

Gender Mainstreaming in Peacebuilding and Localised Human Security in the Context of the Darfur Genocide: An Africentric Rhetorical Analysis

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Summary

A wide body of scholarship has been developed on the Darfur crisis in Western Sudan which started in February 2003.¹ Such scholarship includes various academic works by scholars such as Apiah-Mensah (2005, 2006), Deng (2007), Howell (1974), Mohamed (2007), Rankhumise (2006). Among other issues identified by these scholars and conflict resolution practitioners, was the need to establish a nexus between human security and development as a key in conceiving an understanding of human peace and security. The conflict in Darfur and its impact on human security and development also caught the attention of regional and international organisations, including the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN). It is on this basis that this article seeks to employ an Africentric perspective (also read as Afrocentricity) for the purpose of analysing the place of women during the Darfur peacebuilding process with a focus on the underlying factors that led to the marginalisation of women. Methodologically, this article is heavily dependent on conversations and interdisciplinary critical discourse analysis in its broadest form. Contrary to the official narrative, this article contests the notion that in the post-genocide era in Darfur authentic women voices have found expression in peace-building. The argument established in this article is that existing domestic and inter-national legal instruments have given a false sense in terms of women inclusion in the post-genocide political life of Darfur.

Opsomming

'n Omvattende literatuurkorpus is ontwikkel ten opsigte van die Darfoer-krisis in Wes-Soedan, wat in Februarie 2003 begin het.² Hierdie korpus sluit verskeie akademiese werke in, deur vakkundiges soos Apiah-Mensah (2005, 2006), Deng (2007), Howell (1974), Mohamed (2007), en Rankhumise (2006). Die kwessies wat deur hierdie

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1. In terms of periodisation, the analysis discerned in this article is limited to the period before the year 2011 when Southern Sudan became an independent state from Sudan.

akademici en konfliktoplossingspraktisyns geïdentifiseer is, sluit onder meer die behoefte in om 'n verband tussen menslike sekuriteit en ontwikkeling te bewerk-stellig, as 'n sleutelement in begripsvorming van menslike vrede en sekuriteit. Die konflik in Darfoer en die impak daarvan op menslike sekuriteit en ontwikkeling het ook die aandag van streeks- en internasionale organisasies getrek – insluitende die Afrika-unie (AU) en die Verenigde Nasies (VN). Dit is teen hierdie agtergrond dat hierdie artikel 'n Afrisentreise perspektief (ook Afrosentrisiteit genoem) wil toepas met die oog daarop om die plek van vroue tydens die Darfoer-vredesbouproses te ontleed, met 'n fokus op die onderliggende faktore wat tot die marginalisering van vroue gelei het. Metodologies gesproke maak hierdie artikel in 'n groot mate staat op gesprekke en interdisiplinêre kritiese diskoersanalise in die ruimste sin van die woord. In teenstelling met die amptelike vertelling, betwis hierdie artikel die idee dat outentieke vrouestemme in die post-volksmoord-era in Darfoer, uitdrukking gevind het in vredesbou. Die argument wat in hierdie artikel voorgehou word, is dat bestaande binnelandse en internasionale regsinstrumente 'n vals beeld geskep het ten opsigte van die insluiting van vroue in die politieke lewe van Darfoer ná die menseslagting.

Introduction and Background to the Darfur Conflict

Postcolonial Africa has been beset with a number of conflicts which have had serious consequences on human populations. Over the past three decades or so, the conflicts in Africa took the form of genocides, civil-wars, insurgencies or in some cases terrorism. In countries such as Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), conflicts such as genocide, civil wars and other forms of insurgencies have produced a form of violence that has wiped and displaced human populations (Rankhumise & Shai 2007). Unlike in Rwanda, Somalia or Burundi, the conflict in Darfur was not an easy one to comprehend. In Darfur, it is difficult to single out a cause of the conflict due to the myriad of factors involved. In fact, the Darfur conflict is complex because its origins are historical, it involves religious and cultural issues, it is partly about matters of bad governance amounting to a crisis of legitimacy, and it is also caused by other external factors. For the purpose of this article, it suffices to highlight that the aftermath of the conflict in Darfur is characteristic of some of the elements of genocide (Maake 2009).

