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Sexual violence directed against men and boys in armed conflict or mass atrocity : addressing a gendered harm in international criminal tribunals / Valerie Oosterveld

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Abstract:	This article explores the current state of understanding within international criminal law of sexual violence directed at men and boys, particularly as a crime against humanity or a war crime. It begins by examining how international criminal tribunals have approached male-targeted sexual violence to date, concluding that the tribunals have been uneven in their approach; even so, these cases have been helpful in creating the beginnings of a typology of male sexual violence. The article then turns to identifying three main gaps that must be addressed in order to improve the ability of international criminal tribunals – and, similarly, domestic courts prosecuting international crimes - to address this form of sexual violence. The first gap is an information gap: there is a dearth of systematic data on sexual violence directed against men and boys in armed conflict or atrocity. The result is that relatively little is known about the prevalence, patterns and effects of male sexual violence, and less attention is paid to the issue than should be the case, including in the field of international criminal law. The second gap can be referred to as a social gap. Men and boys may not feel able to speak about their experiences or, if they do, they may not describe themselves as victims of sexual violence. The third gap is a legal gap, which is twofold: a gap in overt recognition and a gap in classification. While rape has been defined in international criminal law in a gender-neutral way, there are other acts of sexual violence visited upon men and boys that are not explicitly named. This lack of overt recognition can be problematic because these acts must be prosecuted under other (broader, less descriptive) headings. When combined with the social gap, the result can be miscategorization. Sexual violence crimes directed at men and boys have been legally (re)classified as torture, cruel treatment or inhumane acts, thereby obscuring the sexual aspects of the harm done to the victims.
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