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SNAPSHOT

## Rape Reporting During War

Why the Numbers Don't Mean What You Think They Do

Amber Peterman, Dara Kay Cohen, Tia Palermo, and Amelia Hoover Green

*AMBER PETERMAN is a Gender and Development Specialist and Research Fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute. DARA KAY COHEN is Assistant Professor at the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. TIA PALERMO is Assistant Professor in the Graduate Program in Public Health at Stony Brook University. AMELIA HOOVER GREEN is a Ph.D. Candidate in Political Science at Yale University and a consultant to U.N. Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict.*

Reports of sexual violence during the ongoing unrest in Libya have captured headlines across the world. Libyan leader Muammar al-Qaddafi's forces, some have alleged, were given Viagra to facilitate their rape of hundreds, if not thousands, of victims. Recently, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, the chief prosecutor at the International Criminal Court, and U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton both expressed outrage at what was apparently a purposeful campaign. Yet recent [reports](#) [1] by the U.N. and by advocacy groups shed doubt on these claims. Amnesty International, for example, has been [unable](#) [2] to locate a single rape victim, or even anyone who knows a victim.

As the veracity of stories about sexual violence in Libya came into question, the *American Journal of Public Health* published a study estimating that the prevalence of rape in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was far worse than previously documented. The article [estimated](#) [3] that between 2006 and 2007 more than 400,000 women between the ages of 15 and 49 were raped during the war there -- 26 times the U.N.'s official count.

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- [2] <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/amnesty-questions-claim-that-gaddafi-ordered-rape-as-weapon-of-war-2302037.html>
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