An Evaluation of Roles and Integration of Female Soldiers in Peace Building in Central African Republic: A Case of Zambian Regiment Lusaka, Zambia.

CARI
Journals

An Evaluation of Roles and Integration of Female Soldiers in Peace Building in Central African Republic: A Case of Zambian Regiment Lusaka, Zambia.

Benson Muchinshi Kamfwa,

MSc. Peace, Leadership & Conflict Resolution Student,

School of Humanities and Social Sciences,

University of Zambia, Lusaka-Zambia;

Author: kamfwabensonmuchinshi@yahoo.com

Abstract

Purpose: The rationale of this study was to evaluate the roles and integration of female soldiers in peace building in the Central African Republic, a case of a Zambian Regiment in Lusaka, Zambia. The motivation to undertake this study was premised on the fact that despite Zambian female soldiers being actively involved in the United Nations peacekeeping efforts, their special roles and responsibilities in the mission are scantly recorded. The study further sought to examine the gender dynamics and challenges encountered by female soldiers in peacekeeping operations.

Methodology: The study adopted a qualitative approach where ninety (90) research participants were homogeneously selected and data was collected through interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussions. The gathered bulk data was then transcribed and coded into categories and was thematically analysed by examining the patterns of meaning within the collected data sets and drawing inferences both explicitly and implicitly.

Findings: The major findings revealed that Zambian female soldiers were actively engaged in community activities; force protection; public health and human rights advocacy; the de-escalation of gender associated cases and acting as role models to community members of Birao and Bria. Challenges encountered include male chauvinism; sexual harassment; insufficient numbers of female soldiers and suspicion of infidelity.

Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: This paper calls on Zambia Army to realign its training curriculum to incorporate gender studies and human rights issues; Acceleration of skills development of female soldiers to build capacity in advocacy on human rights and counselling strategies; Policy on quota system to be adopted to increase the strength of female soldiers during recruitment; Regional bodies under African Union should lobby for resources from the United Nations to have sufficient numbers of female soldiers on the continent to contribute in the de-escalation of conflicts on the continent.

Keywords: *Evaluation of Female soldiers Roles, Integration and Peace-building.*

1. Introduction/ Background

Historically, the war in the Central African Republic is an ongoing civil war that have involved government forces; the Seleka rebels who are mostly Muslims and anti Balaka militia groups aligned to Christianity. The rebel groups had accused government forces of not abiding by the peace agreements hence causing the beginning of the conflict, (World Vision , 2020). This armed violent conflict which began in 2012 has been deeply affecting the daily lives of the general citizenry in that country particularly women and children. Women have been displaced, killed and forced to be heads of households (Bertolazzi, 2010; Matakala, 2015; NGOWG, 2020). This situation has been forcing women to engage in peace building activities to guarantee themselves a peaceful future for their country. The incorporation of women in governance structures including in the defence and security wings to play various roles in the post conflict reconstruction is considered cardinal in this respect.

Peacekeeping mission of a multinational nature in Central African Republic initially was formed in October, 2002 by the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) following the continued tension over recognition bordering on religion, ethnicity and control of mineral wealth, (Heinecken, 2015). In spite of this long standing civil war, peacekeeping efforts transitioned from an African led African Union to United Nations Led Multi dimension Integrated Mission in Central African Republic (MINUSCA). The second civil war occurred between (2004 – 2007) when government forces of late President Bozize fought with rebel groups which led them to a peace deal in that same final year. The terms of the accord were political inclusion of leaders of the rebel group; Disarmament; Demobilization and Integration of rebels into the national army (Heinecken, 2015).

This illustration indicated that Central African Republic has a rich history of post war conflict that requires both unity of purpose and moral responsibility for men, women, boys and girls to come together and take up their unique roles for national building. Additionally Central African Republic shares her border line with Sudan to the north east, South Sudan from the eastern side, Chad from the northern part, Cameroon on the western side and Democratic Republic of Congo from the southern part. All these countries have experiences and backgrounds of war. The whole region has been conflict prone and contributes in one way or another to the ongoing instability in the Central African Republic. Despite the region having this negative outlook of war, Central African Republic can learn positive experiences on the roles of women in post conflict situations, (NGOWG, 2020).

The integration of women soldiers in military systems has come with different reactions from the general public more especially the male soldiers, (Barker & Contreras, 2011). Looking at this aspect from the gender perspective, society had given this integration a positive response

considering the move to be a measure of promoting gender equality between males and females (Cynthia, 2014). Contrary to the position of the society, male soldiers had maintained the negative response stating that, during the peace building missions, the integration of women soldiers shows lack of capacity to undertake the challenging roles and hence they should be aligned to the tasks that matched their sex such as educating fellow women found in areas of insecurity, giving motivational talks and empowering them with knowledge on self reliance skills such as carpentry, gardening and music (Amena, 2000). Male soldiers here are for the view that even before women were integrated into the military, such responsibilities were being performed by male soldiers.

Welfare had always been associated with concerns in relation to women, for instance women as nurses, homemakers, nurturers. But added dimensions to welfare concerns related to women have been the result of systematic analysis of women's health in the face of traumatic situations. This has implications on physical, mental, and situational aspects of health. Feminist scholars had emphasized the long lasting effects of the psychological dimensions of rape in order to draw attention to the seriousness of the woman's plight as well as indicated the different orientation required to meet a woman's welfare needs. In this regard, considerations of the psychological impact of women found in war torn nations are never emphasized. For instance, offering treatment in form of counselling to the victims of rape during the war in 1971 proved impractical. During the war of Liberation, discrimination of women combatants became an impediment to the reintegration of women into the community. During that time it was considered as state policy towards supporting these victims, which the state agents called war heroines but society could not accommodate them, (Heinecken, 2015).

At the international level, this challenging career has been dominated by male soldiers. For instance, the first women soldiers in the United States of America were recruited in 1976 and this trend escalated to different regions of the world, (NATO, 2007). Since its creation in 1945, the United Nations has been using peacekeeping as a mechanism to maintain peace and security around the world. The first conflict management of that nature occurred when Israel was created and that sparked a conflict between that country and the Arab States. During this peacekeeping operation, only male soldiers were entrusted with military tasks assigned by the Security Council. Integration of women soldiers was not considered as they felt that female soldiers couldn't be trusted with such demanding responsibilities, (UNSC, 2008).

In Africa, a similar situation has continued to occur where male soldiers dominate most armies on the continent. Feminist group intervened through Women in Development (WID). Women in Development comprised of female development professionals who came together and advocated for the inclusion of women in developmental activities of the world including in defence and security wings of governments. This group's concern was that women

possessed special talents that could contribute positively to the social, economic and political spheres of the world including defending their countries from both internal and external enemies, (Moser, 1993).

In the case of Zambia, the public holds the view that military duties cannot be performed by women as they are most challenging and therefore requires the masculinity nature of men (Cynthia, 2014). In addition to this, it is argued that even if women continued claiming the military roles, male soldiers dominates the implementation of these roles and women soldiers hide behind male soldiers, (Barnes & Stevelink, 2016). This has resulted into the general public to question the roles of women soldiers in peace building in trying to understand how gender is taking its course in the military. Women soldiers were initially integrated in the Zambian army in 1974 at the time the first indigenous Zambian army commander, General Chinkuli was the commander. This was the instruction received from then the commander in-chief of the armed forces, President Kenneth Kaunda. By 1990 upwards, peacekeeping operations under the United Nations and local operations began integrating female soldiers with not so clear roles specified for them, (UNSC, 2008). For instance, in 1985 General Evelyn Mkakangoma (retd) with other few female officer cadets joined Zambia Army and began their career as second lieutenants with no specific roles designed for them (Zimba, 2018).