Essentially, the conflict in Darfur emerged as a result of the direct military confrontation between the Government of Sudan (GoS) forces, *Janjaweed* (the government backed Arab militia), Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). At independence, the Arabs under National Islamic Front (NIF) took control of the political power as well as the means of production in Sudan. It became evident that the Arabs were not prepared to share political power and resources fairly with other ethnic groups, mainly Africans of the Darfur region. To compound matters, the GoS discriminated and neglected the Darfur region in terms of service delivery and this aroused concerns and discontent that gradually triggered protests by the Africans (and other sympathetic ethnic groups) in the region. The foregoing analysis has been backed up by the Congressional

Research Service (CRS) which posited that, “successive governments in Khartoum have long neglected the African ethnic groups in the Darfur and have done very little to prevent attacks by Arab militias against non-Arabs in Darfur” (CRS 2004).

The GoS responded to the African (Fur, Zaghawa & Massaleit) rebellion by ordering the killings of protesting civilians and the destruction of their homes and villages by its military. It is alleged that the government armed forces also supported the cleansing of the same segment of the population by the *Janjaweed*. It is argued, however that the Darfur conflict was mainly about the control over natural resources between the Arabs and Africans and how such resources can be used for economic and social development and for the benefit of the African population in the Northern and Western localities of the Darfur region. Despite the fact that women were mainly at the receiving end of the Darfur conflict, there is avalanche of evidence which shows that the voices and role of this vulnerable segment of the population in the post-genocide era’s peacebuilding efforts remain largely at the margins of the evolving political practice and scholarship (Prunier 2005).

The conflict was neither racial nor religious as both ethnic groups (Arabs and Africans) were mainly Muslims. Also, the two groups inter-marry. Admittedly, the Darfur conflict is not a case of religious and cultural rivalry, but at times, religion and culture had fuelled the existing tensions between the government, Arabs and Africans. Regardless of the fact that JEM and SLM/A were mainly served by the Arabs, some Africans were also fighting under the auspices of the aforementioned military wings. It is also alleged that the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) [pre-dominantly African] of the Southern Sudan mainly supported the military operations of the SLM/A (CRS 2004). As mentioned above, the government quelled the African protests through the military and it also used *Janjaweed* as a proxy to annihilate any form of opposition in Darfur. It was easier for the *Janjaweed* to join forces with the government military because of the traditional conflict between the farmers (Africans) and the nomads (Arabs) that manifested through land disputes, intensified by the discriminatory government policies.

Juxtaposing Afrocentricity Between Genocide and Gendered Rhetoric

Against this background, it is emphasised that this article is operationalised within the Africentric (also read as Afrocentric) paradigm as articulated by Asante (2003). We have adopted Afrocentricity as an analytical and contextual lens for this article due to its cognitive and functional role (Shai 2017). According to Asante (2017: 20):

Afrocentricity is the process in education that seeks to locate or relocate African people and phenomena within the context of African historical and cultural agency. The key terms would have to be centredness, location, marginality, peripheral, actors, spectators, decentredness, orientation and place.

It is within the context of the above that, the texture and character of this article is dismissive of the usual binary standing of knowledge as either empirical or non-empirical. Hence, we note that the analysis relies on the use of both empirical and non-empirical methods to address a purely empirical question which blurs the hierarchy of its findings. More so, it is underscored that this article is theoretically signposted within the Afro-centric paradigm, influenced by the conclusion that most studies on the subject of genocide and rhetorical studies have, compellingly, been based on concepts and theories rooted within the limited Eurocentric, Western worldview (Asante 1990).

