

Women as Perpetrators of Violence and Crimes in Africa¹

Marianna Kármán²

Abstract:

Women as victims of genocide, terrorism or war crimes are the traditional topics of studies. But this situation necessarily changed in the last decades as number of female combatants increased all over the world. If we examine the case of female attackers in different parts of the world, we can get different shapes and form of intention behind these combats. Africa gives the various forms of cruelty caused in society by women or to women. But the line between the two sides in many cases are not clear. In this study I examine the categories of attacks committed by women in Africa, and the situation of women who decided to destroy – mainly – their own society.

Keywords:

Female combatants;
violence; genocide;
terrorism; Africa.

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² Senior researcher at African Research Institute, Doctoral School for Safety and Security Sciences, University of Óbuda;
ORCID: 0000-0002-9907-5082; karman.marianna@uni-obuda.hu.

Introduction

When examining the relationship between women and violence in Africa, women appear primarily as victims of violence and crimes, both in the common knowledge and in the reports of violence organizations. Numerous studies deal with their scientific implications, and in addition to it, there are a negligible number of reports that portray women as perpetrators of rape. Africa, as a diverse arena of war, genocide, terrorism and political violence, can once again provide us with many examples.

However, in the case of women, it is also important to examine the role or intention of the perpetrator in relation to the current act. In my study, I will set up categories according to the intent, which will help to understand why women will be not only victims but also perpetrators of violence in Africa.

It is difficult to put these crimes into clear categories especially in the case of the African continent. On the one hand, when an organization of political groups emerging when African countries became independent, the political environment and context changed. In some cases members of armed militias became known as freedom fighters. On the other hand, female perpetrators often do not choose this role by themselves but are forced to commit an act that can be linked to violence.

So, one of the biggest problems with terrorism is the identification of terrorist acts, organizations and actors. Not only do terrorists not identify themselves with this word — as their ideologies call themselves rebels, revolutionaries, liberators, freedom fighters, or defenders of the faith, servants of God, but surviving victims in interviews also refer to them as rebels (Kaplan, 2010).

I examine three major groups and their characteristics or prominent personalities that can be linked to Gonzalez-Perez's notion of terrorism (Gonzalez-Perez, 2008). The first of these deals with genocides in Africa, where women are presumed to commit acts of violence voluntarily, politically motivated or from hatred. The second group includes women who have committed acts of violence and/or attacks on behalf of terrorist groups with extremist ideologies organized in the 21st century. While in the last group, I deal with women who support or commit politically motivated acts of violence, who have been primarily involved in the struggle for independence of those African countries.

A detailed presentation of these groups and a case-by-case examination can therefore help to understand why and what role African women play in committing acts of violence throughout history and the present period.

African Genocide and Women as Preparators

The participation of women in nationalist struggles or acts of violence is always – with few exceptions – is an act of free will. In these cases, they are involved in the commission of the murders as actors in the existing political system, for example the many Nazi murderers who were particularly notorious for their cruelty. Ideas about the Aryan race professed in World War II do not appear in Africa, of course, although there are neo-Nazi groups where women are also active participants, such as Cornelia Wet from South Africa, who committed assassination in Griquatown (Griekwastad), in 2013 as a member of the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging. (Wildenboer, 2013)

Women who commit murder or genocide in the name of African nationalism are not only followers of nationalist political ideologies, although by their actions and methods they should be included in this trend, but their ideas are based on social problems such as social injustice or resource distribution, and their aim is the complete restructuring of society.

Among the African nationalist-type groups, organizations, parties, or governments that have many female members, several profess left-wing Marxist ideas such as the South West African People's Organization (SWATO) or the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) (Wood&Thomas, 2017). As these groups can be sharply distinguished from their violent counterparts and have primarily served the independence aspirations of the region, I examine them separately from nationalist organizations accused of genocide.

Sudan's People's Liberation Army (SPLA), whose members have wreaked havoc on the civilian population, can be classified as an organization accused of genocide. According to WARD data (Wood&Thomas, 2019), the SPLA fielded approximately 5-20% female participants. In 2016, even elite SPLA units were involved in acts against humanity that go beyond warfare and approach the concept of genocide. Sexual crime against women, which were typical of the conflict in Sudan, and the loss of control of the units also made the command accountable. As a result of the 2018 Revitalized Agreement on Conflict Resolution in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), Sudanese women have established independent SPLA units with the support of United Nation Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) (Andersson, 2018).

