and women who participated in the RUF concludes,

Women and girls also made up a large part of rebel RUF forces.... almost all stated 'abduction' as their means of entry; one third stated that they had fighting experience; nearly half indicated that they received weapons training; one fifth described themselves as spies; and more than half indicated that in addition to performing other duties, they were forced to be captive 'wives...'

They continue:

They were spies, commanders, and frontline fighters; some were herbalists, meant to supply fighters with magic potions for invulnerability. Others were cooks, medics, and spiritual leaders. They witnessed brutal rituals and suffered significant sexual abuse... were responsible for distributing weapons, food, and loot confiscated from village raids... In sum, the experience of women and girls in the fighting forces was complex. They were captives and dependents, but they were also involved in the planning and execution of the war. (Ibid, 2).

One reason abduction was so common might be the RUF's view of sexual violence. Leadership reportedly "thought the best way to prevent rape of civilians was by RUF fighters having wives,"

leading to abductions (under the guise of ‘rescues’) during successful attacks (Marks 2013, 38). When women “began to outnumber the men,” these abductions ceased (Ibid).

The RUF operated a ‘Women’s Auxiliary Corps’ of adult combatants where some women fought as combatants and served as commanders, generals, or senior intelligence officers (Badmus 2009; Lahai 2012; Marks 2019). Marks (2019, 10) concludes, “Many of the female leaders within the RUF were involved in expanding education and medical care within the group’s territory.” The women’s wing procured arms for rebels; at least one female weapons courier was arrested by security forces. The group also operated a Ministry of Gender. Additionally, Marks (2019, 493) notes that:

Toward the end of the war, a group of civilian women within the RUF formed the Revolutionary United Sisters Organization. Founded by a few senior civilian women and commanders wives to unify RUF and SLA women, the group sought to provide medical care, food, and other services to women soldiers and to create a social and political space for women in the male dominated organization. However Vanguard women refused to join saying they had not been properly consulted.”

According to Aning (1998), a woman headed the RUF’s negotiating team during peace talks.

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Somali Abo Liberation Front (SALF), Ethiopia

Women's participation is not verified.

Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (SCIRI), Iraq

Women's participation is not verified.

The Islamic Women's Organization is affiliated with SCIRI, and it is headed by a female secretary general who "has been a prominent member of parliament since 2005" (Fischer-Tahir 2010, 1386). However, it is not clear that this organization existed or was affiliated with SCIRI during the group's insurgency years, prior to 2003. Similarly, a report of a woman in charge of SCIRI's women's affairs comes in the post-insurgency period (Al Jazeera 2004). SCIRI now functions as a prominent political party in post-invasion Iraq.

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Sudanese Awakening Revolutionary Council (SARC), Sudan

Women's participation is not verified.

Seleka, Central African Republic

There is limited information about women's participation in the Seleka, though reports suggest that women and girls have been incorporated into the group's ranks. There is at least one report of women serving in combat positions in the organization; one woman interviewed said that there were "many women" engaged in the military training with her (Vinograd 2017, n.p). According to Freeman (2014, 57), in Seleka "women are expected to train with the men and are issued automatic weapons, but they also work in the kitchen, preparing food for everyone, making tea, and often fanning the generals as they sit in the hot sun."

The disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) program in the Central African Republic included female combatants from both Seleka and the anti-Balaka. According to the report, 737 of the 4979 ex-combatants, or roughly 15% were female (Abdenur and Kuele 2017). There are numerous reports of the Seleka recruiting children, including girls (Dukhan 2016; Zavis 2014).

Human Rights Watch (2017, n.p) reported that the Seleka have held women in captivity, engaged in sexual violence against them "and forced them to do domestic work." This included cooking and laundry (Ibid).

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Shan State Army (SSA), Myanmar

There is less information about women's participation in the SSA than many other Shan organizations, and the organization split into two substantive factions within a few years. However, Ferguson (2013, n.p.; see also Hedström 2016) contends,

In 1964, after thousands more young Shans joined independence forces in response to the Tatmadaw's police state, the three largest rebel groups in the Shan State, the Shan State Independence Army (SSIA), the Shan National United Front (SNUF) and the Kokang Resistance Force merged to form the Shan State Army, the SSA. This is of particular interest not only because it marks one of the first collective political organisations of groups identifying as Shan, but also because of its auspicious female founder: Nang Hern Kham [also called Sao Hearn Hkam], the Mahadevi of the Yaunghe. In this particular case, we have an example of a strong elite woman using not only her symbolic capital, but also her organisational skills to draw together disparate groups for the collective goal of ethno-national separatism. Women's participation in the Shan insurgency, however, is far more pervasive than just the actions of Nang Hern Kham.

The SSA's governing organ was the Shan State War Council (SSWC), and Nang Hern Kham was its Chairwoman. She was also the movement's "chief spokesman" and a member of the Shan Legislative Council (Lintner 1984, 412). The SSA became one of the largest and strongest Shan rebellions to fight in Myanmar's Shanland conflict, with Hearn Kham as its founder and "first commander" (Lintner 1984, 442).

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Shining Path, Peru

A "large number of women" were involved "at all levels" of the Shining Path, "right up to the top positions in both the regional commands and the National Central Committee" (Gonzalez-Perez 2006, 320). By 1987, over half of all Shining Path members arrested and charged with terrorist activity were women (Ibid). Women fought on the front-line, worked in auxiliary roles, and commanded military forces. An estimated 30-40% of Shining Path members were women (New York Times 1992; Starn 2005). Female fighters were reportedly "often assigned the most ruthless of all terrorist assignments. In examining major assassinations, police have found that it was a woman who, in most cases, delivered the final shot" (Tarazona-Sevillano 1994, 199).

Andreas (1990, 20) concludes that "Sendero Luminoso had, since its inception, attracted women in much larger numbers than men." The organization was founded by Abimael Guzmán and his wife, Augusta La Torre. La Torre reportedly led the group's first military offensive (Heilman

2010). La Torre's family's hacienda served as one of the PCP-SL's first military training schools (Ibid).

Boutron (2019, 159) contends, "Shining Path female activists have primarily been mobilised in activities related to propaganda, logistics, military intelligence, medical care and reproductive and sexual health." Shining Path also relied heavily on women as recruiters (Cragin and Daily 2009). Women's "widespread" participation reportedly helped sustain the organization's strength and longevity (Tarazona-Sevillano 1990, 76). The organization established specific areas of women's mobilization, including regional committees, and recruited women from all social sectors and classes (Ortega 2012; Boutron 2015).

Female Shining Path members had important administrative roles (Gonzalez-Perez 2006). Comrade Norah, a high ranking woman in the group, was one of the founders of the Socorro Popular (Popular Succour), "a front organization of the Shining Path widely reported as having played a key role in the latter's logistical support" (Research Directorate 1993, n.p). Women also worked as teachers (Starn 1995).

Women were comparatively highly represented in the organization's military and political structure. At one point, women held 42% of Central Committee seats and 40% of Political Bureau seats (Henshaw 2016). Women also composed at least half of the leadership in regional committees (Whittaker 2003) and served in important, high-ranking roles since the group's founding (Gonzalez-Perez 2006).

On leadership, Andreas (1990, 21) writes:

While the foreign press and foreign academics for the most part avoid the subject of female leadership and predominance in Sendero, the Peruvian press, with its penchant for sensationalism, plays it up constantly. Edith Lagos was Shining Path's first military commander in Ayacucho. She escaped from prison several times before being killed by the military at the age of nineteen. Laura Zambrano Padilla, a former schoolteacher known as "Meche," was arrested with great fanfare in 1984, accused of being the head of Shining Path's military operations in Lima. Brenda Perez Zamora was identified by one source as the second-in-command of the organization since late 1988. Maria Parado is said to have directed the assault on a prison in Ayacucho that freed hundreds of prisoners. Marina Loayza, Sonia Rosas, Violeta Quispe, Haydee Cicerres, Filipina Palomino, Hermelinda Escobar, Emma Frida, Patricia Zorrilla, Carla Carlota Kutti and Clementina Berrocal are among the dozens of others cited as "cruel and bloody" guerrilla leaders by the mainstream press.

The Shining Path included a women's organization, the Movimiento Femenino Popular, founded by La Torre (Ibid; Henshaw 2016). They "published feminist booklets and tracts, and a magazine, Rima Ryfla Warmi (Women Speak Out), in Quechua and Spanish (Ibid, 20). According to Guiné "Augusta and the women of the MFP went to markets and neighborhoods to explain the emancipation of women [...] the MFP organized three events [in 1976], the Convention of Poor Women of Barrios y Barriadas de Tacna, the Chiclayo Women's

Convention, and the massive propaganda campaign with the dissemination of 70,000 flyers [translated from Spanish]” (2016, 112).

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Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republika Srpska), Bosnia and Herzegovina

According to Berdak (2013), women comprised between 2-3% of the Army of Republika Srpska at the end of the war. Reportedly, both men and women “who had stayed in besieged Sarajevo

were colluding with the snipers in the hills, that they were standing at their windows and sending signals about when to shoot their own neighbors” (Golubović 2019, 1191).

There is evidence that women were active in the perpetration of violence. Perhaps the highest profile woman convicted of war crimes was Biljana Plavsic, the President of Republika Srpska. She was convicted at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) (PeaceWomen 2013). There have, however, been numerous other accusations and convictions of women associated with the Serbian forces in different judicial venues (Prusina 2018; Rovcanin 2020).

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Serbian Republic of Krajina (FYR), Croatia

According to Tatalović (1996, 183), Croatia responded to accusations of wars crimes committed while fighting “Serbian forces in Kninska krajina” by saying:

One of the women (called grandmother Danica), although at a very old age, was firing from a machine gun; another woman killed herself with a hand grenade. The other three women attempted to escape through the rugged terrain of the Medak pocket. [...] During the lightning action, fight was carried on for every house which served as a stronghold of the paramilitary forces, and it is possible that some women who were engaged in the logistics, were in the fighting zone and thus got killed in the crossfire or by hand grenades.

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Signed-in-Blood Battalion, Mali

Women's participation is not verified.

Sikh insurgents, India

UCDP (n.d.) identifies various groups including the Babbar Khalsa International (BKI), the (All India Sikh Students' Federation (AISSF), which is also a political party, the Khalistan Liberation Organisation (KLO), the Bhindranwale Tiger Force of Khalistan (BTFK) and the Khalistan Commando Force (KCF) as Sikh insurgents.