The Darfur Conflict: Women's Roles Reconsidered

Women have occupied a central position in the Darfur conflict. They were loaded with a calculable number of roles that can be classified into two categories. Some women acted as direct combatants during the conflict and others were on the diplomatic side of the struggle. This implies that women were responsible for carrying the luggage of the male soldiers and they also performed domestic duties such as cooking at the battleground. During the war, women were often berated as the “fruits of war” and this loosely meant that they were liable for satisfying the sexual needs of the male soldiers. In Darfur, just like in other conflict ridden areas in Africa, rape (and other forms of violence against women) was used as weapon for war. In relation to this, Sidiga Washi has argued that, “Rape has been used as a weapon in the Darfur conflict. We Sudanese women, have been leading the effort to care for survivors and to push for increased security, but we urgently need support so that we can stop the violence” (Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace 2006). In fact, Washi suggests that women were made to look after the wounded soldiers. Broadly speaking, the United Nations Development Fund for Women underlined the women's roles in conflict and war as follows “... women bear great responsibility for physical, educational, and economic well-being of their families, by caring for the wounded, for maintaining the national economy” (Baylis & Smith 2008: 680).

While the Darfurian women played an important role during the conflict, their efforts have not been recognised by their male counterparts and the donors who fund the peace negotiations. The Darfurian women have been given less/no role during the peace talks and reconstruction processes. This constituted political insecurity and an infringement of their political rights.

Perhaps, the extreme militaristic character of the Darfur conflict evolved into the metamorphosis of women's roles in the negotiations for peace.

Peacekeeping Interventions and Initiatives: The Darfur Peace Agreement

Earlier on, we projected the implications of the Darfur conflict on the different segments of the Sudanese population. After some time, parties in the Darfur conflict realised the negative realities, development challenges and human insecurity emanating from the conflict. It is in this context that in May 2006 the fragile Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) was brokered between the GoS and Minni Minnawi faction of SLM/A (Darfur Peace and Development 2006). The DPA called for immediate ceasefire and the dismantlement of militia groups. It also advocated for the gradual integration of ex-combatants into the national army and the deployment of the people of Darfur at various government levels (US Department of State 2006). Unfortunately, the other SLM/A faction, JEM and the *Janjaweed* remained non-signatories to this agreement and continued with their militarist confrontations to advance their political course. As a result, the Darfur crisis is currently ranked internationally as the worst human rights catastrophe in the world (Prunier 2005). It is estimated that since 2004 a conflict in Western Darfur has left at least 200 000 people dead and turned 2,5 million into refugees (Cohen & Mangasarian 2007). This narrative is evident of the fact that the whole of the Darfur Peace Agreement was just a political and diplomatic rhetorical. This is because the signing of this agreement and non-signing by other belligerent parties have not had any practical effect in terms of containing the intensity of violence in Darfur. To add, the pro-women participatory provisions in the Darfur Peace Agreement and relevant international legal instruments were not reinforced by real commitment by the conflicting parties.

Darfur and the Involvement of the International Community

The peacemaking efforts under Chad's Idriss Deby and the AU in collaboration with the European Union (EU) have all failed and their failure served as impetus for the deployment of the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) in 2007. It should be noted, however, that on the eve of the deployment of the UNAMID, the Darfur crisis was worse if compared to the year 2003 when it started (Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace 2007). In other words, the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) has had less impact due to the calculable number of reasons that are beyond the scope of this article (Rankhumise 2006: 9). It is generally agreed that the civilians were the soft targets and/or cannon fodder of the various

militia and rebel groups. But women (and children) have been mostly affected (negatively) by the crisis before and after the DPA was signed (CRS 2004). We argue that the role of the international community in this regard was not made easy because of the lack of real and adequate support by most of Sudan's neighbouring countries, who were equally battling with domestic and regional security threats (Matsena 2011).

Challenges Facing Women in the Peacebuilding Process

- **Women and the Darfur Peace Agreement**

Although women were active agents during the war, there is no gainsaying that they were not during the tense and delicate peace negotiations in Darfur that had served as a precursor of the DPA that came into force in May 2006 (Muhammed* 2007).² In other words, their views, opinions, wishes and aspirations were not represented at the negotiating table and as a result, the fragile Darfur Peace Agreement has failed to ensure full protection of women, girls and other vulnerable groups. However, women were not completely excluded during the negotiations. Following women's protest marches in Abuja, the capital city of Nigeria, they (women) were included during certain rounds of the DPA held in Abuja. But their influence and contribution in influencing the content of the DPA and on the negotiation process as a whole was very low or non-existent (Shai 2012).