If we look at the violent conflicts in individual countries, most of the experts refer to what acts of violence were committed by men on their male counterparts or women, yet a closer look at these cases may reveal that women were equally active participants in these acts of violence. Traditionally, the inclusion of women in the military would serve the purpose of reducing violence, including sexual violence, against women, but this effort has not proved effective in the light of past experience. Although basically male combatants are ashamed of their female fighter comrades when they commit sexual crimes, we still have a number of examples where, although the number of male perpetrators is declining, female perpetrators are worsening the statistics of sexual crimes committed during wars (Besenyó, 2017).



Although the number of women victims is always much higher, in the field of sexual violence, women also make up a high proportion of perpetrators, and even female fighters have an extremely high rate of sexual violence (UNGA). If we look at the data from surveys in the Democratic Republic of Congo, it can be seen that 40% of female victims and 10% of male victims stated that they had suffered sexual abuse from female gunmen. In Liberia, female fighters also committed sexual assaults on women and men, with reports of women raping women with some object, e.g. may be a weapon or have mutilated their male or female victims. The same kind of sexual violence was also characteristic of the genocide in Rwanda.

In the Sierra Leone civil war of 1991-2002, 'population-based survey data show that groups that included women perpetrated nearly one in four incidents of the reported gang rape'. According to Cohen, female fighters disrupt male bonding, they can serve as sexual partners and "rape substitutes" for male fighters, but she describes that both male and female fighters seek groups to commit violence which results in the case of gang rape. During the Sierra Leonean civil war, gang rape was mainly reported. After the examination of cases and studies, Cohen concluded that, contrary to the traditional assumption, female warriors were much more prone to a kind of particular evil and cruelty in committing violence and encouraging male fellow soldiers to commit excessive violence. Interviewees testified to the immeasurable, anger-motivated violence of female fighters. According to the results of surveys, 76% of perpetrators of violence were engaged in gang rape, of which 75% were male gangs and 25% were mixed gangs (Cohen, 2013).

During the Mozambique civil war, there were also female fighters in RENAMO's ranks, but among the organization's recruitment methods, there was also a recruitment pattern which is typical among terrorist groups, with young boys and occasionally girls being kidnapped into their ranks. Both RENAMO male and female fighters were exiled for their war crimes despite their forced enlistment after the signing of the 1992 peace agreement (Wiegink, 2013). In the formations of RENAMO, however, the organization of women's formations is still typical today (Frey, 2020).

One of the main African war criminals where it was possible to identify and convict a female perpetrator is the Rwandan genocide which were the organized murder of hundreds of thousands of Rwandan in 1994. The genocide was mainly committed by Interahamwe and Impuzamugambi Hutu militias between the 6th of April till 15th of July during the Rwandan Civil War. the number of victims were around 800 000 and 1 000 000, mostly Tutsi and partly moderate Hutu.

This case was unique in the history of modern and independent Africa, because of the huge number of victims in a relatively short time and because of the method of the militias supported by the government. In spite of this, international response to events in Rwanda was very slow and mainly made by NGOs such as Human Rights Watch which reported around 250,000-500,000 cases of rape while the exact number of victims still cannot be determined. The UN stayed passive for long time and did not interfere in the events for a long time. This

was because, after shooting down the plane carrying Rwandan President Habyarimana, people in the presidential guard killed the moderate Hutu Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana (who wanted to call for peace on the radio) so that she could not take control of extreme violence and killings over the whole country. In addition to the prime minister, her husband, the president of the Constitutional Court, and four government ministers were shot dead. Fifteen UN soldiers guarding Agathe Uwilingiyimana were disarmed, five Ghanaians soldiers were released, and ten Belgian soldiers were brutally mutilated and then killed by Rwandan presidential guards. Thus, the case had international involvement relatively early, before the genocide began.

According to official statistics almost 2000 women remain in Rwandan prisons on genocide-related offences. "Ranging from illiterate farmers to former political, religious and military leaders, judges, journalists and teachers. Their stories attest to the fact that women were not only victims of atrocities, but also committed them." (Hogg, 2010) Among them women with socially high rank and high educational background also played an outstanding role in the murders. Educated women got a special role in the genocide as organizers and were given a power to manage the militias and the method of murders.