Gayer (2009, 1) concludes that “a handful of women [...] took part in the armed struggle for an independent Sikh state, Khalistan, between 1984 and 1995.” Butalia (2017, 20) similarly suggests that “few women [...] had become involved in the [Sikh] militant movement in Punjab.” Through interviews with female fighters, Gayer (2009) suggests that women often married into Khalistani rebel groups in militant ceremonies organized by organizations such as the NLI, KCF, and KLO. A “small minority” became “full fledged fighters” (Ibid, 8), but Gayer (Ibid, 12) contends,

Due to the limited size of guerrilla cells (which generally comprised between ten and twenty five combatants only), there could be no formal division of work between fighters and non-fighters and every member of a guerrilla cell was trained into handling weapons and came to experience combat situations. This provided every recruit, no matter how involved he or she was in military operations, with a self-identification as a combatant.

Women participated most actively as couriers for messages and weapons, intelligence workers and informers, nurses and health workers, chaperones for other women, guards, and cooks; women also posed as journalists to lure opponents and planned logistical operations, including a jailbreak (Ibid; de Mel 2014; Shekhawat 2014). Shekhawat (2014, 34) contends that women were “quite visible in support roles in the Khalistan movement.”

The KCF operated a women's wing “which elicited the cooperation of women in the valley for the Khalistan movement” (de Mel 2014, 68). According to (Chenoy 2004, 39),

The two main underground organisations of women terrorists were the ‘Mai Bhago Regiment’ headed by Bhag Kaur and women's wing of The Khalistan Commando Force headed by Gurwinder Kaur. These groups functioned in a militarist manner and the women leaders addressed themselves as ‘general.’

Gurvinder Kuar, the head of KCF's women's wing, recalls "myself and some other girlfriends only had one job: transportation of arms from one place to another" (Shekhawat 2014, 34). Outside of the women's wings, women in Sikh insurgent groups, specifically Khalistani organizations, "did not hold visible leadership positions" (Ibid 2014, 69). Still, Chenoy (2004, 40) notes that there were some women leaders, who called themselves 'generals,' but "testimonies from women terrorists show that they played roles fixed for them by the male leadership."

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Surinamese Liberation Army / Jungle Commandos (SLA), Suriname

Women's participation is not verified.

Sidama Liberation Movement (SLM), Ethiopia

Women's participation is not verified.

Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A), Sudan

Women participated in the SLM/A, reportedly as front-line fighters, leaders, and in non-combat roles. One former fighter, who was later part of the SLM/A's negotiation team for peace talks, recalls,

I joined the rebel movement and learned how to shoot. I took up guns and shot at the enemy, hiding in the sprawling bush. It was not easy. I also got shot in the process (Sudan Tribune 2005, n.p).

Other reports refer to women "guerilla" in the "military wing" (Sowetan Live 2008, n.p), and the SLM's "women commission" references "women who passed on the struggle for freedom in Darfur" and "women who are continue their struggle on the front" (Sudan Tribune 2008a, n.p). At least one woman was also a "commander" (Sudan Tribune 2005, n.p).

According to the International Republican Institute (IRI) (2007, n.p), "[e]thnic Darfurian Hakamas women poets [...] were used to galvanize [SLM/A] soldiers for battle during the prolonged Sudanese civil war." Four women also represented the SLM/A in peace talks (Sudan Tribune 2006).

As mentioned, the SLM/A included a women's commission (Sudan Tribune 2008b).

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Sudan Liberation Army/Movement - Minni Minnawai (SLM-MM), Sudan

Women's participation is not verified.

Sudan Liberation Movement/Army-Unity (SLM/A-Unity), Sudan

Women's participation is not verified.

Somali National Movement (SNM), Somalia

There is evidence that women participated in the SNM in a variety of roles. According to Musse (2004, 87), a “small number” of women served as combatants for the group. TK similarly notes, “[...] the Somali National Movement (SNM), the post-1991 clan militias operating in southern Somalia, have not had female wings, nor do they seem to have actively encouraged female recruits.”

More often women participated in auxiliary roles for the SNM. Women took up work for men who had been drafted into the war, been imprisoned, or fled the area (Musse 2004, 87). Women reportedly formed an “invisible front” for the SNM (Bradbury 1994, 71), acting as nurses and medics, caring for soldiers and families, trading and establishing networks, participating as couriers, gathering intelligence, and fundraising (Musse 2004).

Some women also supported the SNM cause politically: “Women were active in demonstrations with children in Hargeisa before and in the early days of the war. Most recently in Mogadishu, women have been prominent in the anti-UN/US demonstrations of Aided supporters” (Bradbury 1994, 71). Women also had roles in the peace process, utilizing “the capacity to communicate across clan lines and [lobbying] for peace between their husbands and natal clans” (Open Democracy 2012, n.p). One woman describes the motivating role women played during the civil war: “[...] some men used to run away from the front-line, we would shout ‘come back, where are you going, come fight or I’ll fight for you [...]’ we did this in order to shame them into fighting” (Open Democracy 2012, n.p).

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Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), Sudan

Estimates suggest that women made up 6-7% of formally trained combatants in the SPLM/A (UN 2005; Weber 2011; Small Arms Survey 2012) and that the group operated a girl's battalion, *Ketiba Banat*, with 137-139 members (Pinaud 2015). Other assessments conclude that "significant numbers of women" contributed as "active combatants" (Small Arms Survey 2008,1), though some SPLM/A leaders believed women should not fight. Reportedly, lower-level commanders recruited women without leadership oversight (Ibid). Still, most sources agree that women were "largely excluded" from fighter status and not all of those trained in combat fought on the frontlines (UN 2005; Weber 2011, 360). Pinaud (2013, 155) concludes that "very few" women participated in armed combat and that there was a reluctance among "most SPLA leaders and rank-and-file to train women militarily. In fact, those female battalions rumored to have existed were merely women's associations." Still, *Ketiba Banat* were militarily trained (Pinaud 2013), veterans were awarded an elite status, and many became the wives and other family members of rebels who became government members after the peace agreement. Some were themselves subsequently appointed to political positions (Ibid).

Pinaud (2013, 152) argues that the SPLM/A has valorized women fighters in the post-war period, distorting the reality that women "mostly contributed to the war effort outside of battalions." She (Ibid, 161-162) further suggests, "The lists of [camp followers] and 'female combatants' concocted by the SPLA and delivered to the international community had a reputation for being inflated, mismatched with the real numbers of women in the SPLA, and based largely on personal networks."

SPLM/A participated worked in non-combat roles, including as nurses, weapons couriers, cooks, healthcare providers (including midwives), informants, camp followers, and sex workers (Itto 2006, Weber 2011; Small Arms Survey 2008; Small Arms Survey 2010; Pinaud 2013; Soma 2020). Women also purchased small arms and sometimes smuggled weapons and messages across borders. They participated in song and dance rituals that encouraged soldiers to fight (Small Arms Survey 2008). In 2005, the UN DDR program estimated that 3,178 of individuals were women in non-combat roles, but they noted that this is likely underestimated (UN 2005). The SPLM/A had approximately 30,000 troops in this period (UCDP n.d.), therefore the DDR program's estimate puts women's documented participation in non-combat roles at about 10%.

But the SPLMA also operated a women's wing, the Women's Affairs Office within the National Liberation Council. After the Comprehensive Peace Accord was signed in 2005, this group was renamed the 'Women's League' (Edward 2019). This organization ran workshops and seminars, as well as engaged in service provision. The rebels also reportedly operated a Women's Association, which was "an umbrella organization for all women's organizations and groups in areas under SPLA control as well as those based abroad" (Edward 2019, 66). This group helped provide food to the SPLM/A and facilitated events. Moreover,

In Itang in July 1985, six southern Sudanese women came together to form the New Sudan Women's Association (NSWA) with the objective of 'helping the needy by

contributing food, running a clinic and a feeding centre for malnourished children.’ The NSWA was integrated into the SPLM/A in 1986; new chapters of the association formed in other refugee camps, and became a norm in many of the SPLM/A-controlled areas within southern Sudan (Soma 2020, 13).

According to Anne Itto (2006, 56-67), a deputy secretary general SPLM/A and part of the group’s negotiation delegation,

In Khartoum, women contributed gold in support of the jihad and encouraged their sons to join up, while in the south, the Nuba Mountains and southern Blue Nile women contributed food and encouraged their sons to join the SPLA to fight marginalization and oppression by the government in Khartoum.

During peace negotiations, the SPLM/A nominated a “small handful of women leaders” as members of their delegation, but women were often added with short notice or preparation and attention to gender issues among negotiating parties was minimal (Small Arms Survey 2008, 4). The organization includes a female Commissioner for Women, Gender and Child Welfare as of 2000; in 2004 she was the “only female senior member of the SPLM leadership” (UN OCHA 2004, n.p).

Itto (2006, 58, see also UN Women 2010) recalls:

The SPLM/A leadership nominated a handful of women leaders as members of the delegation to Machakos and subsequent rounds of negotiations. However, this did not necessarily enable their strong participation: the women were often co-opted to these delegations at short notice with very little opportunity to consult with each other and develop a women’s peace agenda; they were expected to contribute to the overall party position which was gender-blind to begin with; and they were always a minority, ill-prepared for debates with seasoned politicians who ridiculed or intimidated anyone who dared to spend much time on gender issues. For example, during the negotiations SPLM/A women proposed a minimum quota of 25 per cent for the representation of women in the civil service, legislative and executive at all levels of government, as provided for by the SPLM/A constitution. One senior male member of the SPLM/A delegation laughed and asked me where the women would be found to fill these positions. The 25 per cent quota was eventually accepted in the larger group, where there were at least three women, but then the all-male SPLM/A drafting committee reduced this figure to 5 per cent. The SPLM/A Chairman raised this to 10 per cent [sic] as a compromise. Later on we learned that it had been dropped altogether when government negotiators refused a quota for women in power sharing on the grounds that they had not been fighting women.

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Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army-In Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), South Sudan

There is evidence of women’s participation in the SPLM/A-IO across various roles. Young (2015, 4) reports that there were a “handful” of women in the group’s armed forces, and Kindersley and Rolandsen (2017, 12) similarly note that while women associated with the group’s armed wing mostly worked as “first aiders,” there are some “stubborn” women “who go to the front.”

Women provided auxiliary support to the armed forces, by “taking care of the family, nursing the wounded soldiers and cooking for them” (Global Network of Women Peacebuilders 2014, 5). Women previously associated with the SPLM/A also took on logistical and organizational roles in the IO based on their prior experience. Kindersley and Rolandsen (2017, 10) report,

Many of IO organisers in Equatoria are made up of SPLA-era (1983–2013) cadres of experienced organisers. Ex-combatants and former civil-military administrators from the previous two civil wars, both men and women, are now involved in organising the transport of people and supplies to and from rebel held areas, managing refugee community collective mobilisation and funding, and organising local administration and

justice systems both within displaced camps and refugee sites and within the occupied territories.