According to the Special Advisor of the UN Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, Rachel Mayanja (2005), peacebuilding efforts are deemed to fail if they are not committed to gender equality and non-sexism. Non-participation by women during some of the rounds of the negotiation process literally meant that they have missed an opportunity to lay a foundation on how their future should be crafted, especially in terms of post-conflict reconstruction initiatives. Consequently, rape with impunity continues to be used as a significant weapon by the militias to advance their political course (Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace 2006). The DPA's reconciliation aspects leave much to be desired as it permitted those leaders, who raped, maimed, tortured and ordered the killing of innocent people to evade the rule of law and they had since become high ranking government officials (Muhammed* 2007). Their current status makes it difficult for their

2. Personal correspondence with Eiman Muhammed*, delegate of Sudan in a workshop on "Women in Dialogue for Peace in Africa", Pretoria, 15 November 2007 [True identity of the respondent withheld for ethical reasons. Where the symbol (*) appear it denotes a pseudonym.]

victims to report cases of their previous criminal activities.³ Jo-Ansie van Wyk (2007: 20) maintains, “there is a perception that African leaders enjoy impunity”.

At times, male prominent leaders argued that lack of funding is to be blamed for women non-participation or participation by few women during the peace talks (Muhammed* 2007). This funding relates to accommodation, food and travel and flight tickets to venues/countries that host and/ or mediate the peace talks. Rachel Mayanja (2005) notes “... women’s exclusion from the political process creates a democratic deficit. Societies that marginalize women and prevent their participation in public life tend to have more authoritarian voices and heightened risk of instability”.

• **Shallow Legislative Framework**

The Constitution of Sudan and the DPA does not make provision for the protection and promotion of women’s rights at all levels and as a collective. Instead, it blatantly serves the interests of the married women only because the existing clause about women in the constitution does not safeguard single and/or widowed women. For instance, it is provided that whenever a child applies for an Identity Document (ID) s/he must come along with his/her father who is expected to produce a valid ID on demand and when necessary. Unfortunately, the very clause does not make special arrangements for the fatherless children. This has left children who were products of rape and those whose fathers died during the war to roam the streets – as they cannot access government services due to the lack of IDs (Muhammed* 2007). As a result, Sudan-Darfur has a lot of illegitimate children/street kids whose mothers continue to bear the brunt of their plight because they do not have legitimate and responsible male parents. This trend reduces the girl children (and women) to a lower status in a deeply entrenched patriarchal society (Sudan) where women are viewed as sub-humans.

In addition to the neglect by the government of the day, women with “illegitimate” children and their siblings have also faced the problem of rejection by their families. Due to the stigma of rape, the rule of rejection has also applied to childless rape victims and this shame has increasingly contributed to non-reporting of rape cases and related crimes. Sarah Martin and Mamie Mutchler (2007) reflect, “... even without a physical mark, raped women face stigmatization. In West Darfur, there were reports of single women being thrown out of their family homes and divorces of married women when it became known that they had been raped”.

3. For instance, the internationally outlawed leader of the *Janjaweed*, Musa Halil, was appointed as the Special Advisor to the central government’s Ministry of Federal Affairs.

Perhaps in passing, it should also be highlighted that the Sudanese Law (Article 45) prohibits medical practitioners from offering medical assistance to rape victims without the referral note from the Police Services. On the basis of this proposition, it can be concluded that under Article 45 of the Sudanese Law, rape and other sexual harassment related crimes committed by the cops went unreported and the victims did not receive medical attention. Hence, the perpetrators of the crimes in question were the very same people authorised to combat crime, protect civilians and give them an official note that certifies that they have been sexually abused and deserves medical attention. However, the Sudanese government has later on released a Circular with a limitation clause to Sudanese Law (Article 45). This Circular makes provision for the victims of rape under aggravating circumstances to access medical attention without going through the protracted process of obtaining a sworn affidavit. This Circular serves as a relief to the victims, but it is not descriptive enough as to under which circumstances would the medical practitioners face or not face the might of law after helping a victim.