One of them is Agathe Kazinga Habyarimana, the former first lady of Rwanda who were arrested in Paris in 2009 for genocide, complicity in genocide, conspiracy to commit genocide, creation of a criminal gang, murder and conspiracy to commit murder, extermination, and public incitement to commit genocide. *Le Clan de Madame Agathe*, her court within the court, was known as the *akazu* – little house.

The members of the *akazu* were the masterminds of the extermination campaign, and before, during, and after the killing they enjoyed the patronage and protection of France, whose role in the genocide was as unambiguous as its official denials over the years have been unconvincing. (Gourevitch, 2010)

Rwandan female leaders were always famous of their cruelty. Despite the relatively small number of women politicians involved in Rwandan politics in 1994, most of them played an important role in the genocide. Besides Agathe, also known as *Kanjogera* which was the name of a Rwandan queen known for her cruel rule, two ministers: Pauline Nyiramasuhuko, Minister of Family Affairs and Women's Development and Agnes Ntamabyaliro, Minister of Justice were involved.

Nyiramasuhuko and her son, Arsene Shalom Ntahobali, were accused and convicted of genocide, crimes against humanity and violations of the Geneva Conventions in 2011. They were part of a six-defendant trial, accused of orchestrating or overseeing genocide in the Butare region. Nyiramasuhuko, however, was the first woman to be tried by the ICTR. She told Interahamwe militiamen, led by her 24-year-old son, that they must rape women before killing them as they were seeking refuge at the Red Cross in the city stadium. At her command, they surrounded the stadium building, where thousands of Tutsis received food and safety. The gunmen raped, tortured and killed them and then set their bodies on fire. In another incident,



she ordered her men to take diesel fuel from her car and set it on fire by a group of living raped women, leaving one of them alive as an eyewitness. Nyiramasuhuko was arrested in Nairobi, in 1997.

Agnes Ntamabyaliro had a Tutsi mother, she was accused of arranging Jean-Baptiste Habyalimana's murder in addition to inciting and planning the genocide. She was sentenced in 2009 to life imprisonment by the Rwandan government.

Women as the Participant of Terrorism Attacks

As I mentioned in Introduction, this study examines terrorist attacks committed in the 21st century. These attacks are directed against both the current government and society, although these organizations often describe themselves as liberation movements. Thus their actions are not directed solely against the government or its supporters, and their activities are driven by extreme ideology or religious fanaticism. For this reason we can clearly call them terrorist groups. Nationalist perspectives rarely appear among the ideas of these organizations, while they are not characterized by specific ethnic cleansing either.

Environment and circumstances in Africa made it a hothouse for terrorism. There are many such groups, and they are prevalent across the whole continent. Their roles are various: there are local or international organizations operating specifically within a state (MLF), a country (UNITA) or a region (al-Shabab, Boko Haram, or the African allies of al-Qaida).

The map of terrorism in Africa is constantly changing and the terrorist groups' activities usually extend to neighboring countries to create new groups and encourage others to pledge allegiance to umbrella organizations, such as in Cameroon, Kenya and Niger. Contributing to their widespread are the marriage between extremist ideologies and the ethnic, tribal, and historical complexities of the region, coupled with the failure of social integration policies, the unsuccessful attempts on the part of the political leadership at managing human diversity and economic resources, and the regional security void. (Sundi, 2020)

There are numerous organization we can only esteem their number because not all terror attack can be connected to known terrorist groups. In 2020 there were sixty-four terrorist organizations reside in the continent according to Global Terrorism Database (GTD) reports. Among these, the largest groups include Nigerian Boko Haram (operation fields: Nigeria, Chad, Niger, Cameroon,) and its branch Ansaru (Nigeria); Somalian al-Shabab (Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda), Lord's Resistant Army (Uganda); West African Movement for Oneness and Jihad (Mali, Algeria – originally the part of al-Qaeda); Ansar al-Sharia (Tunisia, Libya); and al-Qaeda (transcontinental).

Each terrorist organization follows different ideologies but work with similar tactics. Most of the groups listed above operate under the veil of Islam, interpreting the teachings of Quran and Sunnah according to their own interests. In any case, at first glance, we would think that

due to an extreme misinterpretation of the teachings of Islam, women are given less role in the preparation or execution of terrorist acts. Even the Christian Lord's Resistant Army (LRA) is feared primarily because of their use of child soldiers, not women. Yet the number of female perpetrators in terrorist acts has increased in recent years in Africa and all over the world. Whereas previously the number of female suicide bombers was a quarter of all assassinations, it has now risen to a third (Bloom, 2017).

