BOOK: GENDERED PEACE: WOMEN’S STRUGGLES FOR POST-WAR JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION

DONNA PANKHURST (EDITOR)

What happens to women when wars officially end? An output of UNRISD research on Gender and Development, this book focuses on the moments after a peace accord, or some other official ending for a conflict, often denoted as “post-conflict” or “post-war”. By exploring international contexts and a variety of local cases, the book argues that although there has been remarkable progress at the international level with newly established women’s legal rights and women’s abilities to access such legal frameworks; women may confront post-war backlash from men and the state.

Post-conflict moments often herald great hope for holding to account those who committed grave wrongs during the conflict and for a better life in the future. For women, however, such periods are often characterized by continuing violence and insecurity including not only the aggression that they faced during the war, but also new forms of sexual violence. In addition to continued and new forms of violence, there may also be an “anti-women” discourse associated with restrictions on the life-choices of women regarding social, economic, and political activity. Through the upheaval of war, in which societies have been transformed and livelihood systems disrupted, women have assumed certain roles for the first time. Yet in the design of policies for post-war reconstruction women’s needs and participation are often systematically ignored.

The book also highlights the important fact that women are not merely victims of war, but that they have agency and are also participants. Authors of this book stress the importance of giving voice to women and not silencing them when they are brave enough to step into the public arena.

Notes to editors

- The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) was created in 1963 and is an autonomous UN agency engaging in multidisciplinary research on the social dimensions of contemporary problems affecting development. Through its research, UNRISD stimulates dialogue and contributes to policy debates on key issues of social development within and outside the UN system.
- Discussed case studies include Sierra Leone, Rwanda, South Africa, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, East Timor, Peru, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and the Balkans. There is also an analysis of the International Criminal Court for Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.
- Donna Pankhurst who edited this book is Professor of Peacebuilding and Development at the Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford, UK. In recent years she has researched in Africa on conflict, post-conflict settlements, and peacebuilding, particularly with a focus on gender issues.
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