Peace building is the process and degree to which a violent conflict is turned into peaceful channels which can be resolved amicably, (Addison & Brueck, 2008). In other words it is a way of getting things on track so that a country returns to normalcy. However, this process being a long term requires adequate measures to be put in place so that a conflict situation does not reoccur. According to Boutros Gali (1992), peacebuilding is "a sustained, co-operative work to deal with underlying economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems of the conflict," (Boutros, 1992, p. 55). Reconstruction is a long term and developmental mechanism of ensuring that peace is attained. Post-conflict peacebuilding like reconstruction involves halting of violent conflicts; coming up with peace agreements; demobilization, disarmament and reintegration of armed groups; taking care of displaced persons; coming up with good governance structures and embarking on economic development. This implies that the principles of good governance should be incorporated to bring about peace. These may be respect for rule of law, participation of stake holders (including women) in the governance structures, timely free, fair elections. Furthermore, peace building calls for the training of people in various disciplines. It is this inclusion of different interest groups such as women, non-governmental organizations, the church groups, defence and security wings, regional and international bodies that bring about sustained peace in the context of post-conflict reconstruction, (Boutros, 1992).

2. Theoretical Perspectives of the Study

This study is underpinned by the United Nations peace operations and International Relations theory as written by Oksamytna and Karlsrud, (2020). The authors demonstrated how peace operations and international relations can practically be implored as a solution to a practical challenge. The United Nations peacekeeping operation has been one mechanism used as a conflict management tool at international level. This theory elaborates the inter-dependence of roles by different actors in problem solving. The theory gives the linkage of power, issues of sovereignty, gender, delegation of authority and collective action by different stake holders in the peacekeeping missions to achieve a common objective. Further the theory analyzes the United Nations peacekeeping mission as a global institution in its broad sense of meaning. According to this theory, global institution have been described as set of interconnected band of guidelines both formal and informal that act like standard operating procedures for expected roles and behavioural conduct, (Karlsrud & Oksamytna, 2020).

The study is motivated to use this theory because it permits a deep understanding of the United Nations peacekeeping operations from different perspectives. For instance how the peacekeeping operations has evolved from its inception to the current status. Peacekeeping operations have transitioned from conducting mere observational tasks on a small scale to carrying out multifaceted missions. This theory is a practical scenario of how other related peace operations theories like feminism and critical security studies can be operationalised as a solution to a particular problem facing society. Societal problems include: humanitarian crisis, human insecurity and gross human rights violation, (UNSC, 2008). This theory appreciates the various roles and responsibilities undertaken by different United Nations peacekeeping components while in the mission area such as the military personnel, police, observer teams and civilians.

Drawing from (Karlsrud & Oksamytna, 2020) peacekeeping operations and international relations theory, sustainable peace would be attained in a multidimensional nature through the inputs of various stake holders, men and women, military and civilians. This theory posits that this international institution (UN) has expanded tasks played by peacekeepers in mission areas. Zambia being one of the troop contributing countries to many African countries ravaged with conflict, has been integrating female soldiers in peace building initiatives in conflict zones like Central African Republic. However there is inadequate literature spelling out the exact roles that Zambian women soldiers undertake and how integrated they are on the contingent. The theory further highlights some of the achievements attained by women in general while in peacekeeping operations. In Zambia such achievements has been overshadowed by male domination. It is with this view that this theory is chosen as suitable

to provide guidance regarding the integration and roles of female soldiers in the context of Zambia.

In relation to United Nations peacekeeping operations and international relations theory, Central African Republic despite being entangled in violent conflicts since 2012 has been trying to structure its governance institutions to reflect the aspirations of both men and women of that country. Activities such as respect for women's rights and gender equality have made tremendous progress. For instance, Central African Republic women participation in decision making stood at 12.5% more than Zambia which had 11.5% in 2012, (Abdennebi-Abdrrahim, 2012). The government of Central African Republic with the support from both international and regional cooperating partners became a signatory to various international conventions and protocols bordering on the participation of women in the developmental agenda of that country. These include: Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (1979). The engagement of women groups had been enshrined in National Development Plans. Gender equality at all levels of leadership has been mainstreamed as a matter of policy, however, despite all these efforts very little progress has been recorded in the operationalization of these policies to translate into meaningful results regarding the specific roles of female soldiers in peace building initiatives.

The conglomerate of non-governmental organizations for women groups (NGOWG) on peace building and reconstruction processes in Central African Republic, have continued calling on relevant stake holders to involve women in peace processes in that country, (NGOWG, 2020). In line with this study, this theory helps spell out the reasons why women soldiers are involved in peacekeeping operations. The theory also acts as a guide to this study on the effects of female soldiers' participation in peace missions and the relationship that exists between the women international community and local women groupings. The theory espouses significant contributions to the study at it consolidates the many attempts that has been recorded by troop contributing countries (TCC) to peace missions on the relevance of involving female soldiers in post conflict recovery and reconstruction activities. The theory thus provides a basis of understanding the social roles and moral responsibilities of female soldiers while in the mission area.

In the same vein, this theory serves as a reminder for a decisive action for women soldiers to be empowered with various roles and responsibilities in comparison with their male counterparts, (Karlsrud & Oksamytna, 2020). The theory has the potential to explain contextually why female soldiers were underrepresented in peace missions in relation to male soldiers. This therefore may ignite plans to rectify the social and structural differences found

between male and female uniformed staff in mission areas. The theory informs this study about other important shortcomings faced by female soldiers and thereby proving to be a mechanism to diagnose challenges and prescribe possible solutions.

Peace operations and international relations theory incorporates the feminist theory propounded by, (Chadorow, 1991). Feminism aims at understanding and analysing the nature of gender inequality and further examines women's and men's social roles, experiences and interests. Themes explored in feminist theory include discrimination, objectification (especially sexual objectification), oppression, patriarchy and stereotyping. Peace operations and international relations theory is broad in this context and it gives a detailed analysis of gender roles in general thereby informing the study to systematically analyse the roles of women soldiers in peace building missions particularly under the umbrella of the United Nations.

2.2. Literature Review

At international level, it had been revealed that life cannot be sustainable without peace and that various human components including female soldiers contribute highly to the attainment of world peace, (Galtung, 1996). The United Nations has played a pivotal role in championing the integration of various categories of women such as female soldiers in post conflict situations to find a lasting solution, (Bertolazzi, 2010). This has been evidenced through the successful organization of the United Nations world female meetings across the globe, of which the initial conference was hosted by Mexico in the year 1975; Copenhagen in Denmark hosted a similar world meeting on women's roles and contributions made in conflict situations in 1980; the third meeting was organized in Nairobi, Kenya in 1985; in the year 1995, Beijing conference regarding women's significant roles in dispute settlement was tabled and discussed (Tsjeard & Frerks, 2002).

Different stake holders at the Beijing meeting crafted an agenda that was aimed at coming up with critical areas that mattered regarding the women's roles and their involvement in peace settlement. Furthermore, the general objective of the Beijing Platform for Action was to mainstream empowerment and participation of women groups in sustainable peace and developmental activities and the recognition of their roles through national and international norms, principles and policies. Among the critical areas of concern were women and the armed conflict; violence against female persons and children; human rights, the environment and women, (Tsjeard & Frerks, 2002). According to the United Nations, the concerns raised at the meeting were to be operationalised through a multi-sectoral approach such as regional organizations, national and international stake holders around the globe.

