

# **HIDING MY SHAME: THE RAPE OF MEN AS A WEAPON OF WAR IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Sexual violence—whether in peace time or during conflict situations—is one of the most horrific acts experienced by both women and men. However, such violence has traditionally been associated with women as the victims and men as the perpetrators. The invisibility of men and boys as (non)survivors has greatly impeded their access to both legal and psychosocial services. This article reveals that sexual violence against men is strategic and has nothing to do with either the victim's or the perpetrator's sexual orientation. Most of this violence is intended to disempower, humiliate and attack their dignity as men, but it is also strategically used in recruitment drives by rebels and also as a means of torture and a way of acquiring information. It was also identified that in moving the discussion along, there is a need to look at male sexual violence within conflict and post-conflict settings. Further study should explore the issue of culture and silence and how gender ideologies and power inequalities have greatly been employed in conflict situations in order to perpetuate the rape of men.*