The use of women to carry out or assist in terrorist acts has also become popular because, due to Islamic cultural rules, women are less checked during security controls respecting religious ethical codes. However, while it could be easily done by using female security guards, government are not ready for this step. There are a very few women soldiers in the army who fight against Boko Haram (Durosomo, 2019). If the male-based security personnel are too aggressively searching for female perpetrators, it can provoke resentment in society, thus providing new sympathizers for terrorist organizations. In addition, the recruitment of women allows for the continuous growth of organizations. While in the past the main goal was to involve men, the forcible or demagogic recruitment of women (or children in some organizations) has increased the number of potential recruits.

In recent years, therefore, the idea that women can participate in *jihad* in the same way as men has become more and more talked about, although it is not duty for them. Even according to the general Sunni view, women can participate in *jihad*, but it is still not obligatory for them. Nevertheless, *jihad* means actual warfare in the sense that hostile forces enter Islamic territory and commit acts of violence. In this case, all men and women can take part in the defense, and women must take part in the fight only if they are appointed to it. The general Sunni conception instructs the Muslim community to go to war only on the occasion of an attack against the community, only on the instructions of the leaders, and with the possibility of avoiding fighting. (In this case Muslims clearly must not attack Muslims.) Applying Islamic doctrines to their own social situation and according to their own interpretation and interest, terrorist groups employ more and more women in their troops, although in Africa the victims are mainly Muslims (Cook, 2005).

Women's relationships to these terrorist groups can be remarkably diverse. Of these, three major categories can be distinguished in terms of intent: as victim; as external supporter and helper of the organization; or as a member of the organization. It is also important to examine the conditions for joining, which may be voluntary or forced by violence. Between these two options there is a typical form when women join under psychological influence (e. g. converted victims).

Women can play various roles in these terrorist organizations: as financiers, recruiters, spies, suicide bombers; but they can be also as helpers in hiding, aiding terrorists. (Goldberg, 2018) Yet it is important to note that neither in al-Qaeda nor in African jihadist organizations have women been given leadership roles. Although these organizations are therefore primarily known as patriarchal ones, they have many female supporters who do not commit



violence directly. There are even some cases where female weapon smugglers or combatants were captured. In addition to the listed organizational activities, women are primarily involved in ideological rather than physical struggles, so their additional responsibilities include conversion, fundraising, training, and administrative or translation/interpretation activities. Outside of Africa, women linked to terrorism have a major role to play in managing Internet interfaces, spreading radical ideologies online.

Women enter the battlefield primarily if they are single or wives after their husbands are lost or imprisoned. Single women who are pushed to the margins of society, live in deep poverty, who are homeless, or have no male family members to take care of or protect them can easily fall into the net of terrorist organizations. If a woman loses her husband, children, family members, etc. and if the enemies of a terrorist organization are to blame, women are much more likely to become voluntary members of an organization and the group in an attempt to turn this personal tragedy to advantage. Recruiters also prefer to take advantage of women's poverty, illiteracy, despair, resentment and enthusiasm to take revenge. Ethnicity or financial pressure may be additional considerations in the exploitation of women according to the interviews made during rehabilitation.

Although the appearance of women in the commission of terrorist acts is seen by some feminist thinkers as an improvement in the situation of women, as a sign of the achievement of equality (Abdel-Latif&Ottaway, 2007), as long as women are sacrificed in one such action, by no means can we seriously think that this would bring any improvement in women's lives.

On September 11, 2016, at the 15th anniversary of the New York terrorist attack, there happened the first terrorist combat in Kenya where the perpetrators were women and there was evidence of intent on their part. In this case Al-Shabab used a female suicide bomber for the first time, at the Mombasa Police Building. The attack was unsuccessful, and the three women lost their lives.

Police said the perpetrators used a knife and a bomb during the attack, and one of the assassins wore a suicide vest that did not explode. Women wearing hijabs entered the station, saying they wanted to report a stolen phone, reported Peterson Maelo, Mombasa County Police Chief, to the media. One woman used a knife and another threw a gasoline bomb, launching a fire. Two officers were injured (BBC, 2016). The suicide bomber was shot down before the bomb was activated. After the attack, "we have managed to identify two of the three terrorist suspects who were killed in Mombasa, they are Kenyans," police spokesman Charles Owino told AFP, "Fatuma Omar and Tasmin Yakub Abdullahi Farah, both from Mombasa." (Akwiri, 2016) The leader could have been Farah, who could not arm the vest. During the investigation, three more companions were found, all of them were Somali refugees.

