From Peace Talks to Pandemics: The Continuum of Feminist Peace Activism

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Feminist scholarship has convincingly shown that violence is more accurately conceptualized as a continuum rather than a war/peace binary. While recent scholarship has elucidated women's peace activism during armed conflict, peace negotiations, and post-peace agreement transitions, we know little about the work of self-identified women peace activists beyond those highly visible moments. We examine the activities of a Burundian women's peace organization in exile, *Mouvement Inamahoro*, during COVID-19. Our data are derived from thirty-six semi-structured interviews with individual members of the organization and reviewing hundreds of primary-source documents. We find that from *Inamahoro*'s standpoint, the intersection of COVID-19 and exile constituted security threats, relevant to its mandate to build peace. Accordingly, it responded with humanitarian assistance, advocacy, and awareness-raising among its own members as well as with Burundians both inside and outside the country. *Inamahoro* also continued its regular activities to promote longer-term peace and security in Burundi through media programming, training women and girls for political leadership, and liaising with Burundian civil society and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs). Based on the continuum of violence concept and building inductively from the *Inamahoro* case, we propose a multidimensional continuum of activism that occurs before, during, and following conflict (dimension 1, time); is conducted in multiple arenas (dimension 2, space); deals with issues of insecurity at multiple levels (dimension 3, scale); and is concerned with threats that are structural, direct, and cultural/symbolic (dimension 4, type). In so doing, we offer a preliminary framework with which to examine the everyday activities of women peace activists, which constitute often overlooked interventions in global politics.

La investigación feminista ha demostrado de manera convincente que la violencia se conceptualiza de manera más precisa como un continuo en lugar de como un binario entre guerra y paz. Si bien los estudios recientes han esclarecido el activismo por la paz por parte de las mujeres durante los conflictos armados, las negociaciones de paz y las transiciones posteriores al acuerdo de paz, sabemos poco sobre el trabajo de las mujeres autoidentificadas como activistas por la paz más allá de esos momentos que gozan de una alta visibilidad. Estudiamos las actividades de una organización de paz de mujeres burundesas en el exilio, el movimiento Inamahoro (Mouvement Inamahoro), durante la pandemia de COVID-19. Nuestros datos se derivan de 36 entrevistas semiestructuradas con miembros individuales de la organización y de la revisión de cientos de documentos obtenidos de fuentes primarias. Hallamos que desde el punto de vista de Inamahoro, la intersección entre la COVID-19 y el exilio constituyó amenazas a la seguridad, relevantes para su resolución de construir la paz. En consecuencia, Inamahoro respondió con asistencia humanitaria, apoyo y sensibilización entre sus propios miembros, así como con los burundeses tanto dentro como fuera del país. Inamahoro también continuó sus actividades regulares con el fin de promover la paz y la seguridad a largo plazo en Burundi a través de la programación de los medios de comunicación, de la formación de mujeres y niñas para el liderazgo político, y de la cooperación tanto con la sociedad civil de Burundi como con las ONG internacionales. Sobre la base del concepto de la violencia como un continuo y teniendo en cuenta de manera inductiva el caso Inamahoro, proponemos un continuo multidimensional de activismo: que ocurre antes, durante y después del conflicto (dimensión 1, tiempo); que se lleva a cabo en múltiples ámbitos (dimensión 2, espacio); que se ocupa de cuestiones de inseguridad a múltiples niveles (dimensión 3, escala); y que se ocupa de las amenazas que son estructurales, directas y culturales/simbólicas (dimensión 4, tipo). Al hacer esto, podemos aportar un marco de trabajo preliminar para examinar las actividades cotidianas de las mujeres activistas por la paz que constituyen intervenciones que son, a menudo, pasadas por alto dentro de la política global.

