Weaponisation of Sexual Violence During Recent Protects in Iran

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Abstract

Weaponisation of sexual violence has been pervasive in conflicts throughout history. In some cases, armies, rebel groups and terrorist organisations employ sexual violence as a strategy to pursue their objectives and as a tool to punish, terrorize and destroy populations. Using sexual violence as a weapon is one of the strategies that patriarchal states use to suppress and silence individuals, particularly women. This paper argues that how weaponisation of sexual violence is used as a form of cultural violence (Galtung 1991) during Iran’s recent protests to legitimize violence in its direct or structural form against women. Through historical analysis of women suppression in Iran, the paper discusses the way in which Islamic Republic used rape and sexual assault systematically to deter women from participation in revolution and protests and suppress their resistance. In conclusion the paper sheds light on the recent feminist movement, Woman, Life, Freedom, in Iran and discusses how these invincible women continue to protest and take the streets in defiance, against sexual violence and in support of survivors.

Keywords: sexual violence, cultural violence, structural violence, feminist revolution, Islamic Republic of Iran