The group also reportedly abducted women for the purposes of being “wives” for combatants, sexual slavery, and forced labor (Human Rights Watch 2020, n.p).

There is ample evidence suggesting that women were active in the group’s political sector. The SPLM/A-IO, for example, had a women’s wing (Sudan Tribune 2015; UNMISS 2019), and “a number of women are seen in the senior administration and hierarchy of the opposition” (Global Network of Women Peacebuilders 2014, 5). The Sudan Tribune (2015, n.p) further corroborates this involvement, reporting that

Sophia Pal Gai, former secretary for administration in the national secretariat of the ruling SPLM in Juba before the 2013 crisis, has been endorsed by the opposition’s Women League to head the political institution in a meeting which took place in Pagak, the headquarters of the SPLM-IO. ‘This is a commendable democratic exercise by the Women League. The Movement commends them for democratically electing their chairperson,’ James Gatdet Dak, spokesman of the opposition leader, confirmed to Sudan Tribune. He also said earlier, the Women League in a meeting endorsed Sandra Bona Malual to the position of chairperson of the national committee for Gender and Women Empowerment, a broader institution in the Movement which corresponds to the national ministry of Gender and Social Welfare in government.

There is further evidence of women in leadership roles; Angelina Teny, “senior” member of the group, was interviewed by BBC (2017, n.p).

Women engaged in peace talks on behalf of the group. There were three women on the SPLM/A-IO’s delegation at the first round of peace talks (Soma 2020). One female member was told by a chairperson of the group in response to voicing concerns about leaving South Sudan, “You must go and support the team. There is nothing that you can do here” (Soma 2020). A female delegate for the group’s women’s wing remarked, “Men think they are the strongest people [...] Today we have learnt in article 1 chapter 4, in the peace agreement, that women have full rights to participate in the revitalized government” (UNMISS 2019, n.p).

The group’s political wing also has a gender diversity quota that requires a portion of the members of the transitional government to be women (UNSC 2020).

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Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-North (SPLM/A-North), South Sudan

There is less documentation of women's participation in the SPLM/A-North faction than in the SPLM/A or SPLM/A-IO, yet limited evidence does suggest that women are involved in the group in non-combat roles, specifically in political/organizational activities. The SPLM/A-North has a women's association which, according to Human Rights Watch (2017, n.p), is "large and widespread." The women's association has apparently collaborated with the group's Secretariat of Social Development and Women's Rights to tackle domestic violence in the region (Human Rights Watch 2017). Further, Hale (2016, 171) writes that "there are a number of quite radical women in the SPLM and the SPLM/North parties who are mainly working in rural areas in opposition to the government, sometimes in areas liberated from the government and its forces." According to The Sudan Consortium African and International Civil Society Action for Sudan (2016, 20), "In short, the 'care work' carried out traditionally by women has been expanded, and the lines between the work women do to support their household and the work women do to support the SPLM/A-N have become blurred."

The Sudan Consortium African and International Civil Society Action for Sudan (2016, 16) further argues,

As a political organisation, the SPLM/A-N can be described as male dominated institution [...] Formative documents of the movement, including founding manifestos, refer specifically to notions of gender equality and equal representation. However this rhetoric has arguably not led to any substantive progress for women within political structures of the movement or Nuba society in SPLM/A-N controlled territories more broadly. The SPLM/A-N remains a traditional, male-dominated, and militarised movement [...]

They (Ibid, 17) note that women "remain largely marginalised and lack concrete influence over the political and social organisation that affects their lives and their well-being."

Sources

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Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM), Somalia

Women's participation is not verified.

Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF)

The SRF, founded in 2011, was made up primarily by “the SPLM/A – North, which operated mainly in the South Kordofan and Blue Nile areas, and three armed rebel groups operating in Darfur: JEM, SLM/A and SLM/A – MM” (UCDP n.d., n.p). According to Dabanga (2019, n.p), “They declared they would overthrow the regime of President Omar Al Bashir “using all available means. Two small rebel groups headed by Nasreldin El Hadi and El Tom Hajo became member[s] in 2012. The following year, the eastern Sudanese United People’s Front for Liberation and Justice (UPFLJ), led by Zeinab Kabbashi, joined the coalition.” Zeinab Kabbashi is a woman (El Gizouli 2015, n.p.), and she is reportedly also the “Co-Vice President of the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF)” (Dabanga 2014, n.p).

The SRF, at least in theory, aspires to women’s inclusion. The SRF’s Statute (2012, 7) specifies that the group’s Leadership Council “shall observe a female quota of no less than 25% of its members.” Similarly, the Statute (Ibid, 11) requires “Female representation across all levels at a ratio of no less than 25%” in the SRF as an organization. It is not clear if these targets were met.

Limited evidence does suggest that women are involved in the SPLM/A- North, the dominant group in the SRF, in non-combat roles, specifically in political/organizational activities. The group has a women’s association which, according to Human Rights Watch (2017, n.p), is “large and widespread.” The women’s association has apparently collaborated with the group’s Secretariat of Social Development and Women’s Rights to tackle domestic violence in the region (Human Rights Watch 2017). Further, Hale (2016, 171) writes that “there are a number of quite radical women in the SPLM and the SPLM/North parties who are mainly working in rural areas in opposition to the government, sometimes in areas liberated from the government and its forces.” According to The Sudan Consortium African and International Civil Society Action for Sudan (2016, 20), “In short, the ‘care work’ carried out traditionally by women has been

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They (Ibid, 17) note that women “remain largely marginalised and lack concrete influence over the political and social organisation that affects their lives and their well-being.”

Information on the presence or prevalence of women in JEM, specifically, is not currently accessible. There are also reports of arrests of women associated with JEM leaders and of women of the Zaghawa ethnicity, but it is not clear if that is a form of collective punishment or repressive policing or a reflection of women’s participation in JEM activities (Amnesty International 2008, Human Rights Watch 2008).

There is evidence of women’s participation in the SLM/A, but these references pre-date the SRF’s founding. The extent of women’s participation in the SLM/A after 2011 is not clear, but women did participate in the SLM/A as front-line fighters, leaders, and in non-combat roles (c.f. Sudan Tribune 2005, n.p).

Other reports refer to women “guerilla” in the “military wing” (Sowetan Live 2008, n.p), and the SLM “women commission” references “women who passed on the struggle for freedom in Darfur” and “women who are continue their struggle on the front” (Sudan Tribune 2008a, n.p). At least one woman was also a “commander” (Sudan Tribune 2005, n.p).

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As mentioned, the SLM/A included a women’s commission (Sudan Tribune 2008b).

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Somali Reconciliation and Restoration Committee (SRRC), Somalia

Women's participation is not verified.

Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), Somalia

Women's participation is not verified.

South Sudan Defence Movement/Army (SSDM/A), South Sudan

Women's participation is not verified.

South Sudan Defence Movement/Army - Cobra Faction (SSDMA-Cobra), South Sudan

Women's participation is not verified.

South Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM), Sudan

Women's participation is not verified.

The SSLM has a Secretary for Women Affairs and Child Welfare, but it is unclear if the secretary is a woman. In the group's declaration (SSLM 2000, n.p), it states:

The SSLM recognizes the equal status of men and women in the society and their participation in all spheres of social life. In this respect, the SSLM shall:

- Promote the full realization of their political, economic and social potentials.
- The SSLM shall ensure the participation of women at all levels of its organizational structures. All institutions and organs of SSLM shall be gender sensitive.

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South Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SSLM/A), South Sudan

Women's participation is not verified.

Shan State Nationalities Liberation Organization (SSNLO)

Women's participation is not verified.

There are reports that there is a Pa-O Women's Union affiliated with forces that the SSNLO has historically been involved with (Risser et al 2003), but it is not clear that this group is associated with the SSNLO.

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Shan State Progress Party/Army (SSPP), Myanmar (Burma)

Women's participation is not verified.

In their study of women in armed ethnic organizations in Myanmar, Kolås and Meitei (2019) identified no women cadres nor political leaders in the SSPP.

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Shan State Revolutionary Army (SSRA), Myanmar (Burma)

Women's participation is not verified.

Sultanate of Sulu / Royal Soldiers of Sulu Sultanate, Malaysia

Women's participation is not verified.

Shan United Revolutionary Army (SURA), Myanmar (Burma)

According to Laungaramsri (2006, 80), “Shan women from Tan Long village had joined the rebel army over different periods of time and for different reasons.” She (Ibid, 80-82) summarizes,

Sao Noi recruited a few women in 1964 to look after the nursing unit while the majority of the Nang Harn [female soldiers] (more than 90 women) was drafted during the SURA

period when Colonel Kon Chueng led it. Prior to their involvement with the rebel army, not all women were aware of what the intended Shan nation would be. Rather, what motivated many of the women to join the rebel army [was] their encounter with the repressive experiences by the Burmese [...] Shan women joined the rebel army either as wives of Shan soldiers who were trained once a week or single females who were full-time soldiers. Female soldiers were trained to work in five different sections: food provision and nursing, accounting and clothing, personnel listing, armed combat, and public relations and outreach. In practice, very few female soldiers were assigned roles in or sent to the front-line while the majority was responsible for non-armed duties including nursing, food provision, maintenance of equipment, and communication [...] Most women were incorporated into the Shan army with designated feminine roles as nurse, food provider, and messengers.

Ferguson (2013, 5) notes that “during the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Shan United Revolutionary Army (SURA) actively recruited women soldiers.” This recruitment included flyers specifically targeting women recruits:

One woman SURA veteran that I interviewed had found out that the army was accepting women recruits from a flyer that they had printed on the Shan moveable type, and distributed to her village in Mong Pan. She told me how she had encountered problems in her Burmese-run high school, and together with a classmate one year her junior, left high school in Mong Pan to join the forces of the SURA. Had she not seen the flyer specifically recruiting women soldiers, one can only wonder how the path of this woman’s life might have been different (Ferguson 2008, 8).

According to Tannenbaum (1987, 696), “women in the rebel armies fighting against the Burmese government are likely to get tattoos” that they believe “make them impervious to bullets.” Women soldiers were also glorified in the SURA media, namely its journals, as well as in the form of a rock song about Shan women soldiers. Women in the organization were organized into women’s platoons. Despite women’s participation in the organization, it remained male dominated (Ferguson 2008).

SURA’s merger with the MTA sidelined women from their previous roles in the organization; Ferguson (2013, 9; see also Ferguson 2021) notes,

Unlike the SURA, where women were actively recruited as rank and file soldiers, the MTA was run much more like a business, or a class-based state. With the merger, the SURA lost most of its autonomy, and among other concessions, women were barred from being foot soldiers within its ranks. The women soldiers of the SURA suddenly found themselves demoted.