La recherche féministe a su démontrer avec efficacité que la notion de violence relève davantage d'un continuum que d'une opposition binaire entre état de guerre et état de paix. Si de récents travaux ont mis en lumière le rôle de militantes pour la paix dans des contextes de conflits armés, de négociations et de transitions suite à des accords de paix, les données relatives au travail de femmes s'identifiant comme militantes pour la paix en dehors de ces moments saillants sont encore rares. Nous analysons dans cet article les activités d'une organisation de femmes burundaises de promotion de la paix en exil, Mouvement Inamahoro, durant la pandémie de COVID-19. Nos données sont issues de 36 entretiens semi-structurés avec des membres de cette organisation et de l'exploration de centaines de documents de source primaire. Nous constatons que, du point de vue d'Inamahoro, l'intersection de la pandémie de COVID-19 et la situation d'exil constitue une menace globale en matière de sécurité, dans le contexte de son mandat de promotion de la paix. L'organisation a répondu à cette menace en fournissant une assistance humanitaire et en réalisant des actions de plaidoyer et de sensibilisation, auprès de ses propres membres et auprès de citoyen·nes burundais·es vivant dans ou en dehors de leur pays. Inamahoro a également maintenu ses activités courantes visant à promouvoir la paix et la sécurité au Burundi sur le long terme, via des interventions dans les médias, la formation de femmes et de jeunes filles à des positions de leadership politique ainsi qu'une coopération avec la société civile burundaise et des ONG internationales/OIG. En nous basant sur le concept de continuum de la violence et en induisant des observations à partir du cas d'Inamahoro, nous proposons un continuum pluridimensionnel de l'activisme qui: se déploie avant, pendant et après un conflit (1ère dimension: le temps); se tient dans plusieurs lieux (2ème dimension: l'espace); fait face à des problèmes de sécurité à plusieurs niveaux (3ème dimension: l'échelle); répond à des menaces structurelles, directes et culturelles/symboliques (4ème dimension: le type). Ce faisant, nous proposons un cadre d'analyse préliminaire permettant

d'étudier les activités quotidiennes de femmes militant pour la promotion de la paix, dont le rôle est souvent négligé en politique internationale.

You have to consider [COVID-19] as a peace and security issue because the moment it threatens the people, the moment it kills: it is a gun. It is a gun. But it is a blind gun. It doesn't choose who to kill. It kills whoever on its way. So, that is even more dangerous than the ones who choose those they kill, because you can talk to them, but you can't talk to COVID-19. You can only fight it, but you can't reason with it. So, for us it is really an issue of peace and security. Interviewee 33 (Inamahoro member), July 15, 2021

The "continuum of violence" points us to ways in which women experience insecurity and violence before, during, and after war (Cockburn 2004). The declaration of a cease-fire does not mean the end of sexual violence, economic precarity, or authoritarianism. The global surge in prolonged displacement (Bradley, Milner, and Peruniak 2019) is also indicative of the lack of relevance that binaries have to the real lives of ordinary people, given that for displaced people, insecurity and violence persist even outside of the "warzone" (Krause 2015). From a feminist perspective, understanding war and peace as binary opposites is at odds with the ubiquity with which women experience violence and insecurity.

We know little about how feminist peace activists address the multiple, nonspectacular, manifestations of insecurity during the various points on the continuum of violence. In particular, a prominent strand of recent literature on women's political participation during and following armed conflict is underpinned by a narrative, organizing events in a progressive linear sequence: war disrupts gendered hierarchies; women mobilize; through collective action, women carve out new leadership roles for themselves; and, finally, women occupy a different, often better place in "post-conflict" politics (Anderson and Swiss 2014; Hughes and Tripp 2015; Berry 2018; Krause, Krause, and Bränfors 2018; Paulson-Smith and Tripp 2021; Anderson and Valade 2022; Tripp 2023). Women's entry into formal politics is not the end of the story, however, since 40 percent of intrastate peace settlements last for only about 5 years (Druckman and Wagner 2019, 288), and the gains that women have made often erode after 10–15 years (Webster, Chen, and Beardsley 2019). Another body of recent scholarship addresses the continued hardships women face following war (Berry 2015; Berry and Lake 2021; Zulver 2021), which troubles the linear progressive narrative implied by the former body of literature mentioned.

