



Female Soldiers in Sierra Leone: Sex, Security, and Post-Conflict Development (Gender and Political Violence)

By Megan H. MacKenzie

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The eleven-year civil war in Sierra Leone from 1991 to 2002 was incomprehensibly brutal—it is estimated that half of all female refugees were raped and many thousands were killed. While the publicity surrounding sexual violence helped to create a general picture of women and girls as victims of the conflict, there has been little effort to understand female soldiers' involvement in, and experience of, the conflict. *Female Soldiers in Sierra Leone* draws on interviews with 75 former female soldiers and over 20 local experts, providing a rare perspective on both the civil war and post-conflict development efforts in the country. Megan MacKenzie argues that post-conflict reconstruction is a highly gendered process, demonstrating that a clear recognition and understanding of the roles and experiences of female soldiers are central to both understanding the conflict and to crafting effective policy for the future.

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Editorial Review

Review

“[...] MacKenzie’s contribution provides a well-written and approachable introduction to the complexities of female soldiering in Sierra Leone. *Female Soldiers in Sierra Leone* is therefore of particular use to humanitarians, activists, feminist researchers, and anyone interested in conflict and war.” -*International Feminist Journal of Politics*

“Giving voice to the seldom-heard stories of female soldiers, Megan MacKenzie challenges over-simplified narratives about male warriors and female victims. This moving and insightful analysis of ‘post-conflict’ reconstruction in Sierra Leone is a convincing reminder of the perils of ignoring gender.” -J. Ann Tickner, co-editor of *Feminism and International Relations: Conversations about the Past, Present and Future*

“MacKenzie is one of the rising international stars of feminist IR war studies and she's clearly one of the best. Her book moves elegantly and respectfully between events she researched in Sierra Leone and her theorizing on conjugal order and gendered insecurity when wars end. Many audiences will want this book, including organizations crafting post-war reconstruction, whose efforts can backfire on women.” -Christine Sylvester, editor of *Feminist International Relations*

“Weaving sophisticated theoretical critique and an amazing account of lived experiences during and after war, this book is a powerful, sophisticated, and beautifully written contribution to debates over how one should study gender and world politics. An inter-disciplinary must-read for all concerned with war and security.” -Lene Hansen, author of *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*

About the Author

Megan H. MacKenzie is a Senior Lecturer of Government and International Relations at the University of Sydney, Australia. She is the author of *Beyond the Band of Brothers: the US Military and the Myth that Women Can't Fight*.

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