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South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), South Africa/Namibia

Initially, few women participated in SWAPO's armed activity (Livhuwani 1999; Akawa 2014). But over time, women participated at many levels and in all roles of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), SWAPO's armed wing (Livhuwani 1990; Conteh 2018). Women were trained as soldiers and "became specialized in military disciplines such as nursing, artillery marksmanship, radio communication, anti-air defense guns, sabotage, reconnaissance, intelligence and even as drivers of military vehicles" (Conteh 2018, 345).

Conteh (2018, 364) contends that more women than men underwent military training and notes that a "large number" fought in combat. Much of this training took place in exile, beginning in 1962 (Akawa 2014). Still, other reports suggest that the hundreds of women composed a "small fraction of the forces" in the PLAN, though they were fully integrated into the army (Kuumba and Dosunmu 2009, 107). Geisler (2004, 52) similarly suggests, "within PLAN [...] the number of women who actually fought at the front must have been very small." Still, Murray-Hudson (1983, 124) contends, "Among Namibians who have died in combat and are honored for their bravery are two women who died attempting to defend the Kassinga refugee settlement during South Africa's 1978 massacre, with anti-aircraft guns in their hands."

SWAPO women worked extensively in non-combat roles. This included "widespread political organizing" (Akawa 2014, 250) through the SWC; members went on speaking tours in the United Kingdom in the 1970s (working in conjunction with the SWAPO Women's Solidarity Campaign) and launched a magazine in 1984 (Akawa 2014). Women also "played major roles as Carriers, walking for days into the combat zone in Namibia, bearing supplies of arms and food for the freedom fighters" (Livhuwani 1999, 24). Women prepared food, staged rallies and protests, were information provisoners and had "major roles" in mobilization work in exile and in South West Africa (Akawa 2014, 253). Geisler (2004, 48) notes that "many of the SWAPO

Women's Council projects in the exile camps were restricted to nurseries, hospitals, schools, literacy campaigns, vegetable gardens and weaving projects."

SWAPO established a separate women's wing, SWAPO Women's Council (SWC), in exile in 1969 (Geisler 2004). In their draft Constitution, the SWC calls itself a "militant wing" created to "develop a firm mass base [...] and train cadres" (SWC n.d., 1). The group appears to engage mostly in mobilization work (Murray-Hudson 1983). The SWC also published a quarterly magazine.

Women composed half of some groups of cadre sent abroad in the 1975-1986 period to study medicine and healthcare. A female doctor was reportedly "in charge of all SWAPO's mobile clinics in the operational zones of the eastern military front" (Collins 1977, 44). Collins (Ibid, 41) contended in 1977 that "perhaps 20%" of people who joined SWAPO in exile were women. Livhuwani (1999, 32) contends that women "had risen to positions of responsibility in the army," though the extent of this leadership is not clear. Women held command positions (Geisler 2004); Murray-Hudson (1983, 120) concluded that there were "many female commanders." The SWC was led by women leaders in their Congress (at least 31 members) and on their Central Committee (19 members). But SWC leaders spoke out about the "insignificant representation of women in the [SWAPO] leadership structure" in 1980 (Akawa 2014, 53). One SWC leader contends that SWAPO stripped her of her position when she suggested that SWC emulate liberation movements in Mozambique and Angola where the women's wing operates separately, rather than under, the primary armed group (Ibid). SWAPO's leadership has "remained male-dominated" (Ibid, 53).

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Syrian insurgents (Jabhat al-Nusra and affiliates), Syria

Women participated in various different rebel groups that make up the Syrian insurgency. Shelton (2013, n.p.) reports that “There are roughly 5,000 Syrian women involved in either fighting or military logistics for the rebels, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based monitoring group aligned with the opposition,” but this estimate is inclusive of Kurdish units as well. There is also a small number of women among the foreigners who have traveled to Syria to fight with Syrian insurgent groups (Hegghammer 2013). Abouzeid (2014, n.p.) reports that “Women fighters are rare in Syrian rebel ranks, with the exception of Kurds, who — like their Iraqi Kurdish counterparts — have all-women units.”

Primary and news sources confirm women's participation in Jabhat al-Nusra, but women's involvement appears scarcer than in other jihadist organizations in the region. There are few reports of women combatants in al-Nusra, but, according to al-Nusra commanders, women are mainly involved in intelligence gathering (Abouzeid 2014). A profile of one female combatant calls her a “rarity” and notes that the organization would not let her go on missions with her fighter husband because they did not want her to stay at the base with men (Abouzeid 2014). According to Abouzeid (2014, n.p.), she complained of the resistance she faced from male members of the group:

‘They wouldn't let me fight,’ Hala says. ‘They said I should sit at home. I said, “Is there anything in Islam that says I should sit at home?” I hate this ignorance. Convince me through my religion and I will accept it.’ Instead her commander's concerns were more parochial: ‘He said, “They'll say, what? He doesn't have men?”’

A few women are also reportedly present as combatants in Ghorabaa al Sham, and the group even reportedly had a women's unit of 15. The commander of this unit said of one of the women under her command, “She is one of the many women who was raped by Assad's dogs... That's why she insists on being a sniper” (Shelton 2013, n.p.).

Women also took on auxiliary roles for al-Nusra and affiliated Syrian insurgents. According to Khattab and Myrntinen (2017, 27), much of this support took place outside the frontlines:

For non-state armed groups, indicative findings point towards women taking on various traditional support roles such as cooking, cleaning, doing laundry and gathering materials. This is especially relevant for those fighters living in and operating from their homes, both in urban and rural areas. In addition, it can be assumed that women also support combat units – and their sons, brothers, fathers, husbands and neighbours who are fighting – by taking up these support roles. Generally, Syrian women do not play a major role as armed combatants. In besieged areas, they have instead become a vital supply line

crucial to the survival of other civilians. For example, they take risks to help “smuggle medicine or food past checkpoints due to them being able to pass through unchecked by authorities on occasion, although if caught their punishment is severe”. Women’s agency depends on the situational context and their place or role in the family, as their decision-making power over male members of the family is generally weak, with the exception of older women who may be in positions of family matriarchs. Nonetheless, there are very few women on the frontlines in a support capacity, as men themselves cook and go to field hospitals for treatment.

In Ghorabaa Al-Sham, female fighters were often kept from the front lines, instead mostly working “at rebel checkpoints to search women or assist men in searching the homes of suspects where women might be present” (Shelton 2013, n.p.). And according to Abouzeid (2014, n.p.), “The few women working with Jabhat al-Nusra are mainly involved in intelligence gathering.”

Much of the available information focuses on foreign women who joined the group from abroad. For example, Dutch security forces identify three women from the Netherlands who migrated to Syria to live in al-Nusra territory (Navest, de Koning, and Moors 2016). An Australian woman and her husband were reportedly killed by ISIS fighters in Syria after they came to join al-Nusra (ABC 2014). In 2020, Norway repatriated a woman charged with supporting the organization (Libell 2020). Tobiassen’s (2016) interviews with Jordanian women also include those who moved to Syria to participate in al-Nusra. Tobiassen (2016, 30-31) writes of one woman,

[She] describes their purpose of going to Syria as waging defensive jihad, which she understands as the duty of every Muslim to fight for the protection of Islam [... She] eventually became excited “to become a fighter in Syria.” Upon arrival, however, she ended up doing domestic work such as cooking and cleaning, as well as doing charity work with and for other women and children in the community. Because she was so well versed in the Qur’an, she also taught a girls-only Qur’an class. The life she lived with Jabhat al-Nusra was thus not very different from the lives of women who had joined [the Islamic State].

In 2020, the United States indicted an American on charges of material support to al-Nusra. She reportedly facilitated money transfers and guidance “on matters of operational security, communications, firearms purchases, and other information, often citing her professional experience, including her specialized military training on guns while in active duty in the United States Army, as well her background in the Army National Guard” (United States of America vs. Maria Bell, 2020). An Israeli-American woman was arrested in 2019 after traveling to Syria to join al-Nusra (Europa Press 2019). Lebanese security forces accused a woman of collaborating with al-Nusra in 2014 (Di Giovanni, 2014).

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Syrian insurgents (Free Syrian Army (FSA)), Syria

Women were critical actors in the Syrian revolution, and they participated in the subsequent civil war. The FSA is a loosely affiliated coalition of rebels, and some women participated on the front-line in these organizations. According to Zuhur (2015, 154), “Women are as divided by the revolution as are men but they are certainly active participants.”

Some women were trained by former Syrian military defectors who joined the rebellion (Ibid), while others trained abroad in Turkey (BBC 2012). This reportedly included at least two all-women brigades in the FSA (Al-Om 2014). Szekeley (2020, 420) concludes that there are “small numbers of women fighting with the FSA,” and the group tends to publicize women’s involvement for propaganda purposes. She writes:

There is also a subset of propaganda videos produced by various FSA factions featuring female fighters as a means of shaming men—whether Syrians or leaders of neighboring states—for not participating in the war. In one such video, a woman carrying a machine gun gives a lengthy speech to the camera, asking scathingly, “and where are the Arabs?” There are, however, few accounts of these factions actually participating in battle.

Women participate more widely as weapons couriers, relief workers, logistics coordinators, cooks, activists, and medics (Sohlman 2013; Al-Om 2014; Saleh 2020). Saleh (2020, 4) concludes that women have “added flexibility” because they “can mask their opposition work under the guise of their everyday activities as women and caretakers.” (Alhayek 2015, 14) recalls an interview with one FSA participant:

She used to work smuggling defected soldiers from the Al-Assad regime’s army and helped many of them join the Free Syrian Army (FSA). She was also an informant for the FSA and had a satellite phone in order to communicate with them and inform them about the Syrian regime’s military locations that they should target. When most of her female relatives and friends left her village seeking refuge in Jordan, Mona was one of very few women who stayed in the village working alongside the male fighters in the FSA.

A woman Syrian activist calls women’s role supporting FSA rebels “major,” arguing that “our primary role is very much to get inside, not only to sit with the civilians and with the local councils and we must be with the brigades as well. We will not bear arms, but we will sit with them and be there with them” (quoted in Asha 2013, 61). At least one female Syrian Army soldier defected into the FSA as a coordinator (Asha 2013).

Women have reportedly been active in the FSA from the early years of resistance. A *New York Times* report (Sohlman 2013, n.p) notes that “In the first nonviolent phase of the uprising, women organized and led demonstrations. But as the revolt slid into war, some took on logistical support roles — delivering ammunition, money, weapons, medical aid, food and clothes to the fighters — and intelligence and security tasks. Some worked in the coordination offices of the Free Syrian Army brigades, often serving as their spokespeople.” Moreover, “women of all ages and social backgrounds” supported the rebels (Ibid).