- **Institutional Incapacity and Brain Drain**

The absence of civil society enactment in Sudan-Darfur serves as a setback in uniting women to fight for their political space and socio-economic rights. There are no well-established and coordinated women-led organisations that specifically deal with women or gender issues. But there are external/International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) that provide humanitarian aid for the needy in Darfur. The personnel of these INGOs observe/witness and hear a lot about the victimisation and marginalisation of women in Darfur, but opt to keep quite due to the fear of being viewed as not neutral. The International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) (2002) clearly postulates, “those in positions of power, including aid workers, often turn a blind eye to violations [against women] for fear of compromising their neutrality”.

Lack of cohesion, solidarity and unity that should manifest through vibrant civil society organisations that champion gender parity, can be devoted to a number of reasons. Sudanese women are divided along political lines of various actors to the conflict in Darfur and they hardly and rarely get time to focus on issues that affect them as women. The Sudanese women subscribe to different political ideologies as advocated by different parties to the conflict in Darfur and this has widened the existing divisions among them. It has also been an obstacle for women to gain their rightful place in the peacebuilding process. At an international level, the non-existent, rather limited role of women in the Darfur peacebuilding process implies the reversal of the gains made through the various legal instruments intended to break the shackles of

gender inequality in the political and economic governance structures.⁴ A Sudanese female exile in Kenya suggested that their male counterparts (husband) often discourage them from voicing their problems and grievances as they relate to the Darfur crisis. She argues, "... my husband would tell me that I should keep quiet about these [women] issues. He will say that this is not a war about women".

It could be argued that the above assertion illustrates the extent to which the role of Sudanese women in finding a lasting solution to crisis in the Darfur is not recognised/acknowledged at both family and state level and this has paved a path for their subjugation in the peacebuilding process. It is against this backdrop that the Sudanese women find it difficult to gain their rightful place in the political landscape of Darfur. Justifying the inevitable rise of women into the political settings, a woman Councillor in Tshwane asserted, "Politics is about life, so how can women not be part of it" (Morna & Tolmay 2007: 39). Historians and Political Scientists are yet to see the day when the women in Darfur would succeed in breaking the shackles of patriarchy so that they can ascend to positions of influence at all decision-making levels.

There is a popular position that Sudan-Darfur is a male dominated society and patriarchy is the engine of the marginalisation of women in the peacebuilding processes and all aspects of life. This is true in terms of the current trends of the cultural dimension of globalisation. However, the patriarchal nature of the Sudan-Darfur society can be reversed because it had been imposed on the Africans of Sudan-Darfur and it is not rooted in African ancestry. According to the Director of the Kara Heritage Institute (KHI), Mathole Motshekga (2007), the Africans from Sudan and anywhere else originated in *Ta-mara*,⁵ the area in the Great Lakes region of Africa and at the beginning they worshipped the female God. Therefore, it can be concluded that originally, Sudan was a matriarchal society and the unbearable domination of men is foreign to this region. It came as a result of slave trade, colonialism and imperialism that distorted the African culture and replaced it with alien cultures [Islam and Christianity] from the Middle East and Europe that reduced women to the rank of secondary role.

Back to the absence of civil society enactment, women's communication or networking in Sudan-Darfur is poor, weak and inefficient as compared to the

4. Legal instruments that preserve and protect the rights of women include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and the Protocol on the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa.