The Beijing Conference implementation around the world had since been monitored regarding its effectiveness concerning the roles and integration of women in problem solving in conflict situations. In this regard, the United Nations General Assembly came up with initiatives such as Resolution number 52/100; Women 2000 Special Session and went further to adopt a Political Declaration that was basically aimed at ensuring the effective operationalization of the Beijing Platform for action, (UNGA, 2000). The findings of this conference indicated, among other things, that women were affected differently from men by the brutal impact of violent conflicts and that it was necessary to appreciate the various roles played by women in conflict zones. The outcome of the conference further pointed out that there was a gap in the integration of different categories of women in national planning, post-conflict recovery program design and the actual implementation of developmental activities during the reconstruction period.

In the same vein, the United Nations Security Council appreciated and reaffirmed the significance of the roles played by different groups of women in conflict prevention, resolution and peace building by coming up with Resolution Number 1325 in 2000. The main objective was to re-emphasize, increase and promote women's roles and integration in decision making structures in an effort to find lasting solutions to conflict ravaged and torn societies, (United Nations , 2018). In addition to Resolution 1325, the Department for Disarmament under the United Nations documented the roles and integration of women in post conflict peace building. The essence was to highlight the various roles undertaken by women folks such as collection of small arms during disarmament; offering social and psychological assistance during reintegration; demining activities and helping in demobilization of former combatants to restore peace in conflict prone areas.

Furthermore, the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) under the umbrella of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has been highlighting issues of women's roles and their involvement in peace and development in the world. In this respect, programmes such as Women in Development, Gender Equality and Women and Development were all supported by OECD, (Tsjeard & Frerks, 2002). The Resolutions of the UN and OECD set an influential policy framework at international level regarding the roles and integration of women in peace building activities in general. However, this policy framework did not translate into actual operationalization at national level thereby creating a knowledge gap between policy framework and implementation plan.

At continental level, the contributions of various categories of women are covered by the African Charter on Human and People's Rights [Article 3(4) and 4] especially women in Africa. The United Nations Charter under chapter VIII empowers regional bodies to guarantee peace and security under their jurisdiction. This includes the deployment of female

soldiers in peace building activities. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) protocol on gender and development compelled member states to protect women and children and encourage punishment to perpetrators of all forms of insecurity (United Nations , 2017). This was done following the acknowdgement that women were equal partners in development. In Liberia for example, citizens of that country experienced serious wars for fourteen years (1989 – 2003) during which displacement of innocent people, sexual exploitation, extreme poverty, death and usage of child soldiers were major problems (Goyol, 2019). Sierra Leone equally underwent a similar violent conflict situation but the regional force under the umbrella of Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) halted the hostilities partly due to a multi sectoral approach that included the involvement of women soldiers (Goyol, 2019).

The deployment of personnel in peacekeeping missions on the African continent such as Congo DR, South Sudan, Mozambique and Chad required a multi-sectoral approach so that volatile situations could be quenched within a given timeframe. Most of the peacekeeping missions were set out in countries where conflicts had escalated to a level which an individual country could not manage to settle peacefully without the appreciation of women's roles and integrating them fully in conflict settlement. Depending on the conflict situation in a particular country and the skills needed, various capabilities were required ranging from military troops, civilian staff, police components, military observers and United Nations volunteers who were men and women. Like the situations in Central African Republic, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, these components were set up there to achieve one thing namely, peace settlement. However, this multi-dimensional nature of peacekeepers brought on board various roles played by different categories of women including female soldiers (Durch et al, 2009). Despite coming up with international conventions at global level regarding the inclusion and participation of women in peace processes, there is scanty information recorded on specific roles of women soldiers in peace building initiatives thereby creating a knowledge gap. Therefore empirical exploration of the various roles played by female soldiers in conflict situations at national level remained cardinal to the full understanding of post conflict reconstruction and peace.

2.2.1 The Gender Nature of War

Most of the current literature on peace studies focuses on the gendered nature of war. These studies have uncovered the largely and androcentric structure of male-dominated culture within the practices of soldiering and military conscription. Because of this scenario, some scholars have coined a supposition that male persons created violent wars while their female counterparts made peace (Chadorow, 1991; Nancy, 2015; Cockburn & Hubic, 2002). Many peacemakers had similarly claimed that while men were soldiers, women were the mothers.

It was assumed that a woman's social and biological roles as nurturers had consequently turned them into builders of relationships that bridged culture, religious and ethnic boundaries. Feminist theorists however have ferociously challenged this notion. They claimed that it essentializes notions of both masculinity and femininity and poses the latter as superior to the former (Baugher, 2010). Nancy (2015) studied the role of female persons in the post-conflict peace reconstruction in South Sudan. This research was aimed at examining the actual approaches employed by women in peace building, the recorded successes and the experienced challenges. This qualitative study used a combination of purposeful and convenient sampling designs when collecting data from the respondents. She found out that peace building strategies contributed to higher female representation in decision making at both local and central government. The main challenges highlighted that affected the performance of roles include structural impediments; illiteracy; inequality and lack of inclusion. The research concluded that women could play a cardinal role and contribute positively to the peace building initiatives given the right platform to do so. Furthermore, the research recommended that adequate resources should be made available and creation of networks to increase high chances of women inclusion in peace building processes, (Nancy, 2015). Despite the study highlighting on roles played by women in general in the post conflict setting, less information was shared on women soldiers' roles in peace building efforts from any troop contributing country thus leaving a gap in knowledge generation.

It has been noticed in different conflicts that women were not only victims of war but also active participants (Cockburn & Hubic, 2002). Women in general carried out several responsibilities such as nursing, mothers to children of the disappeared parents, provided emotional and physical support to community members during and after the period of war. Female persons also played a role of those who commit serious atrocities and abuses (Cynthia, 2014). In Sri Lanka for example, some male fighters perceived women Tamil paramilitaries to be more violent than their male colleagues (Baugher, 2010). According to Cynthia (2014), it was empirically tested that female soldiers participated actively as combatants out of free will. This was evidenced during World War II where one-third of the fighters from Sri Lanka were female. Equally during hostilities in Rwanda, Liberia and Bosnia, female combatants fully played a pivotal role in ethnic cleansing, spearheading protests to bring peace. This finding supports the feminist theory that is against essentialising gender masculinity and feminism.

Women therefore, should not only be seen merely as victims and weak but also play a role of combatants in the peace process. But beyond the critique of this dichotomy, the usefulness of this assumption was made apparent in its focus on the socialization process. Thus, roles may not be biologically determined but they may certainly be influenced by the different socialization processes which men and women soldiers undergo in their life processes. These

studies were therefore useful to the extent that they shed light on these socialization processes. The literature above focused on roles performed by female combatants without any military training background. The roles outlined were thus determined by the situation that women found themselves in (Karlsrud & Oksamytna, 2020). There was need therefore to know and document the responsibilities and roles played by female soldiers from established army units.

In the same vein, there was a larger debate in the literature regarding women's agency versus victimhood. Women are more readily conceived as victims of war because of their vulnerability, for example they are the most harassed, displaced and the negative effects of war rests on their shoulders (Matakala, 2015; Karlsrud & Oksamytna, 2020). A consequence of this had been the tendency to limit women's agency role in the peace-building process. As a counter to this trend, a body of literature had grown in which women's agencies have been made the focus of attention (Cynthia, 2014). As opposed to this bifold thinking Roberta Juliana (1997) had advocated a somewhat different approach using the concept of the victimized self to argue that by acting against victimization, women actually denigrate it. Most of the literature on conflict dealt with the consequences of conflict. For example, what happened to women, men, boys and girls, societies, nations as a result of conflict? But feminist scholarship on women and security had been among the first to foreground structures of patriarchy, capital and militarization as a cause of conflict rather than a consequence. Scholars like Cynthia (2014) & Nancy (2015) have demonstrated how gendered structures influenced military establishments and practices.

