"Preventing Conflict-Related Sexual and Gender-Based Violence with Early Warning Analysis“

Prof Jacqui True (based on a paper and ARC project with Dr. Sara Davies, QUT)

Abstract: Over the past decade there has been significant global attention to, and reporting of ‘widespread and systematic’ sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by state and non-state actors. To date, there have been two major explanations for the onset and preponderance of sexual violence in some armed conflicts. The first explanation focuses on the presence of armed conflict as the key precursor for sexual violence in armed conflict. The second explanation suggests sexual violence in armed conflict is the product of pre-existing conditions of gross gender inequality where sexualised violence is already acceptable. In order to understand the causes of this violence; first, we examine the relationship between pre-existing structural gendered inequalities and the occurrence of systematic sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) globally; and second, we examine the situation of widespread and systematic sexual violence in Sri Lanka. This mixed method approach presents the case for a more concerted focus on structural gender inequality as a critical early warning factor for widespread and systematic sexual violence, which may assist with efforts to prevent egregious crimes of sexual violence.

Bio: Jacqui True is Professor of Politics & International Relations in the School of Social Sciences at Monash University with her PhD in Political Science from York University, Canada. Previously she has taught and researched at Michigan State University, the University of Southern California and the University of Auckland. Professor True has published extensively in the field of international relations. Her current research is focused on the UN Women, Peace and Security agenda, and with Dr. Sara Davies on the prevention of sexual violence in conflict in Asia Pacific. Her book, The Political Economy of Violence against Women (Oxford University Press 2012) won the American Political Science Association’s 2012 biennial prize for the best book in human rights.

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