

WOMEN AND HUMAN SECURITY: THE CASE OF THE MARWOPNET WOMEN IN THE MANO RIVER REGION OF WEST AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

In Africa, women have always had gendered consciousness, and have also been active participants in the political administration of many societies. The advent of colonialism altered the political participation of many African women in different societies. Also the modern state continued the legacy of colonialism by ensuring that women have limited access to power and politics. However, the events of the 1980s and 1990s elicited a re-awakening among African women of the need to salvage the continent from erstwhile male dominant rule which has offered little progress and development; this is most evident in states which have experienced war and civil conflict. According to the 1994 UNDP Report, human security means safety for people from both violent and non-violent threats. It is a condition or state of being characterized by freedom from pervasive threats to people's rights, their safety or even their lives. Human Security has seven distinct dimensions which are: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political. This article examines the threat to human security emanating from violence and armed conflict, and chronicles the activities of West African women who brokered peace between the warlords in Liberia, Sierra-Leone and Guinea and ensured a peaceful resolution of the conflicts within the Mano River Basin of West Africa.