2.2.2 Women as Actors

In war and post-war contexts women activities and roles include victims or survivors, or combatants. (Cockburn & Zarkov, 2014). During conflict, women are also normally considered the last vestiges of civil society (Department of Defence, 2008). When men take up arms, women are usually left to defend the homes and carried on with the day to day activities of feeding a family and caring for elders and children often in adverse circumstances. Feminist scholars had also linked this trend as making women more vulnerable to rape by opposition forces. Rape was rampantly employed by opposition forces to intimidate the targeted community so that subjects could flee from their homesteads to the advantage of the perpetrators (Department of Defence, 2015). Conflict situations often led to mother's playing a positive role in society, which under normal circumstances could have been natural to them but due to the nature of the conflict it became a symbol of protest (Cockburn & Hubic, 2002). Such a role was that of the Argentinean mothers who mourned their 'missing' children (Cock, 2005). Mourning of the dead in most societies was usually a private and social act where women played an important part. But in situations where 'death'

itself was not recognized, then the very act of mourning was held to be a symbol of protest (United Nations, 2000). Not only did such actions contain a cathartic and therapeutic element for emotions suppressed, but it also fore-grounded the private into the public arena, hence making grieving or mourning an intensely political act, which transformed victims into survivors.

As widowed wives or grieving mothers, it was often women who were seen to seek justice. The impunity of soldiers and other law enforcement agencies had often been the target of criticism by many civil society and human rights organizations. But at the ground level the demand for justice had always been fuelled by the demands of war widows or mothers of killed children or the orphans of killed parents who through their immediate involvement could carry through these demands even at great odds. The responsibilities carried out by the spouses of the intellectuals killed during the Bangladesh/Pakistan war in 1971 was significant in that they were the only members of the community who had protested the repatriation of incarcerated Pakistanis of War (POWs) from the area of Bangladesh without any promise of a trial for the mass killings they committed. The demand for trial of war collaborators were only made by the parents of Jahanara Imam a freedom fighter at the time the whole community was quiet about the issue. The movement for the trial of war criminals and the consequent setting up of the public tribunal was seen as challenge to a legitimate state, and the charges of sedition were filed against Jahanara Imam and forty other leaders of the movement, (Barnes & Stevelink, 2016). This demonstrates a key role women can take in a post-war situation, albeit at great personal risk.

Women were either casualties of contention or operators of harmony building. Many times, women had deflected clashes and were answerable for settling clashes. Therefore, harmony constructing needed the inclusion of female soldiers to play the various roles highlighted above to achieve peace. During savage clashes and wars women were compelled to accept new jobs as heads of families, suppliers of ammunition, becoming female soldiers, and political dissidents. Others suffered death, poverty, displacement and unemployment (Global Coalition for Africa, 2004). The main objective of peace building especially with the participation of women soldiers was to ensure that the wellbeing of the people was entrenched; it was about de-escalation of conflicts so that it could not degenerate into war (Galtung, 1996).

Post-war Rwanda has scored high in ensuring that women participated fully in bringing sustainable peace to that country. In the words of Chazan (1999), Rwanda has the highest female parliamentarian in Africa and President Kagame believe that women understood social economic values and therefore could play important role in addressing the challenges confronting humanity particularly in post conflict period. According to the 2018 Inter-

Parliamentary Union, President Kagame increased women representation in Parliament from 26 to 27 making it 52% of the total number of seats. Women participation in governance and peace building processes at all levels (both in public and private sectors) has since been enshrined in the constitution so that women were marginalised (Chazan, 1999). Therefore, in the post-conflict period female groups at various levels in Rwanda including military have been fully integrated in the political, social, economic development of a society to successfully carry out the rehabilitation and reconstruction processes.

 In 1995 a group of women from West African war-torn countries came together and appealed to their heads of States to halt hostilities when they participated in the Beijing Conference on Women affairs (Goyol, 2019). This was in line with Goals 1325 of the United Nations Security Council that required Nations to invest in women for strife aversion, endorsement of female participation in peace building processes and peacekeeping missions. Because of the foregoing, South Sudan had increased the number of women engagement teams to ensure that peace building initiatives became successful, (United Nations, 2018). For instance, troop-contributing countries to South Sudan and Central African Republic like Zambia had seen an increase in the number of female soldiers and police officers in trying to work with more women groups and restore order. The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development for instance implored women in peace engagement initiatives at all levels of leadership to de-escalate the tension in countries affected by violent conflicts.

In Zambia, the government has aligned itself with some international treaties bordering on the participation of women in the developmental agenda of the country. Zambia had been a signatory to Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); the Beijing Platform for Action (1995); Convention on the Elimination on all forms of Discrimination against Women (1979). The engagement of different stakeholders like women groups (women soldiers) inclusive has been enshrined in the 7th National Development Plan (2017 – 2021) of Zambia. Gender equality at all levels of leadership had been mainstreamed as a matter of policy in Zambia (Ministry of Finance and National Planning, 2017, p. 47). However, despite all these efforts very little progress had been recorded in the operationalisation of these policies. For example, women in both public and private institutions occupy less than 10% of decision-making positions (United Nations, 2018) and the number of female parliamentarian stood at 18% as of 2018. Consequently, despite these policy frameworks and international protocols, Zambia still has fallen below the minimal requirement of thirty percent women inclusion in social, economic and political activities which included female soldiers' integration into the defence forces.

Although women had had constructive role in peacebuilding during and after conflicts, there was a general tendency to ignore their contribution in formal peace processes, that is, one

that entailed the drawing up of the peace accord or peace negotiations. Amena (2000) has critiqued the exclusion of women groups in peace processes. The new constitution in Bangladesh failed to include the interests of the non-Bengali minority groups in that region. Amena pointed out the marginalization of women had been institutionalized by the peace accord in the allocation of reserved seats for women and non-Bengali people (Amena, 2000). But although women had been neglected in the formal peace processes, they had had a large role to play informally. One of the clear examples of this had been the Naga Mothers Association. In the face of warring factions and ethnic strife, the Naga Mothers Association had initiated dialogues with the 'undergrounds' (militant factions). This averted government violence and bloodshed. They organized public rallies with religious leaders to appeal for peace and spoke against killings not only by army but also by militants (Heinecken, 2015).

However, the few women who had participated in the governance system particularly in political circles have demonstrated that female engagements were vital to peace building and attainment of development. For instance, Julia Chikamoneka was a freedom fighter, courageous and managed to organize resources for political prisoners during the pre-independence era; Dr Anna Chifungula, first female Auditor General, passionate, fearless and helped to transform her institution through motivation, innovation and transparency to stand for the truth; Inonge Wina, first female Vice President, held various Ministerial positions including gender and managed to build peace in intra-party conflict prior to 2015 by-elections; Nawakwi Edith, an entrepreneur, courageous politician and first female Finance Minister. She managed to challenge the third term bid by the second Republican President, Fredrick Chiluba (UN, 2018); (Chewe, 2016).

2.3 Women's Agenda

It was not only necessary to focus on female soldiers or women in general as actors in order to assess their roles in peacebuilding but also to focus on what would be women's agenda for peace. Feminist scholars had analysed violence against women in conflict situations with a view to portray them as crimes against humanity, (Abdennebi-Abdrrahim, 2012). It had been part of a strategy to project women's rights as human rights and hence to be taken up by international humanitarian law. Violence against women covered under rape, abduction, honour killings, sexual exploitation and slavery. Welfare has always been associated with concerns related to women for instance women as nurses, homemakers, nurturers. But added dimensions to welfare concerns related to women had been the result of systematic analysis of women's health in the face of traumatic situations. This had implications for physical, mental, and situational aspects of health. Feminist scholars such as Chadorow, (1991); Nancy, (2015) & Cynthia, 2014   had emphasized the longer lasting effects of the psychological dimensions of rape to draw attention to the seriousness of the woman's plight

as well as indicated the different orientation required to meet her welfare needs. In most post-conflict situations women experienced the absence of such approaches. For example in Bangladesh, within the treatment of the raped victims of the 1971 War of Liberation, social stigma often became an obstacle to their rehabilitation into their own homes and societies (Heinecken, 2015).