This article explores how women's peace activists define and conduct their work during a period unpunctuated by armed conflict or peace talks, but where exile, exacerbated by COVID-19 has created new forms of insecurity and threats for women and girls. We examine the activities of a transnational Burundian women's peace organization, *Mouvement Inamahoro: Femmes et Filles pour la Paix et la Sécurité*,[1] in response to COVID-19 between March

2020 and July 2021. *Inamahoro*, which translates directly to "women builders of peace" in Kirundi (Baricako 2020), formed in the wake of the 2015 electoral crisis that saw about 400,000 flee Burundi. The organization's stated mission is to promote peace and security in the country and is currently comprised of about sixty Burundian women from a range of ages, ethnicities, political affiliations, and socioeconomic backgrounds who live throughout Africa, Europe, and North America—most as refugees following the 2015 crisis. While most are members who are un/underemployed and did not hold positions in formal or informal politics prior to becoming refugees, a minority of members include former diplomats, representatives of Burundi's National Assembly and Senate, judges, officials of political parties, and leaders of prominent Burundian civil society organizations. Some members were involved in Burundi's peace negotiations between 1998 and 2000 and instrumental in the adoption of pro-women legislation between 2000 and 2010.[2] *Inamahoro* then marks a reformation and remobilization of Burundian women's peace activists with the addition of a new generation of activists galvanized by the events of 2015.[3] As one member living in the Mahama refugee camp in Rwanda remarked, *Inamahoro* was "born in exile, by exiled people."[4] The fact that *Inamahoro* is a movement in exile with most of its members living as refugees in East Africa shaped its approach to dealing with insecurities associated with COVID-19. Specifically, members' first-hand experiences with pandemic-related insecurity—such as sickness, hunger, unemployment, and violence in the home—were highly influential.

We begin this article by discussing Burundi's response to COVID-19 and offering background on *Inamahoro* as an organization that has features of both a diaspora and a women's peace organization. We then discuss feminist conceptions of peace, the multidimensional continuum of violence, and the approaches of feminist peace organizations, which broadly define violence and work to ameliorate insecurity. In the following section, we outline our methods employed to learn about Inamahoro's peace advocacy during COVID-19. The bulk of the paper then showcases our findings derived from interviews and the review of primary documents—focusing on how *Inamahoro* defines and conducts its peacebuilding work in line with a continuum of activism. We do so by analyzing *Inamahoro*'s motivations to act during the pandemic, their advocacy, their humanitarian efforts, and their efforts to "build the capacities" of women and girls. In the conclusion, we reflect on broader implications and offer some avenues for future research.

Background: Burundi's Response to COVID-19

The pandemic exacerbated an already precarious situation for Burundian refugees in East Africa, especially women. Since Évariste Ndayishimiye assumed the presidency in

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[1] Mouvement Inamahoro: Femmes et Filles pour la Paix et la Sécurité was formerly simply known as the Mouvement des Femmes et Filles pour la Paix et la securite au Burundi (MFFPS). However, the movement split into two organizations in March of 2020. One group kept the name and registered it in Canada. The other group renamed the organization Mouvement Inamahoro: Femmes et Filles pour la Paix et la Sécurité in September 2020. Further details regarding the split can be found at Inamahoro's website.

[2] For an overview of Burundian women's civil society during the peace process, see Anderson (2016), Anderson and Valade (2022) and following it Anderson and Valade (2022).

[3] For an analysis of Burundi's 2015 crisis, see Vandeginste (2015) and Bouka (2017).

[4] Interviewee 7. Interview with the authors. 06/2021.

June 2020, Burundi rejoined international organizations in good standing, sanctions were lifted (Rettman 2001; UN News 2021), and Burundi was removed from international human rights watch lists (International Crisis Group 2021). Normalization of Burundi's international relations placed Burundian refugees in Rwanda, Uganda, and Tanzania in an extremely precarious position, with their host states pressuring them to repatriate (Human Rights Watch 2020b) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reducing their food rations (Manirambona et al. 2021, 2). COVID-19 has added mass unemployment to these exile-related struggles.