According to Khattab and Myrtinnen (2017, 27), much of this support takes place outside the frontlines:

[...] it can be assumed that women also support combat units – and their sons, brothers, fathers, husbands and neighbours who are fighting – by taking up these support roles. Generally, Syrian women do not play a major role as armed combatants. In besieged areas, they have instead become a vital supply line crucial to the survival of other civilians. For example, they take risks to help “smuggle medicine or food past checkpoints due to them being able to pass through unchecked by authorities on occasion, although if caught their punishment is severe”. Women’s agency depends on the situational context and their place or role in the family, as their decision-making power over male members of the family is generally weak, with the exception of older women who may be in positions of family matriarchs. Nonetheless, there are very few women on the frontlines in a support capacity, as men themselves cook and go to field hospitals for treatment.

There are also reports of women organizing in territory held by the Free Syrian Army to form women’s groups. According to one report: “The General Women’s Conference for the Support

and Empowerment of Women in the Aleppo Euphrates Shield area, which is under the control of the Free Syrian Army (FSA), convened July 25 in Azaz — a city in Aleppo's northern countryside. The conference, which gathered more than 150 Syrian women working in various service and humanitarian sectors in the area, was organized under the auspices of the Stabilization Committee, affiliated with the Free Aleppo Governorate Council” (al-Khateb 2018, n.p).

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Takfir wa'l Hijra, Algeria

Women’s participation is not verified.

It is difficult to identify in which country the group was active -- we use reports related to the Algerian group here, per the guidance of UCDP.

While there were not direct reports of women’s participation in Takfir w’al Hijra in Algeria, there were a number of reports regarding how Islamist armed groups made appeals to society based on gender norms and engaged in violence targeting women. Furthermore, there were also

reports suggesting that women sympathized with Islamist groups because affiliation could bring with it material comfort and because their interpretation of Sharia law offered them a degree of protection (Turshen 2022; Zeraoulina 2020).

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Taleban, Afghanistan

While women played important logistic and administrative roles in the Taleban government until its fall in 2001, their participation during the groups' rebel years appears limited. Women who participated in the 1980s' anti-Soviet conflict note that they "had a much bolder and active role" than women do in modern Islamist insurgency in Afghanistan (Ahmadi and Lakhani 2016, 6). Women contributors to the Taleban took on domestic roles like cooking, cleaning, tending to sick and wounded fighters, and mending clothing (Ibid). A 2012 news article in *The Times* (n.p) interviews Taleban women and concludes,

As Taleban wives they play a supporting but important role in the insurgency. Not only do they believe in the cause, but they also assist their husbands by smuggling weapons under their clothes, carrying messages and taking care of wounded fighters. One woman contends, 'It's no problem... I know how to do this. My husband taught me so that I can shoot when the enemies come.'

The Taleban occasionally employed women suicide bombers during their insurgency years (Roggio; 2011a; Roggio 2011b; The Guardian 2012; Johnson 2013; Narozhna and Knight 2016). But, as de Leede (2014, 6) argues, "the Afghan Taliban are reluctant to employ women in their suicide attacks and they do not seem to take advantage of the perceived value of women as suicide bombers in the same way other political insurgents do." Dearing (2010, 1079) concludes that women are "wholly absent from the Taliban and their *jihad* in Afghanistan," despite the handful reports of women attackers. The Taleban's primary leadership "believe that women should not take part in combat" (Ahmadi and Lakhani 2016, 6).

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Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO), Sri Lanka

Women's participation is not verified.

Tripura National Volunteers (TNV), India

Women's participation is not verified.

Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), Ethiopia

Women were "involved in the armed, political and propaganda struggle against the Derg regime" (Burgess 2013, 101). An estimated 30% of TPLF troops were women, numbering around 40,000 (Ibid). Women and men fighters reportedly dressed similarly, wearing the same uniforms and with similar hairstyles (Berhe 2009). Geisler (2004, 50) contends,

Testimonies of women fighters in the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) involved in an armed struggle against the central government of Ethiopia from 1975, have suggested that peasant women were particularly keen to become women fighters, because it was one way of balancing their inequalities.

Desta (2008, 147) notes that the TPLF had a broader conception of ‘fighter’ than only participation in combat. Some “women fighters were able to rise to commanders while many other women and girls were trained as administrators, health workers, technicians, carpenters, metal workers, and drivers” (Oda 2010, n.p). Women also participated as spies, educators, and in mass mobilization (Maki 2001). Interviews with former fighters suggest that combatants often did non-combat jobs (Oda 2010).

Women worked in mobilization, presenting the front’s political program at local events and recruiting entire families into the movement; according to Oda (2010), women also played roles as intelligence gatherers. According to Hammond (1990, 102) women were “over-represented in the cadres, the department responsible for the organization of the masses.” There were mass associations formed for women (Ibid).

The TPLF operated a Women’s Fighters Association (WFA) (Oda 2010). The WFA operated schools for women – half of which were for women fighters and half of which were for women from the villages – providing political training and political education. WFA women and others in the TPLF also participated in mobilization, accounting, food and goods supplying, and as military trainers (Maki 2001).

The TPLF was relatively open to female commanders, but fewer women had access to high levels of leadership. One woman worked on the TPLF Central Committee (Oda 2010).

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Tai Revolutionary Council (TRC), Myanmar (Burma)

Women's participation is not verified.

Taleban Movement of Pakistan (TTP), Pakistan

Reports suggest that women occasionally carried out front-line attacks for the TTP. In 2010, a female Taleban bomber killed 40 people waiting for food aid (Telegraph 2010; Noor 2011). In 2011, a husband and wife team killed eight people in a suicide bombing that the Taleban claimed. Both hid suicide vests, hand grenades, and rifles under burqas to avoid security forces' suspicion (BBC 2011). Qari Zia Rahman, who reportedly led both Taleban and al Qaeda operations in Pakistan's tribal agencies and parts of Afghanistan, allegedly established and operated suicide training camps targeting potential female bombers (Roggio 2010; 2013). In 2010, a 12-year-old girl was reportedly intercepted by police who reported being trained as a 'human bomb' by the Taleban in Pakistan. She reported that the group was training women suicide bombers in small cells and that they were told, "God will reward you with a place in heaven" (Roggio 2013, n.p.).

According to an ICAN and UNDP report (2019, 82), "In addition to functioning as suicide bombers, women have played integral roles in fundraising and 'domestic radicalization,' by indoctrinating their children and other women with extremist ideology." Women also play an important role in the rebels' intelligence gathering and other auxiliary networks. Zakaria (2017, 43), calls the (unnamed) wife of TTP leader Fazal Hayat "the group's erstwhile 'first lady.'" The TTP also created a women's magazine, called Sunnat-e-Khula (The Way of Khula), "urging potential female jihadists to join the ranks of the militant group and to devote themselves to the cause of jihad" (Anwar and Shah 2017, n.p.; Jadoon and Mahmood 2018) Reportedly, the magazine is named after a young female fighter from the time of the Prophet Muhammad (Ibid). The magazine:

[...] encourages women to leave the boundaries of their houses and actively promote jihad. Issue 1 of Sunnat-e-Khola calls women to publish and distribute jihadi literature, preach jihad to other women, organise secret gatherings of women at home, train women in weapons handling, and donate money. At the operational level, it encourages women to provide food in hideouts, transport weapons, including suicide vests, and act as spies, including collecting information about sensitive locations for attacks. It also calls on female members of the Pakistani army to work for the Taliban by providing sensitive information, especially about high profile or sensitive locations. This detailing of roles and activities reflects how TTP have clearly strategised women's participation (Rani 2018, n.p.).

According to Zakaria (2017, 42):

The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan's turn from seeking to eliminate women from the public sphere to envisioning them as warriors who must forsake their families to make the hijra, or migration to Khorasan, denotes a crucial change in direction. It reflects a new female identity that advocates rebellion against traditional structures, the same structures the Taliban resolved to uphold and resurrect when it first came to power in Afghanistan in 1996. While TTP is not announcing it will abandon these policies, the fact that one of its publications would encourage women to defy their fathers and migrate alone is revolutionary.

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Taliban Movement of Pakistan, Tariq Afridi faction (TTP-TA), Pakistan

Women's participation is not verified.

National Liberation Army (UCK), FYR Macedonia

Women “constituted a very small minority” in the UCK, and “even when they were present, their role was to assist as medical staff, or provide shelter for wounded rebels” (Bekaj 2019, 13-14). But there is evidence that women fought on the front-line. Phillips (2004), for example, confirms female members with AK-47 Kalashnikov rifles surrendering their weapons to British forces. There are also martyrdom sites commemorating “about a hundred Muslim Albanian men and a few Muslim Albanian women from Macedonia and neighboring Albania and Kosovo, who served in the Albanian National Liberation Army (NLA; Ushtria Çlirimtare Kombëtare or UÇK in Albanian) and were killed in an armed conflict against Macedonian security forces in 2001” (Neofotistos 2012, 1).

According to Babamento (2014, 120), the NLA/UCK “had the distinct advantage of having a very youthful membership and a considerable membership of women too, thus increasing its popularity.”

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Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA/UCK), FYR, Kosovo/Serbia

Women “constituted a very small minority” in the KLA, and “even when they were present, their role was to assist as medical staff, or provide shelter for wounded rebels” (Bekaj 2019, 13-14). An estimated 3% of registered combatants were women (Özerdem 2003a). Reportedly, “only a negligible number of female combatants joined the KLA before 1998 and 53% of female combatants were with the KLA for less than a year” (Ibid, 388). But some KLA women were “primarily fighters” and some did not want to disarm during DDR programs (Mazurana 2004, 33). Associated Press (1998) footage from the late 1990s documents women and men during military training. The report notes that “every town and village in KLA hands has its contingent of young women bearing arms for the cause” (Ibid, n.p).

KLA women were killed during fighting and memorialized by the groups' Veterans Album (Di Lellio and Salihu 2014). The Specialist Prosecutor's Office in The Hague has invited female KLA guerillas to come and give interviews about war crimes (Morina 2019).

Stephens (2014, 126) interviews female KLA fighters and notes,

Although one female ex-combatant saw the role of female fighters as a support to men, the female memory of combat is dominated by the sense of being an equal to man, fighting till the end, feeling the same fear or joy, singing the same songs and being killed in the same ways.

Women in the KLA did administrative work at headquarters or other bases, were logisticians, provided medical care, controlled finances, and prepared food (Di Lellio and Salihu 2014; Aliu 2018). One female fighter notes, of women's off- and on- the front-line contributions, "If it wasn't for the contribution of our women, mothers, and girls, the KLA would not achieve what it did" (quoted in Aliu 2018, n.p.).