Economic rehabilitation was perhaps the most common kind of policies, which was addressed towards women as victims of war. This was a very significant intervention because ordinary women in traditional communities, who had no exposure to formal income generating activities, remained vulnerable and were left alone to take care of their families. Literature had indicated that real struggle begun for most of the vulnerable communities immediately a conflict broke out and heads of families decided to take part in the war (Moser, 1993). However, post conflict settings often presented chances for vulnerable communities to build capacity and access formal employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. The skills in which women were trained were often dictated by traditional perceptions of gender roles embedded in that society, for example sewing, handicrafts, weaving, and so on. But often these skills were not adequate to generate adequate income to maintain a family, and women felt disadvantaged from the very beginning of their entry into public life. Long term skills training in a specific career and opportunities for education to help them face the competitive job market were not given priority by such state policies. Therefore, it was necessary to construct a female soldiers' agenda of economic rehabilitation, (Moser, 1993).

However, when it came to the Zambian situation, the roles of women soldiers in the military had been problematic. Female soldiers had been marginalized by male soldiers based on them being of a weaker sex. Male soldiers dominated most of the duties as they had perceived themselves to be masculine and stronger than women soldiers (Matakala, 2015). There was need to assess the various roles of women soldiers in peace building to prevent the male chauvinism. If the uncertainties regarding roles of women soldiers in peace building were not cleared, it could lead into escalation of marginalization of women, male domination, and inequalities in gender socialization. Despite women take up certain roles in times of war like becoming combatants to liberate themselves, this apparent relief may not be economically tenable. For as soon as the conflict is over, women may again be relegated to the domestic sphere as had been seen again and again in cases like the Central African Republic. If women's liberation was to be made part and parcel of the new society under construction, then steps must be taken to legitimize and institutionalize gender equality in one form or another.

Similarly, a group of female officers from Zambia, the Republic of Uganda and Rwanda emphasized the need to increase the number of women troops in war torn nations during a discussion held in Gabiro, Rwanda. They indicated that adequate number of female troops would imply reaching out to the whole conflict affected population because women soldiers were able to penetrate and engage their fellow women in communities where their male counterparts could not reach due to cultural barriers in those conflict affected societies, (DVIDS, 2019). Therefore, increasing female soldiers in peace missions could improve access to many women and children in conflict zones like the Central African Republic.

3. Study Objectives

The following are specific objectives:

- ➢ To establish the roles of women soldiers in peace building.
- ➢ To investigate the gender dynamics in the performance of roles of female soldiers in post-conflict reconstruction.
- ➢ To determine the challenges that women soldiers face during peace building efforts.

4. Methodology

This study commenced in June, 2021 and was completed in February 10, 2022, adopted a qualitative non experimental case study research design which is a method eligible when the research intends to collect data on occurrences such as opinions, attitudes, feelings, and habits on a subject (Bless & Achola, 2001). A sampling technique is a process or method used to bring research participants with similar characteristics together with a view of extracting data that is representative of the population (Bless & Achola, 2001). This research adopted the typical sampling technique where only respondents familiar with the situation were engaged. This study used homogeneous sampling technique to select sampling units from a population of three hundred female soldiers because the sampling units were all female under the same organisation and had experienced peacekeeping operations. Data on specific issues relating to the study was collected through questionnaires, focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews. The study was conducted in Lusaka district of Zambia.

Sample size is the number of research participants who answered to the question requirements of the study from the target population. A sample in this regard was a group of research participants selected from a larger population for the purpose of investigation. It was basically a subset of the total number of participants under study, (Punch, 2012). The researcher in this respect selected a sample size of ninety (90) participants because the sample contained enough respondents to provide the needed qualitative information on the

research topic and avoided informational saturation. This number included twenty (20) key informants who were interviewed and comprised mostly female commissioned officers; twelve (12) female warrant officers participated in a group discussion and fifty-eight (58) female non-commissioned officers responded to questionnaires. Saturation is reaching a point in data collection where no new piece of information uncovered may have significant changes apart from what had been put down already. Therefore further gathering of data could not have altered anything (Saunders et al, 2018). Hence, collection of additional pieces of data could have proved costly but irrelevant to the study.

The researcher specifically used interview guides to collect data from respondents. The interview guides contained both open and closed ended questions, allowing informants the freedom to express their views in their own terms. Interviews provided flexibility and the ability to probe and clarify responses, they took note of verbal as well as non-verbal behaviour, and they provided a high response rate that was adaptable to the study. Even though the interviews were costly, time consuming and led to interview bias, they were used in the study because they allowed direct interaction with the research participants and the collection of in-depth information considering the very fact that respondents involved were very busy staff, attending to their daily administrative work. Female soldiers in this case were administered with questionnaires; focus group discussion forms were used in a similar manner as one of the data collection instruments.

This study ensured that the instruments used (interview guides) were in line with the variables being investigated in the study for the purpose of validation of research tools. Furthermore, validation of research instruments was enhanced through piloting of instruments. This involved the testing of questionnaires on a minimal sample of research participants before the actual data collection was embarked on referred to as questionnaire piloting. This pre-test of research instruments therefore assisted the student researcher in ascertaining potential issues that were likely to be encountered and helped to identify the possible solutions to the anticipated problems.

The informed consent form; an introductory letter from the University of Zambia and study authorisation letter from Zambia army were attached to the questionnaire, interview guide and focus group discussion forms to make the research participants aware of what the study was about. The verbal introduction by the researcher to research participants in that regard was meant to clarify procedures of data collection instructions and to attend to questions that were raised by participants prior to commencement of the interview. The recorded data that were collected using interview guides, discussions and questionnaires were transcribed and checked for uniformity, consistency, accuracy and ambiguity. Data analysis was attained by scrutinizing the data gathered from the field with a view of identification of relevant themes

and arriving at correct conclusions (Leed and Ormrod, 2005). The raw qualitative data collected was subjected to coding and categorisation. Computation was facilitated through the usage of Microsoft word and excel. The categories and themes within the data set were equally analysed. These programs were ideal for qualitative data as they possess more advantages over other programs and that they were user-friendly. Having transcribed the data from the field into texts, the researcher chose to present the findings of the study through tables and figures by employing qualitative content analysis. Content analysis is a technique employed to compress qualitative data gathered from the field into identified categories and themes (Patton, 2002). This permitted the researcher to pick out the relevant information required for the study and thereby decreasing the amount of data that was considered for final analysis. The usage of both manual and computer aided analysis through coding resulted in the reduction of errors and thus increasing reliability and validity of data. In this regard the researcher had to identify the categories of data with desirable characteristics relevant to the study. Furthermore, a comparison of differences and similarities of data sets found in the themes and categories was carried out for the purpose of analysis.

Ethical concerns were taken into consideration in this research and the following were included: Participants freely decided to either participate in the research or not after being explained to on what the research was about, they signed a consent form which was attached to data collection instruments. Research was obliged to keep complete secrecy and confidentiality of the participant's responses, furthermore, no personal identification information was captured in the questionnaires for the same purpose. Participants were allowed to freely ask questions regarding the study so that they became well informed before participation. Research participants from the onset were explained to that no gratification of any form was to be provided (be it monetary or material), all participants were aware that the research was purely for academic purpose and had no monetary gain. The University of Zambia and the organization under which the research was conducted issued authority letters respectively allowing the student researcher to undertake the study authentically as per ethical requirement.