5. *Ta-mara* is an Ancient language word which means "queen of heaven and earth". It is suggested that this meaning is an affirmation that historically, Africa/Sudan-Darfur was a matriarchal society. The area called *Ta-mara* is also known as Punt/Bunt/Ta-ntura/A-fur.

period before the DPA was signed. Hence, some of the courageous and promising women leaders have been absorbed into governance structures in Khartoum and the regional transitional authorities in Darfur (Poabogadi* 2007).⁶ The women brain drain into government circles naturally divorced them with grassroots realities and they lost touch with the problems of women in their constituencies. Others went to an extent of revealing the hiding places of their former militia/rebel groups in exchange for lucrative deals such as employment promotion. In the same vein, some of the men and women who were recruited to the Khartoum government deliberately sold out their former comrades in arms for their own personal benefit and this has negatively affected women's struggles.

Moreover, it is further alleged that at times, the Khartoum government and regional transitional authorities in the Darfur unfairly discriminate and marginalise the wider women population thereby co-opting those women who are not a threat to the status quo or those who are not clear and vocal about women's rights and the human rights discourse as a whole. Active gender activists are left out of the system because they are seen to be introducing Western foreign cultures that are inimical to Islam.

- **Lack of Skills and Knowledge**

The Sudanese-Darfur women are disadvantaged in post-conflict reconstruction/peacebuilding initiatives because of lack of skills on governance, democracy and the rule of law. In the Darfur region which is predominantly Muslim, their religious [Islam] norms and doctrines prohibits women from taking leadership roles in the community and this practice has deepened the existing unequal social relations between men and women. In addition to their domestic roles, uneducated women in this region know how to hold a gun only and it is out of the same gun that they can make a living (Muhammed* 2007). This unfortunate socio-historical development has arrested most of the women to the rural areas whilst their active and young male counterparts moved to the urban areas in search of greener pastures at public or private sectors. It has also made them prone for recruitment by the warring factions.

Amid the scarcity of leadership and career-orientated skills, Sudan-Darfur women are facing a reality of the lack of compelling knowledge on the Protocol on the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa (Van Wyk 2007: 8) and the UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security which "... urges for women's genuine and equitable participation in peace negotiations in war zones and the aftermath" (IANSA 2002). Sudan is yet to ratify Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

6. Personal correspondence with Kwanna Poabogadi*, former official in national Office of the Status on Women in South Africa, Pretoria, 15 November 2007.

Discrimination Against Women, 1979 (CEDAW), that seeks both to eradicate stereotypes that limit the potential of women to domestic roles and to undo their legacies.⁷ To make matters worse, Sudanese policy makers, who are mainly men, have a limited knowledge on gender equality issues and their patriarchal decision making authority ought to discredit any initiative to bring about gender parity in the political and corporate arena (Sibanda 2007: 30).

Nevertheless, countries such as South Africa have provided peacekeeping and leadership capacity building training for the leaders of the countries emerging from conflict such as Sudan. Some of the Sudanese were beneficiaries of such a programme offered by South Africa's Department of Foreign Affairs (now called the Department of International Relations and Cooperation) and the University of South Africa's Centre for African Renaissance Studies. Unfortunately, the findings of the research for this article has revealed that in most cases, such delegations did not have a female component (Shai 2012). Realising the absence of women during the leadership capacity building training workshops, the organisers insisted that women leaders should be included in the next sessions. However, it is alleged that most of the women who were later brought for training were (embarrassingly) pregnant wives and concubines of prominent male leaders who did not have an interest in political governance issues. This development did not only serve to portray women as weak human beings that are good at child bearing as opposed to leadership roles. It has actually resulted in what can be termed "Incapacity Training" on the part of the female participants and it is a disservice to all women of Sudan whom it was claimed 'they were representing (Ntebo* 2007).⁸

In the broader context of the Peacekeeping Economy (PE) it can be argued that besides ensuring the suggested thirty percent (30%) female quotas of the workshop participants/trainees, pregnant women were included in the delegation so that they can have access to the decent medical attention in South Africa since their countries' health facilities have been destroyed during the war or their services are inadequate and/or of low quality (Shai & Ogunnubi 2018). Interestingly and depending on the preference of the parents, if Sudanese women give birth in South Africa their children are likely to be entitled to South African citizenship by the virtue of being born in the country and they would absolutely enjoy equal rights like any other [native] South African citizen (Shai 2012). In the same breath, it is alleged that the motive behind bringing [female] next of kin to the peace talks and/or leadership

7. See, National Institute for Public Interest Law and Research, *CEDAW in South Africa: the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*, Pretoria: Nipilar, 1995.