In terms of leadership, Özerdem (2003b, 100) identifies one female, registered combatant as a "senior manager" and eight female "middle managers," a minority. In 1998 the KLA organized into seven operational zones, and one of these zones, Drenica, had one female commander out of five total (20%) (Aliu 2018). News reporting from 1998 contends that the KLA's "guerilla leadership remains mostly male" (AP 1998, n.p.)

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Union of Forces for Democracy and Development (UFDD), Chad

Women's participation could not be confirmed.

Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR), Central African Republic

There are few references to female participation in the UFDR. Still, there is one report of a woman being forced into the UFDR, where she worked as a housekeeper at headquarters (UN Peacekeeping 2020).

A Human Rights Watch report relays the account of a teenage girl who, along with another girl, were “forced to carry looted goods” for the group (Bouckaert and Bercault 2007, n.p.). Child Soldiers International (2008, n.p.) also notes that “The UFDR reportedly used civilians, including young girls, to cook or to transport looted goods.”

Sources

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Uganda Freedom Movement (UFM), Uganda

One profile identifies a female UFM fighter by name and suggests that the NRA attempted to recruit her away from the UFM because of her high regard and reputation for immense skill (New Vision 2020).

Sources

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Union of Resistance Forces (UFR), Chad

Women's participation is not verified.

Union of the Armed Resistance Forces (UFRA), Niger

Women's participation is not verified.

United Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan (UIFSA) /Northern Alliance, Afghanistan

Though the Northern Alliance controlled approximately 10% of Afghanistan, available information on women's involvement with the organization is limited. Writing on the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, Ferguson (2001, n.p.) contends, "The 'Arab Taliban fighters' believed to be 'dug into positions near the airport' are all men, as are the Northern Alliance troops, commanders, and spokesmen who were leading the attack [...] Northern Alliance ministers [are...]. all men."

At least one woman represented the Northern Alliance during the 2001 Bonn conference, while another was an alternate representative (Erlanger 2001; Benard 2008).

Sources

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United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), India

According to Deka (2019, 469), "Inspired by the crucial role played by women in the Naga and the Kachin rebel organizations, ULFA encourages women's participation in both of its political

and military wings.” Elsewhere, Deka (2018, 1) identifies women as “numerically less” but more committed than men in the organization. Sultana (2013, 20) similarly argues that “a huge number of women joined” the broader Assam Movement, and Moral (2013, 2-8) calls women’s involvement in the ULFA “substantial,” suggesting, “senior cadres of the outfit reveal that they would not have exceeded 12–15% of the total membership at any given point in the organisation’s existence.” Moreover, “[i]n 1991 when the membership of ULFA in the Bhutan and Myanmar camps alone was substantially huge, the women were barely a 10–12% of the total strength” (Ibid, 15).

Women’s non-combat contributions were many. Deka (2018, 1) suggests that “while women were equally trained in arms, they were neither sent for combat nor represented in decision-making underground” and that “[w]omen in ULFA did not participate in combat except for emergencies” (Deka 2019, 475). Women were active members in scanning a geographical location prior to the execution of any rebel activity or armed operation. Women also maintained the communication between different districts, and women in ULFA mobilized and recruited new members from far-flung places in the state (Deka 2019).

Women also participated as spies, arms and goods couriers, educators, medical support, networkers and messengers (Sultana 2013; Sharma and Behera 2014; Deka 2018). They were particularly efficient logisticians because men were under constant surveillance (Katila 2013).

Women did take on leadership roles, including Pronoti Deka, who became ULFA’s first Cultural Secretary (Moral 2013). Women were officers of the commissariat and lieutenants, particularly women related to male leaders (Ibid). Moral (Ibid, 2) concludes that “ULFA’s women cadres however do not have a separate wing, unlike most other major insurgencies in South Asia, and are regarded as common members subject to standard regulations of the outfit.”

Women in the ULFA were raped and killed by security forces (Moral 2013; Deka 2018).

Sources

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National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), Angola

There were female fighters in UNITA, though such participation appears relatively rare and likely developed later in the conflict, in the 1980s (Wessells 2007; Tripp 2015; Makana 2017b). According to Henshaw (2016, 215), women “often accompanied male rebels, assisting the movement by transporting goods, gathering intelligence, and helping out around the camp, but only a small number of these women identified themselves as ‘combatants’ or members of the organization.” Still, there was reportedly an all-female battalion, Batalhão '89 (Makana 2017b). Though specific groups are not named, Makana (Ibid, 69) notes that

Women who desired to enter and participate in the liberation struggles as combatants had to find some quasi-military roles such as transporting guns, engaging in espionage, and working in other clandestine activities. Their roles were, therefore, multidimensional and often contradictory as many were involved in various aspects of armed struggle as perpetrators, actors, porters, spies, bodyguards, and human shields.

In addition to these activities,

[w]omen’s role in UNITA during the liberation struggle involved the transport of materials, food and arms to men on the front-line. Carrying was done on the head and involved long distances. Political activities consisted mainly of mobilizing people and particularly youngsters to join the armed struggle. Women were also trained as political activists (Ducados 2004, 59).

Though women played an active role in UNITA, they were not well-served by the post-conflict demobilization process. According to Maiden (2011, 11),

In Angola, only 60 females, representing 0.2% of the estimated size of the Union for Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) were identified through DDR, even though numerous media and human rights organizations remarked on the high number of women active in the organization.

UNITA also practiced forced marriage between UNITA soldiers and women and girls. One UNITA commander said, “[w]omen are our Toyota Hilux. They are four-wheel drive, are comfortable, and have stereo sound” (Vines 1999, 65). Marriage and family played an important role in UNITA’s day-to-day operations. Combatants were “urged, or, if necessary, coerced” into marriage and having children (Beck 2009, 351). Within these marriages, women were offered a degree of protection, as abuse of women could result in punishment (Ibid).

UNITA also included a women’s non-combat organization, the League of Angolan Women (LIMA), which was founded in 1973 (Ducados 2004; Makana 2017a). The women’s wing was a place “for women to work amongst women and also bring them to the body politic of the liberation struggles” (Makana 2017a, 360). But despite women’s participation in UNITA, the organization had a relatively conservative gender ideology. Campbell (1993, 53) notes that “LIMA also reinforced the conservative philosophies by promoting the idea that the women were

child bearers and the women in UNITA are encouraged to bring up children according to traditions.”

Within UNITA, women could rise to positions of leadership. As members of the youth wing, for example, “girls received political indoctrination, and some rose to command positions in which they directed the activities of other girls” in the group (Wessells 2007, 14). There are also reports of women training as commanders (Melake 2019).

There are reports of abductions of girls by Angolan rebel groups and abuse against these abductees (including sexual violence), though the groups are not listed (Stavrou 2004). Girls, many of whom were abducted, were cooks, nurses, teachers, and porters in UNITA (Tate 2003, Makana 2017b); these girls also boosted morale through dancing and celebrating victory (Ibid, 12). One estimate suggests that there were between 5000-8000 girls underage married to UNITA soldiers (Ibid).

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United Armed Forces of Novorossiya, Ukraine

According to the UCDP (n.d), the Novorossiya forces were a short-lived entity resulting from the unification of the Lugansk and Donetsk People’s Republics that formed in 2014 and became defunct in 2015. As such, there is not extensive documentation of the group. It is also hard to tell when coverage is referring to the actual Novorossiya forces because ‘Novorossiya’ is still used to refer to the pro-Russian separatist movement generally.

However, women participated in the Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics before and after they united, so it can cautiously be assumed that these patterns of participation hold for the United Armed Forces of Novorossiya as well. Women participated in combat roles in both Donetsk and Lugansk factions (DW 2015; Al Jazeera 2014). Some female combatants report that women were kept from the frontlines despite receiving military training (Fannin 2016), while others report that they are not treated differently from their male compatriots (Logan 2015).

There are a few reports of women leading battalions. There are also reports of women recruiting members, being nurses, and engaging in mercenary activities (Fannin 2016; Zoria 2019; State Border Guard Service of Ukraine 2020).

Sources

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Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF), Uganda

Women's participation is not verified.

United National Liberation Front (UNLF), India

Police arrested more than 15 women cadres of the UNLF between 1999-2017 (SATP n.d). Women are trained in UNLF camps, and the organization reportedly operates a women's wing (Ibid; The Hindu 2016). There is little available information about the extent of women's participation or the roles they perform, but incident monitor reports suggest women are in the women's wing leadership (SATP n.d).

In a governmental assessment of rebel groups in the Manipur region, the Human Development Society (2010, 29) concludes of the KCP, the PLA and UNLF,

Every underground organisation has its female wing in which many young women cadres have been enrolled. The women cadres are utilised for cooking, housekeeping, watch and ward, and nursing tasks in the camps of organisations. The women members are also utilised for gathering intelligence and for brain washing of girls and women to enlarge the support-base of their organisation in general public. During operation of the security forces, the women sympathisers are made to come forward while the men folk stay behind so that security forces are prevented from launching offensives. During agitation backed by the underground activists, the women sympathisers turn out massively to make the agitation look broad-based and spectacular. There is hardly any instance where a woman cadre has risen to the hierarchy and command structure of an insurgent organisation in Manipur.

Sources

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Uganda National Rescue Front (UNRF), Uganda

Women's participation is not verified.

Mwesigye's (2010) study of UNRF ex-combatants yielded only male participants, suggesting that few, if any, women were recruited into the group.

Sources

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Uganda National Rescue Front II (UNRF II), Uganda

Women's participation is not verified.

According to Roth and Reis (2014, 354), former UNRF II child soldiers

mentioned that girls and women were not abducted and that there were no girls or women in the barracks in South Sudan with them. The official number of returnee child soldiers from the UNRF II also consisted of boys only. Community members confirmed that girls had not been recruited into the UNRF II.

Sources

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Uganda People's Army (UPA), Uganda

Women's participation is not verified.

Ugandan People's Democratic Army (UPDA), Uganda

Limited evidence suggests that women may have participated in the UPDA but currently available details of participation are sparse. Burgess (2008, 8) notes that female leader of the Holy Spirit Movement, Alice Lakwena, was originally in the UPDA before starting her own group:

Though there are conflicting reports of how she came to work with the UPDA (her mother claims she was kidnapped; her father says she was recruited because of her spiritual abilities), Alice began her military career among both support and skepticism. Many were doubtful of her military abilities because she was a woman, while others felt her spirituality would help lead them to victory. Nonetheless, Alice was able to recruit troops from the UPDA, and the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) was born.

