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MEDIA RELEASE

SFU study challenges assumptions on wartime sexual violence

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UN webcast at: <http://webtv.un.org/#>

A new study by the Simon Fraser University-based [Human Security Report Project](#) (HSRP), released today at the United Nations headquarters in New York, finds that there is no compelling evidence to support a host of widely held beliefs regarding wartime sexual violence.

The study, presented by HSRP director Andrew Mack, disputes the common assumption that conflict-related sexual violence is on the rise, and argues that the experience of a small number of countries afflicted by extreme levels of sexual violence is not the norm for all war-affected countries.

Key findings include:

- In more than half of the years in which countries around the world experienced conflict between 2000-2009, levels of reported conflict-related sexual violence were low to negligible.
- There is no evidence to support frequent claims that rape as a “weapon of war” is widespread, nor that its incidence has been growing.
- Domestic sexual violence victimizes far more women in war-affected countries than does the conflict-related sexual violence that is perpetrated by combatants.
- Recent studies show that male victims and female perpetrators may be more numerous than generally believed.
- The study also finds that the mainstream view of the impact of war on children’s education as highly damaging is incorrect, and that educational outcomes in war-affected countries improve over time despite fighting, even in regions most affected by war.

The complete study is available online at www.hsrgroup.org and will soon be available in print.

The HSRP has received funding from the Department for International Development (United Kingdom); the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation; the Norwegian Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency; the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs; and the UBS Optimus Foundation.

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