5. Analysis of Findings.

Roles of Women Soldiers in Peace Building in Central African Republic

This study revealed that female soldiers played roles of force protection; advocacy on public hygiene and how to report gender related offences; women soldiers also monitored peace through motorized and foot patrols in the communities of Birao and Bria; through their female engagement activities, they managed to inspire local community members and thereby de-escalated gender related violence cases in that country. Female soldiers were tasked to carry out the role of safeguarding local women and children including girls. In this

way Zambian female soldiers acted as role models to the local communities

The study further disclosed that female soldiers were good at subduing gender linked offences in the Central African Republic. This was achieved through force protection activities that included safeguarding of United Nations personnel, property, and civilian elements in the community. According to the responses, Zambian female soldiers won the trust of the local communities through their various engagements in peace building. On daily basis, women peacekeepers were patrolling in and around the town of Birao. For instance, women soldiers formed groups among themselves and penetrated through the community lines and interacted with the local women, children and local leadership on the ground. The classified information gathered in that case could be utilized by the company headquarters to neutralize the plans of the perpetrators of conflict in the community. The established roles of female soldiers resonated well with what Heinecken, (2015) found out, that women during a conflict came together and formed community groupings like the Naga Mothers Association which initiated dialogue between militia groups and government forces to bring about peace in Nagaland, India.

Furthermore, the findings of the study disclosed that women soldiers of the Zambian contingent inspired the local communities especially women and children in Central African Republic. Cultural norms in Central African Republic did not permit the interaction between male soldiers and female community members. It was therefore impossible for male soldiers to engage the community in that respect. Female soldiers thus bridged this cultural gap and provided the needed support the community required. The Zambian female engagement team (FET) in this regard became models to the local community. Seeing a Zambian female soldier driving a UN vehicle; operating a very high frequency (VHF) radio; putting on military combat uniform proved inspirational to the local community.

The findings were in line with what (Galtung, 1996, p. 2) stated that women could be either casualties of contention or operators of harmony building. Many times women had deflected clashes and had been answerable for settling clashes. Therefore, harmony construction needed the participation of female soldiers to play the various roles highlighted above to achieve peace. During clashes and wars, women were compelled to accept new jobs as heads of families, suppliers of ammunition, becoming female soldiers, and political dissidents. Others suffered death, poverty, displacement and unemployment (Global Coalition for Africa, 2004). The main objective of peace building especially with the participation of women soldiers was to ensure that the wellbeing of the people was entrenched; it was about de-escalation of conflict so that it did not degenerate into war or causing the re-eruption of the conflict.

The study further found out that those women soldiers participated fully in bringing sustainable peace to communities in the Central African Republic. This was in line with

what Chazan (1999) had observed, that in the post conflict period female groups at various levels needed to be fully integrated in the political, social, economic development of a society to successfully carry out the rehabilitation and reconstruction processes. Women soldiers in this regard carried diverse voices to fellow women; female soldiers employed distinctive methodologies in female engagement team activities; women soldiers applied individual experience, caring, negotiation skills in line with the United Nations mission objectives better than their male counterparts.

The various roles brought out by the findings of the study through objective one were very much in conformity with what was revealed by Solomon (2005) that women risked their lives in the face of warlords to form a movement called Liberian Women Initiative (LWI) in 1994 whose main objective was networking to end the conflict. In this regard women came together and participated in disarming combatants and requested for their inclusion in the peace building initiatives like what was being done by Zambian female soldiers in that country. Women in Liberia came together following a long period of conflict in that country. It was with that role of women in peace processes that Zambian female soldiers were engaged to contribute effectively towards the attainment of peace in that country.

Table 1: Shows the Roles Played by Women Soldiers in Central African Republic

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Force Protection	34	37.8
Advocacy on Public Health	09	10
Community Engagement Activities	18	20
De-escalation of GBV Cases	14	15.5
Acting as Role Models & Inspiring Local Women	15	16.7
Total	**90**	**100**

Gender Dynamics in the Performance of Roles

Throughout history, both commissioned and non-commissioned female officers had been kept away from combat duties and command hierarchy. However, the coming up of international legal instruments by the United Nations set the tone for the inclusion of female soldiers in peace processes. Despite the existence of legal provisions on the inclusion of women, national militaries find it difficult to attain gender parity. Combat duties had been highly connected to the construction of military masculinities. Therefore, addition of women soldiers and feminine interests to this military conscription could be considered disruptive. In other words, since military combat duties were at the core of the military conscription, feminine influence was considered alien to it. This gave firm background on why military establishments had lower numbers of female than the male soldiers. The findings of this

study agreed to the view that there was a low representation of women soldiers in peace keeping missions as compared to male representation.

According to the findings, the community members in Birao and Bria held the Zambian female soldiers in very high esteem during the period of deployment. The local communities held the view that Zambian female soldiers enhanced their livelihoods through female engagement activities that were specific to local women and children's needs. One female research participant pointed out while teaching local women about peasantry, child abuse and hygiene issues that they gathered information that helped in the facilitation of coordination between the military and civilian communities. In this regard, Zambia Army female soldiers contributed positively to the attainment of peace building objectives. This revelation was very much in line with what Cynthia (2014) observed, that in different forms of conflicts women were not only victims of contention but remained active participants a thing that contributed to the de-escalation of the conflict.

According to the feedback female research participants gave during interviews, a glorification of male dominance in military duties was observed. For instance, all female soldiers could be matched off the parade square and only directed male soldiers to prepare for motorised patrols in Birao and Bria communities. This was done despite the exhibition of willingness by some female soldiers to undertake the tasked roles. Generally, women soldiers were willing to participate in the assigned tasks but it was difficult for them to disregard command directives during the tour of duty. In this regard women soldiers had to live up to such a masculine ideal. This explained why the general public held the view that fewer female soldiers were placed in situations that entailed risky and potential combat. Therefore, research findings indicated that masculine factors and gendered ideals influence deployment of female soldiers in international and local assignments that were perceived to be high-risk missions.

The findings indicated male chauvinism that is at variance with some literature reviewed in this study in which various scholars had indicated that the gendered structure of military establishments and war were designed in such a manner that women soldiers were not only victims of discrimination during post conflict peace building but also active participants, (Nancy, 2015; Chadorow, 1991) . Women soldiers were involved not only as combatants but contributed through female engagement activities in times of war and during peace reconstruction. This was in support of what Cynthia (2014) wrote, that women played pivotal roles through carrying out numerous tasks during war. In Sri Lanka for instance, some male fighters perceived women Tamil paramilitaries to be more violent than their male colleagues (Baugher, 2010).

According to Cynthia (2014), it was empirically tested that female soldiers participated actively as combatants out of free will. This was evidenced during World War II where one-third of the fighters from Sri Lanka were female. Equally during hostilities in Rwanda, Liberia and Bosnia, female combatants fully played a pivotal role in ethnic cleansing, spearheading protests to bring about peace. Women, therefore, should not be looked at as victims using gender bias lenses but also as equal partners in peace processes, and potentially, as vicious villains as well. Thus, roles may not be biologically determined but they may certainly be influenced by the different socialization processes which men and women soldiers undergo in their life processes. This study was therefore useful to the extent that it provided relevant insights on gender aspects of female soldiers in peace support missions.