This suggests that if there were women in the group that were rank-and-file members, they were possibly abducted.

Sources

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Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG), Guatemala

A survey of URNG fighters suggests that women composed about 15% of combatants and 25% of “political cadres” (Luciak 2001, 190). Caballero (1999) estimates that women made up 11.5% of fighters killed during the war (Caballero 1999). Saint-Germain and Chavez (2008) similarly estimate that women composed 15% of combatants, 25% of political cadre, and a substantive proportion of highly clandestine support work. In non-combat roles, women were also active in logistics and communications (Gonzalez-Perez 2008).

For example, in the EGP, Luciak (2001, 28) concludes that “most female combatants were active in communications, logistics, and rear-guard activities. Traditional domestic activities, such as preparing meals, washing clothes, cutting firewood, or cleaning, however, were more equally shared between the sexes. Women carried information, food, and weapons including grenades and machine guns. They worked as healthcare providers and political educators, engaged in farmwork, armed themselves, hid and smuggled weapons, and participated in military operations” (quoted in LAP 1983; Arias 2009; Sharp 2017).

There were some high-ranking female URNG officials; these women pushed for gender equality measures in the peace agreement that ended the civil war (Luciak 2001). Prior to the war’s end, women composed less than 10% of political leadership (Ibid). URNG women struggled to be included even after new structures were developed in the post-peace-agreement environment (Ibid). Women also struggled to reach high-ranking command roles during the war. In the Guerilla Army of the Poor (EGP), the group that made up the largest share of URNG combatants, no woman ever held a rank higher than captain (Ibid). But women also became squadron leaders (Arias 2009) and regional directors (Sharp 2017).

Women in the URNG organized the Secretariat for Women’s Political Matters and Women’s Committee of Political Affairs. It also seems that the National Union of Guatemala Women (UNAMG) was also affiliated with the URNG (McHugh 2008).

Sources

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United Somali Congress/Somali National Alliance (USC/SNA), Somalia

Women were active in the USC/SNA alliance. According to a report by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (1997), the USC/SNA in 1995 had a Women's Branch. The women's wing organized demonstrations in support of rebel leaders (Byrne 1996).

Reportedly, the female head of the women's wing was placed on house arrest, allegedly for criticizing the USC/SNA for "widowing many women and leaving many children traumatized or orphaned" (Ibid, n.p.). There is evidence of women in political leadership more broadly; one news article from 1995 says of a USC/SNA committee, "The heavily-guarded congress is being attended by intellectuals, businessmen, politicians and women delegates" (Deseret News 1995, n.p.).

Other reports suggest that women participated in front-line and auxiliary roles within warring factions in Somalia, but groups are not specified. Ingiriis and Hoehne (2013, 319) note that there were some women combatants in the USC but does not specify which faction. They write (Ibid),

A young gunwoman speaks about her motivations to fight and experiences during the war years in the south in the early 1990s. She mentioned that she was looking for 'justice and freedom.' Her hatred focused on the old dictatorial regime under which she had been treated unfairly. She joined the United Somali Congress (USC) and helped to oust Mohamed Siyad Barre; later she fought against American forces pursuing a warlord in Mogadishu. She even fought when she was pregnant and was wounded seven times. While the number of those who physically participated in the civil war may be small,

more women offered services such as cooking or washing to the militias, or mobilized and encouraged their male relatives to secure their clan's status in future political disposition.

The United Kingdom's Country Information and Policy Unit Immigration & Nationality Directorate Home Office (2002, n.p.) further concludes that "several women are important behind-the-scenes members of various factions." There are some reports of women affiliated with the USC and providing logistical support (such as food and washing) and mobilizing fighters through poetry and song (Gardner and El Bushra 2004; Igiriis and Hoehne 2013). Likewise, Dini (2010, 163) contends that "Women affiliated with the clan-based oppositional groups played important roles in the movement against the military government."

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United Somali Congress/Somali Salvation Alliance (USC/SSA), Somalia

The USC/SSA in the Shibis District had a Women's Group, headed by Madiina Amburey (Danish Immigration Service 1998, 9).

Other reports suggest that women participated in front-line and auxiliary roles within warring factions in Somalia, but groups are not specified. Ingiriis and Hoehne (2013, 319) note that there were some women combatants in the USC but does not specify which faction. They write:

A young gunwoman speaks about her motivations to fight and experiences during the war years in the south in the early 1990s. She mentioned that she was looking for 'justice and

freedom'. Her hatred focused on the old dictatorial regime under which she had been treated unfairly. She joined the United Somali Congress (USC) and helped to oust Mohamed Siyad Barre; later she fought against American forces pursuing a warlord in Mogadishu. She even fought when she was pregnant and was wounded seven times. While the number of those who physically participated in the civil war may be small, more women offered services such as cooking or washing to the militias, or mobilized and encouraged their male relatives to secure their clan's status in future political disposition.

The United Kingdom's Country Information and Policy Unit Immigration & Nationality Directorate Home Office (2002, n.p.) further concludes that "several women are important behind-the-scenes members of various factions." There are some reports of women being affiliated with the USC and providing logistical support (such as food and washing) and mobilizing fighters through poetry and song (Gardner and El Bushra 2004; Igiriis and Hoehne 2013). Likewise, Dini (2010, 163) concludes that "Women affiliated with the clan-based oppositional groups played important roles in the movement against the military government."

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United Tajik Opposition (UTO), Tajikistan

Women's participation is not verified.

United Wa State Army/Party (UWSA), Myanmar (Burma)

Women contributed in armed and unarmed roles to the UWSA. Women reportedly contributed to the military effort and a company of women featured in a UWSA military parade (Bangkok Post 2019; Sandford 2019; Winn 2019). Men and women have also been conscripted into the UWSA's activities (Chen 2014; Wansai 2019). The Wa administrative structure reportedly included women's officers (Ong and Steinmüller 2021).

Women are also organized within the Wa Women's Association. Ong and Steinmüller (2020, 15) note that the organization is "comprised of members who are largely the wives and daughters of leading army commanders and businessmen in the Wa State" and that it "is autonomous from the administration." There is mixed reporting about the extent to which this association is affiliated with the UWSA, though it seems as if the groups have a similar relationship as other ethnic armed groups operating in the region (MacGregor 2015; Ong and Steinmüller 2021). The Wa Women's Association is an important vehicle by which Wa culture is maintained; Steinmüller (2020, 886) asserts that in the organization:

The wives and daughters of Wa commanders do some charitable work for orphans, they organise some dance troupes and they also practice the Wa script. Feminine cultural work is seen as complementary to the masculine military, but it is also clearly subordinated: The singers and dancers of the propaganda groups, as well as the heads of culture departments, are always second in command to military commanders.

The Women's Association has undertaken a number of charitable endeavors focused on women and children's issues.

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Wahhabi movement of the Buinaksk district, Russia

According to Souleimanov (2005, 55), “Typical Wahhabi constituents were reinforced by groups of Islamic volunteers who had fought in the first Russo-Chechen War. After 1996, several of them married women from Chechnya and Dagestan and stayed in the Caucasus.” It is not clear if these women were also involved in Wahabism, though some of them were daughters of prominent Wahhabis and from heavily Wahhabi villages (Williams 2015).

Gammer (2005, 844) suggests that women have been involved in suicide bombing for the Wahhabi movement in Russia in Dagestan, where this movement is based, and Chechnya. Sokirianskaia (2016, n.p.) recalls, “Since 2000, Russia has been hit by 82 suicide bombing attacks involving 125 suicide bombers, at least 52 of whom were women. I know of several families in Dagestan whose young women adopted radical strands of Islam and then converted their siblings and even their fathers.”

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West Nile Bank Front (WNBF), Uganda

Limited evidence suggests that women did participate in the WNBF. The Uganda Radio Network (2005) reports that a woman commanded many fighters in the WNBF. *New Vision* (2009) also reports that the WNBF had a women’s wing that this same commander led. Apparently, another “leading female officer” in the WNBF, “who was one of the very few women to have assumed a military function in this group,” went on to establish an organization for ex-rebels and their families (Bogner and Rosenthal 2017, 9).

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West Side Boys (WSB), Sierra Leone

There is evidence that women participated in the West Side Boys in various roles. Utas and Jörgel (2008, 497) write of the WSB's recruitment structure, "The West Side Base was established gradually, with new people arriving over an extended period of time, both from Makeni and from Freetown. The soldiers seldom arrived alone, but brought with them families, wives, girlfriends, children and other dependents." Women and girls were sometimes forcibly recruited into the group (Braithwaite and Ruiz 2018, 5; Human Rights Watch 2003).

Women reportedly fought for the WSB (Washington Post 2000; Braithwaite and Ruiz 2018). Three women were reported to have been among 24 WSB members killed during a raid by the British army (Guardian 2000). Young girls participated in combat as well – according to Utas and Jörgel (2008, 497):

After some time, many of the younger ones were incorporated in the military structure. Young boys and girls attached themselves, or were forcefully attached, to WSB soldiers and carried out diverse tasks in the household or simply became incorporated in the military structure – armed with AK 47s, but only a trace of military guidance.

At least one woman supported the group by procuring drugs, food, and medicine (Ibid). Women also cooked meals for combatants (Fowler 2010, 52).

Some women and girls were kept in sexual slavery to boost the morale of male fighters (Human Rights Watch 2003). Such a practice was reportedly referred to by group members as taking "sex combatants" (Guardian 2000, n.p.).

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Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), Ethiopia/Somalia

Women were active in the WSLF in front-line, non-combat roles, and leadership roles (Van Hauwermeiren 2011, 2012). One former WSLF member recalls that women fought on the front-

line: ““Oh yes! They were fighting often! At that time, they are super armed” (Van Hauwermeiren 2012, 16). Some women were injured fighting for the organization, others were killed, while still others were captured and raped (Ibid).

Preliminary estimates from former combatants suggest women composed about 5% of fighters (Ibid). The Telegraph featured a photo of armed female fighters in 1977 (The Telegraph 1977). “A few” women were reportedly military leaders on the front, with some leading units of armed forces (Van Hauwermeiren 2012, 16). Front-line women lived with men in forest camps.

“Many more” women were nurses than front-line fighters, though even the nurses were armed in case of attack and some worked as combat medics (Ibid, 18). Women also worked in logistical roles as communications experts (like radio operators) and couriers. WSLF women performed the *danta*, a traditional song and dance intended to raise fighters spirits and boost morale (Van Hauwermeiren 2011). Braukämper (1982-1983, 9) suggests that women “serve[d] as sanitary personnel of the liberation movements, but usually not in the fighting forces” in this period because of “a widespread belief in southern Ethiopia that women should not be allowed to kill anything.”