8. Personal correspondence with Tabakenna Ntebo*, gender activist and a South African delegate in a workshop on "Women in Dialogue for Peace in Africa", Pretoria, 16 November 2007.

capacity building and post-conflict reconstruction workshops was to get double [more] money through the stipend/*per diem* paid to the participants. At the same time, the couples would be in a honeymoon as most of these events are held outside their countries in expensive hotels (Rankhumise 2007).⁹ The monetary benefits and/or a combination luxury retreats mentioned above have a tendency of derailing the peacebuilding efforts. For instance, Rankhumise (2008)¹⁰ claims that the Sudanese peace-keepers (Abuja) prolonged the peace process as part of the “peace process economics”.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Unless it is complemented by an Afrocentric perspective, our evidence suggests that the study of rhetoric and gendered politics in Africa and how it intersects with the struggles of subdued position of women in post-genocide societies (i.e. Darfur) is incomplete. The pursuit of the Afrocentric discourse allows scholars to capture the essence of the marginalised political nuance of everyday struggles from an authentic African perspective. Since Afrocentricity does not degrade other perspectives, its application in this article is poised to meaningfully contribute to the much needed epistemic justice (Asante 2017).

Flowing from the foregoing analysis, it could be concluded that women took a centre stage as the combatants and victims in the Darfur conflict/ crisis. Some women experienced human rights violations at home, battle-ground and at the camps of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).¹¹ However, the involvement and participation of women during the negotiations and other post-war reconstruction/peacebuilding processes was nothing, but a cheap political rhetoric. Among other factors that enabled this gendered rhetoric include the following: loose legislative frameworks that do not protect women, compromise of gender due to the assumed patriarchal nature of their society, cultural and religious practices, lack of skills and knowledge, shortage of funding and poverty. Those women who participated in the peace talks were not the legitimate delegation of the Sudan-Darfur women. Therefore, Sudan-Darfur needs the comprehensive support of the

9. Personal correspondence with Patrick Rankhumise, Research Specialist, Africa Institute of South Africa, Pretoria, 26 November 2007.

10. Personal correspondence with Patrick Rankhumise, University of Venda, Thohoyandou, 11 March 2008.

11. DPs camps are supposed to be the safe havens for the victims of war. But in Darfur, most them had become the targets of different militia groups and the residents are often exposed to serious human rights violations.

international community through regional cooperation frameworks such as Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and AU.

On the basis of the above discussion and conclusions, the article now seeks to make the following recommendations:

- Financial and/or technical support should be made available to strengthen women leadership capacity that is critical if sustainable peace, stability and development are to prevail in Sudan-Darfur.
- The principle of female component of the peace missions should become a norm and fifty percent (50%) quota system should be enforced.
- The Sudanese government and the international community should help the Sudanese women establish a network of organisations that specifically deals with women or gender issues.
- Enough funding should be made available for the participation of women in future peacekeeping and building efforts such as negotiation, mediation, conciliation and reconciliation.
- Safe and positive African indigenous healing systems and practices should be integrated in the mainstream social, counselling and psychological services in Sudan-Darfur.
- The international community should collectively invoke more pressure on the government of Sudan to abolish Article 45 of the Sudanese Law and restrictive laws on NGOs registration and help Sudan design and implement programs that will be used to change the attitudes of men towards women.
- Support the creation of women networks at all levels and across the geographical demarcations, NGOs and political divide.
- The communities in Darfur should fully cooperate with the International Criminal Court (ICC) to ensure that influential men who conduct themselves in a manner that degrades and down-press women are flushed out and face the full might of the law.
- Lastly, there should be regular monitoring and evaluation of the instruments that are put in place to redress the marginalisation of women in pivotal post-conflict reconstruction/peacebuilding initiatives and processes.

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