Meanwhile, the already dangerous living conditions in Burundi were worsened by the government's reluctance to acknowledge the pandemic (Human Rights Watch 2020a). Former President Pierre Nkurunziza's government encouraged handwashing and introduced mandatory quarantine for incoming travelers (Human Rights Watch 2020a; Paviotti 2021), which *Inamahoro* stated was inconsistently applied with only some travelers being forced into detention centers (Mouvement Inamahoro 2020b). At the same time, Nkurunziza refused to cancel rallies related to the 2020 presidential election (Paviotti 2021). Nkurunziza would die in 2020 due to what some believed to be COVID-19. Burundi's new president, Évariste Ndayishimiye, declared COVID-19 to be "Burundi's worst enemy" and introduced a more substantial response to the pandemic in June of 2020. However, he maintained the Nkurunziza government's religious narrative that God alone would protect Burundi from COVID-19 and refused to limit gathering (Human Rights Watch 2020a). Ndayishimiye finally allowed COVID-19 vaccines into Burundi in July of 2021—after this study was completed—but maintained the rhetoric of divine protection from the pandemic (Kaneza, July 29, 2021). Specifically, Ndayishimiye, like his predecessor, claimed that the pandemic was caused by homosexuals incurring God's wrath (Paviotti 2021). In addition to the religious narrative, another constant in Burundi's response to COVID-19 was allegations of underreporting COVID-19 cases and related deaths (Human Rights Watch 2020a; Inamahoro 2020; Paviotti 2021). As will be discussed in subsequent sections of this paper, these pandemic-related insecurities thrust upon Burundians both within and outside of the country prompted *Inamahoro* to take unprecedented action.

What Is Inamahoro?

Inamahoro is a transnational network composed exclusively of Burundian women, most of whom live in exile, focusing on Burundian politics and how they impact Burundians inside and outside the country. The fact that *Inamahoro* has active branches in several countries and the fact that its organizational goals—which will be discussed in subsequent sections—are in line with ideas of a feminist peace mean that it could be construed as a transnational feminist network. The term "transnational feminism" has broadened to encompass more than vague ideas about "global sisterhood" (Conway 2017) and now transnational feminist organizing is understood as networks consisting of "women from three or more countries who mobilize for research, lobbying, advocacy and civil disobedience to protest gender injustice and promote women's human rights, equality, and peace" (Desai 2013). However, *Inamahoro* does not attempt to transcend national identity and most of its goals are focused on Burundian women and girls (Carty and Mohanty 2015). In this sense, it resembles a diasporic organization (Brubaker 2005; Adamson and Demetriou 2007;

Brinkerhoff 2011). The term diaspora has broadened to include most displaced groups that maintain ties to a "homeland" rather than merely groups who left their country of origin in the "distant past" (Délano and Gamlen 2014). A vast literature on diasporic organizations examines the efforts of these organizations to influence politics in the "homeland" via advocacy (Brubaker 2005; Bermudez 2011; Betts and Jones 2016; Adamson 2020). As Betts and Jones observe, "[w]hen political opponents, dissidents, and activists are unable to operate within the country of origin, the most significant politics for a state is likely to take place transnationally, across states and among dispersed national communities" (Betts and Jones 2016). The hope of returning to a "peaceful" homeland—or a homeland that favors one side of a conflict—generally fuels this diaspora activism (Orjuela 2008). In addition to advocacy, these organizations often engage in service provision to aid refugee and diaspora communities in host countries (Henry and Mohan 2003; Faria 2014; Bradley, Milner, and Peruniak 2019).

However, *Inamahoro* differs from diasporic organizations (as theorized in the literature) in several respects. To begin, *Inamahoro* is entirely composed of women. Although the diaspora literature documents women' role in providing remittances (Fouron and Schiller 2001; Wong 2006), there is less diaspora literature exploring the likelihood of women to act collectively to influence the "homeland" (Snyder 2015). In fact, some have categorized the diaspora literature as "gender-blind" (Cárdenas and Olivius 2021). Moreover, the diaspora literature disproportionately focuses on diaspora organizations based in the Global North. As such, it conceives of diasporas as comprised of elites who are "out of touch" with the realities of the homeland by virtue of being "autonomous" and free from any threats emanating from the authoritarian homeland (Koinova 2012; Kapur 2014). Given that *Inamahoro*'s members are mostly located in developing countries—some of which are governed by authoritarian regimes—neighboring Burundi, the diaspora as composed of Western elites who are entirely free to criticize the homeland does not fit this case. In this sense, *Inamahoro* resembles a feminist peace organization given that it self-identifies as one and is composed of those who remain "on the ground" so to speak and is not so far from the "homeland." Moreover, the literature has often documented diasporas as actors that sustain division by supporting one side of a conflict, whereas feminist groups are generally considered a unifying force willing to work with their so-called enemies (Anderson 2000). *Inamahoro* self-identifies as a women's peace movement and puts this into practice by having a diverse membership in terms of ethnicity and political leanings, which distinguishes it from diasporas in this respect. However, there is limited literature documenting cases of diasporic feminist movements (Cárdenas and Olivius 2021), meaning that the two types of organizations are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Ultimately, organizations such as *Inamahoro*—that are not neatly categorized—have received inadequate attention and yet play an important role at local, regional, and international levels.