However, a year before al-Shabab's terrorist action, in 2014, Boko Haram had already used women or girls in suicide bombings, which brought with it the practice of abducting school girls as in the famous case of kidnapping the Chiboki girls. The system of suicide bombings

itself has not been used by African organizations for a long time because suicide is a culturally despised act in Africa. However, the new method quickly became popular in Boko Haram strategy. The first such incident was reported on June 8, 2014, when a bomb exploded at the Nigerian Army barracks in Gombe, the female combatant and one soldier died while another was wounded by the explosion. After that there were six such attacks in six weeks when Boko Haram used women and girls as suicide bombers. The number of such cases has increased since November 2014, with the youngest perpetrator being a 7-year-old girl who blew herself up in the Potiskum market, where seven people died, and several were injured. Globally, female suicide bombers were most often deployed in Nigeria, and all attacks were connected to the Boko Haram.

The organization exploited women to the extreme, kidnapping and recruiting them to conduct suicidal attacks. Boko Haram executed 434 suicidal operations between April 2011 and June 2017. Of the 338 bodies that were identified of the suicidal attackers, at least 244 were women, which means that at least 56 per cent of Boko Haram's suicidal operations are conducted by women. This percentage makes the group the first in history to depend primarily on women in its suicide operations. (Sundi, 2018)

Examining the cases in Kenya and Nigeria, we can see that among African perpetrators there are those who intentionally take part in assassinations. When considering the first cases in Nigeria, we can also clearly state that the perpetrators most of the time did not even know what will happen to them. The methods of Boko Haram are much more characterized by the abduction of women and girls, and thus the forcible recruitment of women. In the case of girls, schoolgirls in particular are abducted, as Boko Haram also want to combat the Western-type education for women (Besenyő&Mayer, 2015).

In the case of abducted women, several interviews (Gidda, 2019) revealed the exact method by which members of the organization work. One characteristic is that they separate Christians and Muslims and treat them differently, although violence can be demonstrated in both cases. Leah Sharibu and 110 other Dapchi female students were abducted in 2018, and while the other girls were later released, Leah was held because she refused to convert to Islam (WWM, 2020). This is exactly what the terrorists want to do, set Muslims against Christians. In the most common cases, Christians are forcibly converted to Islam - threatened with death if refused. And several abducted Muslim women are forced to be married and/or raped by Boko Haram members. Numerous reports cite of women being sexually assaulted by Boko Haram militants; some were raped within context of a forced marriage, others for being Christian, another was attacked for a perceived slight against the militants. However, the group's leaders make some effort to protect kidnapped girls from random sexual abuses outside the context of "marriage".

Some are used to carry ammunition magazines with them, others are forced to watch the killings or commit them themselves, although in these cases women often turn the gun on themselves to end their suffering because they find no other way out. Although the escape most often ends in death, we know of several lucky cases in which the abducted woman



escaped from her abductors by some trick. There was a case when someone complained of abdominal pain when the terrorists wanted to rape her, so she was taken to the hospital to check for AIDS. At the hospital, she was helped to make the escape. Some girls are selected and forced to serve other women who stand out for their beauty.

One woman who was raped in 2013 in a Boko Haram camp told Human Rights Watch that other women (specifically wives of Boko Haram leaders) were often complicit in sexual abuse of female prisoners. “I was lying down in the cave pretending to be ill because I did not want the marriage,” the woman told the researchers. “When the insurgent who had paid my dowry came in to force himself on me, the commander’s wife blocked the cave entrance and watched as the man raped me. (Alter, 2014)

This also proves that not only the female wing of al-Qaeda has emerged, but also active female members appear in African organizations. It is enough to look at the history of women associated with the organization, such as Aisha Wakil or better known as Mama Boko Haram, who can be closely associated with founder members of Boko Haram. She is currently among the number one enemies of the terrorist organization due to a radical change in the organization’s ideology (Focus Nigeria, 2019). But these women are mostly anonymous, the origins of their relationship with terrorist organizations cannot be clearly described.