The WSLF reportedly founded a women’s wing, the Western Somali Women’s Association, in displacement camps in Somalia. Braukämper (1982-1983, 9) notes, “in this field, discrimination according to the ethnic origin of refugees can be clearly seen. Only the Western Somali Liberation Front has been authorized to found such type of organizations, whereas the Oromo have had no chance to set up their own association.”

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Yemenite Socialist Party – Abdul Fattah Ismail faction, Yemen

Women's participation is not verified.

Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), Zimbabwe

Women fought side by side with men in ZANU's liberation struggle. Women were front-line fighters who trained in camps both within Rhodesia and across state borders and were more active in military roles than in neighboring anti-colonial revolutions (Lyons 2004). An estimated 25-33% of ZANU's membership were women (Nhiwatiwa 1979; Gonzalez-Perez 2021), and Zvobgo (1986) estimates that there were an estimated 1,500-2,000 trained female fighters in ZANLA (ZANU's military wing). ZANU trained women and men together. Moorcraft and McLaughlin (1982, 129) argue that ZANU overstated women's front-line roles for propaganda value, but they call women's combat participation "considerable."

The ZANLA's Women Detachment reportedly trained women militarily. As a former participant in the women's wing recalls,

In the new community of ZANLA, I was treated as an equal. We did the same tasks as male comrades. We performed patrol duties, carried war material, guarded our bases, and cooked in turns with our male comrades. We were frequently given missions through villages and sneaked around boer military posts. Although such tasks were sometimes painstaking and tiresome, we enjoyed ourselves enormously because we always took comfort in the fact that we fought the boers when prepared and when we wanted and we received abundant support from the masses. We recruited more female comrades who have since swelled our ranks. We now have a ZANLA WOMEN'S DETACHMENT, which has been instrumental in sharpening our ideological thinking" (Churucheminzwa 1974, 11).

Mudeka (2014, 94-95) summarizes,

With the war's climax between 1976 and 1979, ZANLA recruited thousands of women for combat; to sew and nurse and the women developed chirenje relations with peasants. Chirenje was a barter trade where female combatants exchanged with peasants the clothes they sewed or received from donors with food for the forces. Songs sung by guerillas during night meetings valorized women's chirenje; Comrade chirenje, (Comrade it's that barter trade) Kutakura gidi chirenje, (To carry this gun it's that barter trade) Kurova bhunu chirenje, (To hit the white oppressor it's that barter trade) Kutora Zimbabwe chirenje, (To retake Zimbabwe it's that barter trade) Ukatamba nemugoti wechirenje (If you belittle the cooking stick of that barter trade) Tinokutongera pakaoma, (we will punish you severely) Ukatamba nanyakubika chirenje (If you belittle the cook of the food from barter trade) Tinokurova nemboma (we will beat you up with a hippo hide Sjambok) Chorus: Chirenje amaiwe-e, (It's that barter trade, mother) Chirenje amaiwe-e (It's that barter trade, mother) Chirenje amaiwe-e (It's that barter trade, mother)... A popular slogan denoting the strategic role of women combatants was 'pamberi nehondo yerusununguko, pamberi nemugoti!' This translated to, 'forward with the liberation war, forward with the cooking stick!' While to some, this slogan denotes confinement of women to 'traditional roles', one could alternatively see it as a concession to the indispensability of the "feminine" roles.

However, Charumbira (2013, 212) concludes of ZANLA (ZANU's military wing),

Marketing strategies emerged, depicting staged gun-wielding female combatants, giving the illusion that women were, indeed, participating on the (combat) frontline. In reality, women were largely shunted into "female" roles such of cooking, laundry, carrying ammunition for the male combatants, and providing (sexual) "comfort" to the "real" guerrillas, the men. The exception to the male-centered ZANLA was with the establishment of a token Women's Brigade/Detachment...

Indeed, female ZANU participants took on in auxiliary roles: women were couriers, messengers, intelligence workers (including hiding security documents), administrators, healthcare workers, teachers, cooks, mobilizers, and they provided shelter and clothes for fighters (Lyons 2004; Nhongo-Simbanegavi 2000; Manyame -Tazarurwa 2009; Mudeka 2014). According to Lyons (2004) women's main tasks included ferrying ammunition to the frontline and working as instructors. This was reportedly a key role for the women's wing: Mudeka (2014, 91) contends, "The Women's Detachment undertook assignments such as soliciting information and travelling long and highly dangerous journeys to bring weapons from the rear to the front."

An estimated 18,000 women worked in supportive roles: the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association estimates that at least 20% of war veterans from both ZANU and ZAPU were women, mostly in non-combat roles (Lyons 2004). They did not distinguish between the groups. This included front-line fighters but also engineers, women commanders, nurses, smugglers, and communications logisticians (Lyons 2004; Gonzalez-Perez 2021). But Lyons (2004) makes clear that there are few records and a wide range of estimations for women's participation in ZANU and in ZAPU.

Women worked in leadership roles within ZANU's political operation, including attempts to shape legislation in post-independence Zimbabwe, and some served as military commanders (Gonzalez-Perez 2021, 12). For example, "ZANLA women [...] rose to commanding ranks. Although they also worked with men, they had authority over the conduct and assignments of their own female units" (Mudeka 2014, 91). Women held "the highest-ranking positions among ZANU's Central Committee and ZANLA's General Staff, training both male and female cadres" (Gonzalez-Perez 2021, 614). Women also made up the leadership of the group's Department of Women's Affairs (Mudeka 2014, 84): "The reality of women's recruitment into a ZANLA Female Detachment under female leaders meant that women had broken into the arena of war, 'traditionally' designated male."

But Sadomba and Albert Dzinesa (2004, 54) argue that "despite much of the party rhetoric implying egalitarianism and the parallel recruitment and training of women alongside men, their deployment in leadership positions was not egalitarian." Though women made up the highest levels of command there were few of them.

ZANU women report differential treatment and experiences based on class and background. Peasant women were reportedly the first to join, followed by elite women. And "[w]hen they got

to the camps, the educated female combatants were given jobs that were different from the ones given to the less educated” (Manyame -Tazarurwa 2009, 105). One former combatant recalls,

The female comrades like in my case, I was responsible for the administration of ZANLA. I was responsible for the documentation. I was responsible for the finance, all the monies that was used by ZANLA; I was responsible for it. So whatever needed to be purchased, I was like the Finance Director of ZANLA (quoted in Manyame-Tazarurwa 2009, 105).

Women’s emancipation was part of ZANU’s socialist platform, though women members report feeling betrayed and dissatisfied with the group’s lack of commitment to women’s equality (Ibid). Manyame -Tazarurwa (2009, 111) argues, “ZANU leadership warned women who challenged gender issues that they risked official ostracism and consequently their political demise.” There were no women in ZANU’s negotiating delegation during the peace negotiations (Sadomba and Dzinesa 2004).

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Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), Zimbabwe

Women fought in Zimbabwe's liberation struggle, including in ZAPU. Women were front-line fighters who trained in camps both within Rhodesia and across state borders and were more active in military roles than in neighboring anti-colonial revolutions (Lyons 2004). Unlike ZANU, which integrated women with men in existing battalions, ZAPU trained women separately in the all-female Victory Camp and Mkushi Camp. Former participants and archival evidence suggests that ZAPU included a "Women's Brigade" with female soldiers in Victory Camp (SAHA n.d.a.; Sibande 2016). Reportedly, women were militarily trained but often deployed "after basic training for training in such roles as police, nurses, secretarial etc," though some were soldiers (SAHA n.d.b, n.p). Lyons (2004) similarly finds little evidence that the women's brigade fought on the front-line.

The group was training over 1,000 women for military action when the war ended (Lyons 2004). Wood (2019) suggests that women composed around 10% of ZAPU's front-line and likely had less exposure to combat than women in ZANU. Lyons (2004) makes clear that there are few records and a wide range of estimations for women's participation in ZANU and in ZAPU.

While estimates of women's participation are scarcer for ZAPU than ZANU, Sadomba and Dzinesa (2004, 53) conclude that "ZANLA [ZANU's military wing] probably deployed more women fighters than ZIPRA [ZAPU's military wing]." One female ZAPU member recalls, "We ZAPU women did not go to the front, but we were defending the camps [...] refugee camps like Mkushi. If an enemy came, they defended and actually shot and killed the enemy" (quoted in Ibid, 54). Alexander and McGregory (2004, 88) similarly conclude, "ZIPRA's women's battalion never left the camps."

The Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association estimates that at least 20% of war vets from both ZANU and ZAPU were women, mostly in non-combat roles (Lyons 2004). They did not distinguish between the groups. Sadomba and Dzinesa (2004, 53) contend that ZAPU's "women combatants mostly engaged in support roles outside the country, including medical care and transportation [...] While men and women underwent similar military training, it was mostly the men who were deployed to the battlefield."

The organization did incorporate women in leadership roles, namely as commanders (Sadomba and Dzinesa 2004). ZAPU also operated a Women's Affairs Department that "with sections, branches, districts, provinces, and a national executive had facilitated the mobilisation of many women and helped build women's confidence in being chairpersons, office holders and in conducting meetings" (Geisler 2004, 47). Unlike ZANU, ZAPU was resistant to promoting women's participation and they admitted to difficulties retaining women members (Lyons 2004). Still, when ZAPU did recognize women, they explicitly linked women's emancipation with their revolutionary goals.

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Zintan Brigades, Libya

Women's participation is not verified.

Zviadists, Georgia

Zviadist women reportedly organized political protests, including interrupting opposition parties' events (Akhali Taoba 2003). One news report concludes, "it became clear that the women were supporters of expresident Zviad Gamsakhurdia [...] This group of women has quite a lot of experience engaging in scuffles. During the last ten years, they have regularly come to blows, sometimes with paramilitary groups and sometimes with special police units" (Ibid, 55). In 1993, security forces arrested those accused of being or supporting Zviadists, including women. News reporting on one such arrest quotes acquaintances who say the arrested woman supports the Zviadists but "never does anything" and "wouldn't hurt a fly" (Sneider 1993, 1). Some reports suggest that "Black Pantyhose" or "Black Stockings" is a term used to refer to Zviadist women (Geworld 2016, n.p.), giving rise to – unverified - folklore of an armed female militia fighting for Gamsakhurdia.

Women in Abkhazia and South Ossetia reportedly smuggled goods for guerrilla groups before the 2003 Rose Revolution, including Zviadist groups (Kupatadze 2005). Today, many former smugglers for paramilitaries and rebels are now "petty traders" known as "women with bags"

(Ibid, 69). Kupatadze (2005, 72) notes that “[...] in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the distinction among official security and police forces, criminals, and various armed militias is completely blurred.”

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