Feminist Conception of Peace

The designation of war, peace, and armed conflict has powerful effects on the lives of ordinary people. The emphasis in the literature as well as in post-war peacebuilding policy has focused on "a narrow vision of harm, focusing on spectacular manifestations of violence, such as war, rather than the underlying root systems creating violence and harm in women's lives" (Berry and Lake 2021, 461). The disconnect

between a country designated as "at peace" is often not re-flective of women's daily lives. "No wonder women often say, 'War? Don't speak to me of war. My daily life is battlefield enough'" (Cockburn 2004, 43). Insecurity during and after armed conflict is continuous and gendered. The silencing of guns in combat does not end sexual violence, poverty, and various forms of inequality.

It is perhaps because of the multiplicity of ways, times, and spaces where women experience violence that self-identifying women's peace groups generally conceive of peace as broader than the absence of war. Rejecting the war–peace dichotomy that privileges organized battlefield violence over everyday threats faced by ordinary people before, during, and after armed conflict, a feminist con-ception of peace considers structural forms of violence in addition to "direct military violence" (Tickner 1995) and conceptualizes "the scope of peace as large" (El-Bushra 2007), "holistic" (True 2020), and including positive rights and freedoms (Confortini 2006). Feminist visions of peace are concerned with addressing inequalities not only during "spectacular instances of violence" but also during "peace time" (Wibben et al. 2019, 87). Examining the "everyday," which is often overlooked in peacebuilding literature, reveals a set of practices and relationships crucial to un-derstanding how peace and conflict are experienced at the microlevel (MacGinty 2014). Occurrences in the everyday lives of women specifically are often regarded as "little nothings" (Singh 2020). And yet, a holistic concept of peace "integrates human security, human rights, conflict resolu-tion, […] gender equality" and therefore is concerned with campaigns for "economic livelihood, health, education, environment, and cultural values" (Chan 2011, 522).

Broadening from the more traditional, male-identified, sources of international security focused on the state as the reference object (Thomson and Pierson 2018) means that we also expand "who merits security" to include individuals and communities making security both "multidimensional and multilevel" (Sjoberg 2010, 4–5), and connecting the microlevel to macro-level events (Wibben et al. 2019, 101).

Like feminist theorists, women's peace organizations generally understand peace as broad and act accordingly—usually by participating in high-level advocacy while also engaging in service provision geared at those experiencing a wide range of insecurities (El-Bushra 2007; Farr 2011). For instance, in her discussion of Liberian women's peace activism, Gbowee (2009, 50) observes that "women's peace activism is not only about advocating for a cessation of physical violence during conflict and wars but also to ter-minate the physical and structural violence that exists in everyday society." Similarly, Cárdenas and Olivius (2021, 350) observe that the Women's League of Burma engaged in a series of peacebuilding activities beyond traditional high-level advocacy—such as promoting "women's agency" via leadership training and engaging in "women-to-women" diplomacy across conflict divides and outside of formal peace processes.

The context of COVID-19 has further broadened the insecurities that women peace activists contend with. The insecurity disproportionately experienced by women and girls during the pandemic is akin to post-war conditions (K.C. and Whetstone 2022). Migrant women workers, for ex-ample, have been particularly vulnerable to job loss (Arora and Majumder 2021; Ansar 2022). Confined to their home during lockdowns, women and girls have been subjected to domestic violence, unwanted pregnancies, and loss of educational opportunities (Wenham et al. 2020; Cameron et al. 2021; K.C. and Whetstone 2022).

Despite the disproportionate burden placed on women as caretakers and frontline workers, feminist activists have con-tinued their work throughout the pandemic (Tabbush and Friedman 2020; K.C. and Whetstone 2022). In Northern Ire-land, for example, feminist activists used online networks, provided mutual aid, and made gendered policy recommen-dations (Deiana, Hagen, and Roberts 2022). In *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro, women banded together to form "emotional–political" communities to address gender-based violence and structural inequality (McIlwaine et al. 2022). In Colom-bia, South Sudan, the Philippines, and Ukraine, women peacebuilders pivoted from their regular peacebuilding work to address the humanitarian needs generated by the pandemic among vulnerable populations, "leverag[ing] their networks, connections to local communities, and unique, conflict-sensitive lens" (Santos et al. 2022, 12).