Female Fighters in the Wars for the Independence of African Countries

Historically, one of the oldest forms of violence in Africa is military warfare. The first documented cases in which women were also involved appeared specifically during the independence movements, when the peoples of Africa revolted against the colonizing great powers. Although women’s participation in politics and military movements is rare in Africa, women who joined anti-colonial nationalist uprisings, such as in Kenya, Eritrea, or Zimbabwe, typically did so solely of their own volition and chose to fight colonial oppressors on their own – despite restrictive gender roles in their society.

Although relatively few studies emphasize the key role of Kikuyu women in the Mau Mau movement, they have played a key role in all areas of the struggle for independence; in the formation of the movement, in forest struggles, in serving participants (providing food, weapons, hiding, etc.), in mediation between troops, and for espionage against British troops (Presley, 2019). According to the rules of Mau Mau, women were respected due to their outstanding, sometimes leading position. Rape against them resulted in the death of the perpetrator. Kikuyu women excelled in disguising their activities in support of the movement; taking action primarily at night, while taking care of their families during the day and maintaining the appearance of a normal life. The female wing of the Mau Mau movement was extremely effective, which is why in the eyes of the enemy, the Kikuyu women were treated much as were the male soldiers. The British held the female prisoners in camps, forcing them to do hard physical work, beating them and raping them.

The largest number of female members in the struggle for independence were in the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF). Like the Mau Mau movement, women in fact worked in all areas like men. "EPLF, moreover, was far more than simply a military organization." (Bernal, 2001) In the system offered by the EPLF, in the light of left-wing nationalist ideas, women and men were equal, so fighting together brought with it respect for each other. However, after gaining independence, these roles became unbalanced again. After the conflict, women clustered into feminist organizations, and even outside the borders — e. g. in refugee camps in Europe, Egypt, or Saudi Arabia — they maintained these women's organizations (Zerai, 1994).

In the struggle for Zimbabwe's independence, women were members of both the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) and Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), although they were mostly employed in fewer areas due to their poor physique (Sadomba&Dzinesa, 2004). Yet in some cases, women have been placed in leadership positions, such as Joice Runaida Mugari Mujuru, who became a commander at Chimoi camp in 1976. In 1977, she became a member of the Central Committee of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and secretary for women's affairs. In 1978, when her camp came under attack, Muruji — nine months pregnant at the time — was still an active combatant and thought the colonial military.

In military organizations such as in Zimbabwe, Uganda or Algeria, women had to make serious sacrifices in their struggle for the independence of their country. In many cases, the young women could not have families and were brutally treated in captivity by the colonizing troops because of their social symbol of their gender and effectiveness in fight.

Algerian women have fallen victim to both the Islamic patriarchal system and the means of the violent emancipation of the French army. Their role was similar to the female warriors of the above presented countries. They disguised themselves, if it was necessary, as Europeans to obtain information from the French for their compatriots. As a symbol of punishment for Algerian men, the French severely treated and raped or executed them.

As the examples above show, in many African countries, women, at the risk of their lives and the safety of their families, took part in the struggles for militias organized for the independence of their country, bearing an equal burden with men.

Conclusion

Women's participation in violence-related events appears in a variety of roles in Africa. They represent themselves in all areas of the battlefield as opposed to their traditional female social roles. They also appear as cruel killers and hero warriors, victims, and assailants in different or nonetheless similar roles compared to men according to their gender characteristics. Although they are relatively rare in leadership roles, in areas where they can achieve



outstanding results — whether in a negative or positive sense, they always appear of their own free will.

They are forcibly recruited primarily into militias linked to terrorism, where in fact they can rarely get a responsible position and in most cases only become tools and objects in the fight for the ideologies of these groups. As described above, the deployment of women against these terrorist organizations can be particularly important and effective, as they can easily highlight that few volunteers in these organizations have no opportunity to advance.

Conflict of Interest

The author hereby declares that no competing financial interest exists for this manuscript.

Notes on Contributor

Dr. Marianna Kármán holds PhD in African Literary and Cultural Studies, has been researching the oral and written traditions, cultural and religious system and practices of the region for about 20 years - primarily in Nigeria. Her specialization includes Islamic studies, intercultural discourse, African migration, process and social context of African neology. From 2012 she led researches about African migration in Hungary, founded educational programs about Africa and Islamic world, from 2017 she is a researcher, trainer and member of African Hungarian Union, and currently works as a senior researcher at African Research Institute, Doctoral School of Safety and Security Sciences, Óbuda University and as a refugee program coordinator at Hungarian Red Cross.

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