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Women Under Occupation: Rape as a Weapon of War in the Israel-Palestine Genocide
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Abstract

Bombs, tanks, and guns are the conventional weapons of warfare, but the true cost of war extends far beyond the battlefield. Human beings lose everything—their belongings, families, and often their lives—falling victim to the relentless violence of conflict. Political discourse typically focuses on territorial disputes, security concerns, and statehood, frequently sidelining the impact of war on women, particularly the use of rape as a weapon of war. Across conflicts worldwide, rape operates as a calculated instrument of political violence. The Israel-Palestine genocide has not been exempt from this form of brutality. In the struggle to obtain absolute sovereignty, rape is the ultimate tool. A biopolitical strategy used to penetrate and dominate not only the victim but also the very fabric of the state itself. This thesis explores the role of sexual violence as a weapon of war within the Israel-Palestine genocide, analyzing its function as a tool of control, ethnic cleansing, and psychological warfare. Grounded in feminist International Relations (IR) theory, this study critically examines how Western media coverage and political narratives enable, excuse, or obscure the occurrence of sexual violence and rape against women under occupation. By shedding light on this underreported dimension of war, this research aims to contribute to broader discussions on human rights, international accountability, and the gendered realities of warfare.

Keywords: Sexual violence; Rape as a weapon of war; Feminist International Relations; Intersectional feminism; Settler colonialism; Military occupation; Media discourse; Political narratives; Gendered violence; Israel–Palestine genocide; International accountability