Table 2: Shows the Gender Dynamics in the Performance of Military roles

Gender Balance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	54	60
Yes	23	25.6
Not Sure	13	14.4
Total	90	100

The Challenges Faced by Women Soldiers in Central African Republic

Peace is considered an essential commodity to everyone living in conflict and non-conflict regions. Peace matters mostly to all those who had seen their relatives killed, houses demolished and those who had witnessed their economy crash. Peace remained essential to all categories of people and stake holders with memories and wounds that stayed with them forever after a conflict experience. Sustainable peace requires the input of different participants such as civilians, military, men and women, state and non-state actors (Karlsrud & Oksamytna, 2020). However, exclusion of women soldiers in peace processes presented as a challenge in many conflict-affected countries like the Central African Republic.

Zambian women soldiers had in the recent past played various roles in promoting peace in Africa. However, their involvement in peace building processes has not been without challenges. The findings of this study revealed that women soldiers due to being in minority had faced challenges such as verbal and non-verbal abuse; sexual harassment; male chauvinism; suspicion of infidelity and being scorned physically from their male counterparts and from other armies operating as peacekeepers within the same sector in the Central African Republic. These findings were in line with what was stated in the literature

that the inclusion of female soldiers gave rise to sexual harassment from male soldiers on the UN Peace keeping Operations. A report by the Pentagon to the UN Security Council indicated that sexual harassment was on the increase during the UN peace keeping operations in Iraq and Afghanistan between 2006 and 2008 (UNSC, 2008). There was documented evidence also that sexual harassment in African Armies was on the increase, especially during peacekeeping operations, (UNSC, 2008). Zambia being a troop-contributing country to the United Nations peace keeping operations in the Central African Republic had not been an exception to this challenge.

The research findings revealed that one of the prominent challenges encountered by female soldiers was sexual harassment which accounted for 36.7% as could be demonstrated by table 3 below. This form of challenge presented itself in three categories that included physical, verbal and nonverbal abuse. According to the feedback from research participants, women soldiers were prone to sexual harassment for several reasons: The common reason identified was that the majority of these soldiers were junior non-commissioned officers (64.4%) implying the lower ranks category. As such male soldiers of senior ranks took advantage to perpetuate the vice which did not settle well to victims. Sexual harassment had traumatizing effects on female soldiers in the performance of their roles. For instance, some female soldiers who were victims of harassment while on a mission indicated that they failed to carry out their female engagement roles effectively. This experience by female soldiers was in line with feminist writer like Cynthia (2014) who advocated that women's agency role should be pronounced in peace building processes. The revelations of the findings therefore confirmed the occurrence of such phenomenon in mission areas.

According to the findings from research participants, suspicion of infidelity and mistrust on the part of female soldiers from male soldiers proved as a challenge. This robed victims of self-confidence and consequently affected the relationships back home by their spouses. The mistrust was also experienced from the host local community in the Central African Republic. For instance, the local people particularly men failed to appreciate the capabilities of women soldiers in carrying out combat duties. Some community members in this regard believed that only male soldiers were capable of effectively protecting the community effectively. This phenomenon contributed to the escalation of male chauvinism during peace support mission in the Central African Republic.

The foregoing contributed to the glorification of masculine military culture. The local communities of Birao, Bangui and Bria held a strong view that protection of property and civilian components was a preserve of male combatants. Therefore, mistrust of female soldiers in that regard was not strange for the host communities and Zambian male soldiers. The Department of Defence (2008) observed that during contention period, women were

looked at as last vestiges of civil society. The implication was that while men went for war, women were left behind to take care of minor issues away from fighting at the battle front. This created a 'big man' syndrome in the minds of society. Consequently, male domination grew in military establishments and spread its tentacles whenever and wherever deployment of troops were exercised like in the case of Central African Republic.

The revelations from the findings also indicated that insufficient number of female soldiers on the mission was a drawback and therefore presented itself as challenge on the part of female soldiers and the Zambian contingent. The small number of female soldiers on peacekeeping mission restricted them in attending to gender related crimes in the host communities. From the findings, Zambian women soldiers needed adequate manpower to reach out to different communities and localities to de-escalate criminal activities and to ensure that female engagement teams' positive impact were felt by the local communities. Because of the inadequacy of Zambian female soldiers on the mission, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and gender related cases recorded an increase. This experience was in tandem with what Moser (1993) indicated, that women had been neglected in peace building processes despite contributing immensely in their informal ways. The findings also indicated that female soldiers were physically scorned due to lack of military tenacity and endurance compared to male soldiers a thing that psychologically affected them during the period of operation.

Table 3: Shows the Challenges Experienced by Female Soldiers in Central African Republic

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male Chauvinism	14	15.6
Sexual Harassment	33	36.7
Physically Scorned	10	11
Suspicion of Infidelity	18	20
Insufficient Number of Female Soldiers	15	16.7
Total	**90**	**100**

6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

Grounded from the three objectives and reflected by three research questions this study has its conclusion drawn. The basis of this conclusion was founded on the findings of the roles and integration of female soldiers in peace building in the Central African Republic taking a case of the Zambian regiment in Lusaka. Employing in-depth interview questions, focus

group discussions and using the data collected from questionnaires; this study found out that female soldiers carried out various integrated roles on peace keeping operation. The main roles collectively pronounced are force protection; community engagement activities; de-escalation of gender related cases; advocacy; acting as role model and inspiration of the local communities.

In terms of the gender dynamics, the study revealed that women soldiers are fairly integrated in the performance of military roles. However this integration achieves little success due to the existence of gender imbalance in the military establishments. It is also concluded that the culture of male chauvinism influences the inclusivity and deployment of female soldiers in international assignments.

The study concludes that female soldiers experience various challenges ranging from verbal and non-verbal sexual harassments; male chauvinism and discrimination; being physically ridiculed; suspicion of infidelity to having insufficient number of female soldiers on the mission leading to gender imbalance.

6.2 Recommendations

Considering the significance of the integration and roles carried out by female soldiers during peace keeping operations in the Central African Republic, Zambian female soldiers like their male counterparts when deployed in the peacekeeping missions have a significant role of ensuring effective implementation of force protection; de-escalation of gender related cases; advocacy; acting as role models and inspiring local people and carrying out all community engagement related activities to ensure rehabilitation and post conflict reconstruction take root in the host country. The revelations of this study will inform the international community, the region and Zambia as a nation to devise relevant policies that will address the fore mentioned challenges to foster and enhance international peace and security. Zambia Army being a troop contributing country to the United Nations will act as a reference point in the region on how the highlighted challenges were resolved.

This paper suggested some recommendations below:

1. Zambia Army to ensure as an institution the redesigning of its training curriculum to incorporate gender studies and international human rights courses at the academy and recruit training centres to allow trainees acquaint themselves with the current international norms and principles in peacekeeping engagements. This can also be attained by inclusion of human rights related programs to military courses in all Zambia Army specialist corps.

2. Zambia Army to ensure through its Training branch to consider entering into a memorandum of understanding with higher learning institutions like the Copper-belt

University and University of Zambia with a view of sending personnel to learn peace and conflict resolution related courses. This will empower commissioned and non-commissioned officers with the required knowledge in international peacekeeping assignments.

3. The Zambia Army should ensure to embarking on the acceleration of skills development on female soldiers to build capacity in human rights advocacy, counselling and community empowerment initiatives to enhance preparedness when deployed in peacekeeping missions.

4. To ensure adequate number of female soldiers in the system, Zambia Army should consider devising a policy that will ensure the operationalization of a quota system during recruitment that will be meant specifically for female cadets and recruits. Sufficient number of female soldiers will enhance effective and efficient female engagement activities in post conflict reconstruction settings at both local and international levels.