Nevertheless, much of the literature on grassroots women's peace activism focusses on associations' work during and shortly after armed conflict or peace processes.[5] *Inamahoro*, however, includes members who have been active in peace advocacy for over two decades; it addresses multiple manifestations of violence, in various spaces, at many levels, during a time period where international actors have deemed Burundi a safe place to return to. It is likely that there are many other organizations such as *Inamahoro* working in a similar way, but perhaps they receive inadequate attention because policymakers, ed-itorial boards, and grant-awarding bodies deem various critical junctures—"short periods of time [or] windows of opportunity [that] can lead to a long-term institutional transformation" (Paulson-Smith and Tripp 2021, 366)—as worthy of attention, privileging certain events and time periods over others. We hope that illuminating the work of *Inamahoro*, then, and providing the seeds of a theoretical framework will allow for a better understanding of the con-sequential work of grassroots women's peace organizations addressing issues of insecurity in multiple dimensions.

Continuum of Violence

The complex and cyclical nature of violence may be con-ceptualized as existing along four dimensions: time, space, scale, and type (Cockburn 2012). The first dimension, time, emphasizes that threats to women extend beyond ceasefire declarations and peace agreements. Women may experience violent backlash, for example, following increased leadership gains made during armed conflict (Zulver 2021). Those who have become refugees during war face continued insecurity despite whether armed con-flict has been officially terminated (Krause 2015). Peace agreements, premised on "negative peace"—the absence of war—might even naturalize everyday violence against women by elevating the principle of masculine protection (Velásquez Estrada 2022). These examples illustrate that various interlocking roles or identities—leader, refugee, woman—continue to produce vulnerabilities once armed conflict has officially ended.

Furthermore, the war/peace binary, as well as the liberal peacebuilding paradigm, assumes a linear trajectory; peace follows war. Numerous states experience episodic conflict over decades, which is the case of Burundi, for example. The brevity of periods of "peace," then, might better be

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[5] There are of course long-standing international women's peace organiza-tions such as the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) (Confortini 2012). These, however, are largely based in the Global North and differ in composition and resources from more ad hoc grassroots organizations, such as Inamahoro.

called "interbellum, [only] a pause before fighting begins again" (Cockburn 2004). From the standpoint of individuals who experience episodic armed conflict, violence and insecurity have a "complex and cyclical temporal frameworks" rather than a "linear temporality" (Hedström and Olivius 2022, 508). The war/peace binary, then, reflects the perspectives of decision-makers and outsiders as opposed to individuals most threatened by insecurity. It follows that individuals affected by insecurity—whether the cause is war, poverty, health, or structural injustice—would seek to address those threats regardless of their label.

The second dimension, space, concerns the physical spaces in which threats occur. Enloe's question "Where are the women?" yields unexpected answers. Women are threatened by violence from "from home and street to battlefield and stratosphere" (Cockburn 2012, 255). Although women participate in militant groups in high numbers (Wood and Thomas 2017; Darden, Henshaw, and Szekely 2019), feminists have long pointed to the threats that women and gender nonconforming people experience in their homes and communities. The spatial dimension of the continuum of violence directs us to examine spaces where violence occurs often made irrelevant by their relegation to the "private sphere." Those concerned with the security of less powerful people in society, including women, must look to the spaces where violence, which strictly is not battlefield violence, occurs.

The third dimension, scale, concerns the "scale of force (from fist to bomb) or social unit (two people in a punch-up, wars between nations)" (Cockburn 2012, 255). Closely related to the spatial continuum, women often experience violence in "small-scale" incidents that may involve themselves and a perpetrator. From the standpoint of activists, whether sexual assault is perpetrated by soldiers as a weapon of war or by a family member, it requires redress. Nevertheless, the war/peace binary privileges violence that is conducted in relation to armed conflict.