5. Zambia Army should ensure to coming up with a deliberate policy to encourage many female soldiers embark on physical trainings as instructors to build confidence and inspire other women soldiers to gradually tail off male chauvinism.

6. The international community, the government of Zambia and the Central African Republic should ensure to work in close liaison with each other in identifying the cultural and religious barriers that exclude free interaction between peacekeepers and host communities.

7. African Union and its regional bodies like SADC, ECOWAS and IGAD should ensure to continuously lobby for resources from the United Nations to increase the number and build capacity of female soldiers in African Armies for timely deployment in conflict zones where culture does not permit the interaction of male soldiers with women in host communities.

REFERENCES

Abdennebi-Abdrrahim. (2012). *Study on Discrimination Against Women in Law and in Practice in Political and in Public Life, Including in Times of Political Transitions.* OHCHR.

Addison & Brueck. (2008). *Making Peace Work. The Challenges of Social and Economic Recovery.* Palgrave: Macmillan.

Amena. (2000). *Gendered Nation, Gendered Peace.* London: Rougtledge.

Barker & Contreras. (2011). *Initial Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey(IMAGES).* Washington DC & Rio de Jeneiro: International Centre for Research on women/Promundo.

Barnes & Stevelink. (2016). *Military Mothers in Parenting and Children's Resilience in Military.* Geneva: Springer International.

Baugher. (2010). Rape, Myth Acceptance, Sexual Trauma History and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 2036 - 2053.

Bertolazzi. (2010). *Women with a Blue Helmet. The Integration of Women and Gender Issues in UN Peacekeeping Missions.* Santo Domingo: UN-INSTRAW.

Bless & Achola. (2001). *Fundamentals of Social Research Methods.* Nairobi: Pauline Publishers.

Boutros, G. (1992). *An Agenda for Peace.* New York: United Nations.

Carey. (2001). Women and Peace and Security: The Politics of Implementing Gender Sensitivity Norms in Peacekeeping. *International PeaceKeeping*, 49 - 68.

Chadorow. (1991). *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory.* Yale: University Press.

Chazan. (1999). *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa.* Colorado: Lynne Reiner Publishers.

Chewe, M. (2016). *Meet Zambia's Sole Woman Presidential Contender.* Lusaka: African Review.

Coalition of Women for a Just Peace. (2009). *The groups making up the coalition, their principles, vision for peace, and activities.* Nazareth: Coalition of Women for a Just Peace.

Cock. (2005). Forging a New Army Out of Old Enemies: Women in the South African Military. *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 3 - 4, 97 - 111.

Cockburn & Hubic. (2002). *Gender and the PeaceKeeping Military: A View from Bosnian Women's Organisations.* Sarajevo: In. C.

Cockburn & Zarkov. (2014). The Postwar Moment: Militaries, Masculinities and International Peacekeeping. *Lawrence and Wishart*, 103 - 122.

Cynthia. (2014). Mapping hte Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence Against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*, 1241 - 1299.

Department of Defence. (2008). *Gender Mainstreaming Strategy No. 1 of 2008.* Pretoria: South African Parliament.

Department of Defence. (2015). *South African National Defence Force Transformation Status: Briefing to the Joint Standing Committee on Defence.* Cape Town: South African Parliament.

Durch et al. (2009). *Improving Criminal Accountability in the United Nations Peace Operations.* Washington DC: Stimson Center.

DVIDS. (2019). *Importance of Increasing Women in Peacekeeping Operations.* Atlanta: Defense Visual Information Distribution Service.

Etchart et al. (2005). *Progress in Gender Mainstreaming in Peace Support Operations.* London: Commonwealth Secretariate.

Galtung. (1996). *Peace by Peaceful means: Peace and Conflict, development and civilisation.* Oslo: International Peace Research Institute.

Global Coalition for Africa. (2004). *African Social and Economic Trends.* Washington, D.C.

Goyol. (2019). The Role of Women In Peace Building: Liberia in Perspective. *International Journal of Development and Management Review (INJODEMAR) Vol. 14 No. 1.*, 123 - 135.

Goyol. (2019). The Role of Women In Peace Building: Liberia in Perspective. *International Journal of Development and Management Review (INJODEMAR) Vol. 14 No. 1.*, 123 - 135.

Heinecken. (2015). Are Women Really Making a Unique Contribution to Peacekeeping? The Rhetoric and the Reality. . *Journal of International Peacekeeping*, 227 - 248.

Karlsrud & Oksamytna. (2020). *United Nations Peacekeeping and International Relations Theory: An Introduction.* Researchgate.

Kataike. (2018). *The Challenges Faced on the Education of Girl Child in Uganda at Secondary School Level. A case Study of Butaleja District in Eastern Uganda.* Kampala: Kampala International University.

Leed and Ormrod. (2005). *Practical Research Planning and Design* . New Jersey: Merril Prentice Publishers.

Matakala. (2015). *Sexual Harassment and Experiences of Female Soldiers on the UN Peace Keeping Operations: A Case of Mushili and Kalewa Baracks, Zambia.* Lusaka: University of Zambia.

Miles & Huberman. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook.* Washington, DC: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Ministry of Finance and National Planning. (2017). *The 7th National Development Plan (2017 - 2021): "Accerating Development Efforts Towards the Vision 2030 Without Leaving anyone behind".* Lusaka: Government Printers.

Moser. (1993). *Gender Planning and Development: Theory, practice and Training.* London: Rougtledge Publishers.

Nancy. (2015). *The Role of Women in Post Conflict Peace Building in the Republic of South Sudan: A Case of Jubek State.* Nairobi: Univerity of Nairobi.

NATO. (2007). *Recruiting and Retention of Military personnel Academies.* Brussels: Research and Technology Organisation.

NGOWG. (2020). *Central African Republic NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.* New York: United Nations.

Patton. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods.* London: Thousand Oaks.

Punch. (2012). *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches.* London: Sage Publishers.

Saunders et al. (2018). Can Sample Size in Qualitative Research be Determined a Priori. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology?*

Solomon. (2005). The Mano River Union Sub-Region: The Role of Women in Building Peace. In Baksh R Et al (Eds.),. *Gender Mainstreaming in conflict Transformation: Building Sustainable Peace.*, 171 - 180.

Tsjeard & Frerks. (2002). *Women's Roles in Conflict Resolution and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Literature Review and Institutional Analysis.* Clingendael: Netherlands Institute of International Relations.

UN. (2018). *UNRC Statement on International Women's Day in Zambia.* Lusaka: United Nations.

UNGA. (2000). *Women 2000, Beijing Plus Five Session.* New York: United Nations General Assembly.

United Nations . (2017). *Status of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Zambia.* Lusaka: United Nations - Zambia.

United Nations . (2018). *Women Representation Vital to Realising South Sudan Revitalised Agreement, Chief Peace Keeping Chief Tells Security Council SC/13585, Security Council> 8403rd meeting (AM).* New York: UN Meetings Coverage and Press Releases.

United Nations. (2000). *https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/.* Retrieved from https://www.un.org/: https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/

United Nations. (2018). *Gender Audit of Public and Private Sectors in Zambia.* United Nations.

United Nations General Assembly. (2000). *Women 2000, Beijing Plus Five Session.* New York: UNGA.

UNSC. (2008). *Challenges for the Deployment of United Nations Peace Keepers in Mission Areas.* New York: United Nations.

World Vision . (2020). *Central African Republic Conflict: Fast Facts and How to Help.* Ottawa: World Vision Canada.

Zimba. (2018). *The Fragile Girl Who Reached for the Star.* Lusaka: Zambia Daily Mail (15/04/2018).