The fourth dimension of violence is type, which derives from Galtung's distinction between negative and positive peace. Violence can be direct, indirect (structural), and cultural/symbolic (where justifications for violence exist in intersubjective beliefs and values) (Galtung 1969, 1990). A holistic concept of peace, then, "integrates human security, human rights, conflict resolution, […] gender equality" and therefore is concerned with campaigns for "economic livelihood, health, education, environment, and cultural values" (Chan 2011, 522). For instance, "undemocratic health outcomes" have been considered a type of structural violence made even more central by the pandemic and threats to reproductive rights (Forester and O'Brien 2020).

As already discussed, self-identified women's peace groups respond to the continuum of violence in a myriad of ways, in multiple arenas, and on various scales. As Cockburn (2004, 44) remarks, "if violence is a continuum, our movements have to be alliances capable of acting in many places, at many levels, and on many problems simultaneously." As we will illustrate, *Inamahoro* exemplifies a continuum of activism that may be conceptualized as follows. The four-dimensional continuum of activism is where women peace activists perform a range of activities before, during, and after war in a variety of spaces, on various scales, combatting violence of various types. By examining *Inamahoro*'s understanding of and approach to peacebuilding via advocacy, humanitarian aid, and capacity building, this article aims to show how women peace activists pursue this continuum of activism by understanding peace broadly and operationalizing a variety of peacebuilding activities that are not restricted in terms of time, space, scale, or type.

Methods

Our findings shared in this article are part of a larger longitudinal research project, begun in 2019, where the research team and *Inamahoro* agreed to document the organization's work to understand how a women's peace organization functions during a time period unpunctuated by armed conflict or formal peace talks. This documentation includes two major components. The first was creating an archive of the organization's activities and documents (spanning from the organization's inception in 2015 to 2022). A member of *Inamahoro* was hired (using research grant funds) to collect and organize documents pertaining to *Inamahoro*'s work and internal organization. The archive includes external communication (press releases, advocacy letters, transcripts from media programming, screenshots of social media), internal governance documents including meeting minutes, and an events database.

For the second research component, the research team conducted interviews in person with thirty-two members in Rwanda in 2019 and a second set with thirty-six members via Zoom/WhatsApp in 2021. We feel that the Zoom/WhatsApp interviews were facilitated by prior familiarity between *Inamahoro* members and the research team. The research team presented our research design to *Inamahoro* in person at their 2019 Annual General Assembly in Rwanda and our preliminary findings at their 2021 General Assembly held virtually, offering members the opportunity to provide feedback. In addition, some members of *Inamahoro* had met members of the research team through previous research for different projects conducted in 2017 and some as far back as 2007. These multiple interactions facilitated a high level of familiarity developed over time.

Recognizing that discussing Burundian politics—even outside of the country—was not without risk, we conferred with the leadership on how to ensure the safety of interviewees, many of whom had fled Burundi. This involved discussing our proposed set of questions. Ultimately, they did not see any issue with the questions that we had drafted and opted to add more questions about members' perceptions of Burundi and their hopes for the organization. Interviewees received the questions prior to their interview so that they could decide whether to participate. At each interview, we assured interviewees that they could pass on any question they did not wish to answer.

In 2021, through *Inamahoro*'s leadership we invited all of its members to participate in interviews. We conducted semi-structured individual interviews with thirty-six members (of about sixty total) over Zoom and WhatsApp in June and July. Our interviewees were diverse in terms of country of residence, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, profession, previous political involvement, and organizational role. Notably absent in our sample are the approximately ten members who reside in Burundi. The leadership informed us that none of them felt comfortable speaking with us about their involvement in *Inamahoro* over a Zoom or WhatsApp call. This may be indicative of the high level of repression in the country where individuals fear being overheard discussing politics, even when they had the opportunity to determine the time and place for a virtual interview.

We chose semi-structured interviews to capture the experiences of as broad and diverse a set of members as possible. Relying on official documents only—including the official media communications of the organization—would not

have revealed the diversity of the individual members' activities, impressions, and experiences. In short, we would have missed "a window into the everyday world" of individual members (Blee and Taylor 2002, 92–101). Each interview lasted between 20 and 30 minutes. We asked questions regarding the interviewees' sociodemographic status, past and current participation in formal and informal politics, membership in *Inamahoro*, experiences and activities related to COVID-19, and impressions regarding Burundian politics.

We are aware, as Jacoby (2006) cautions, however, what interviewees choose to reveal is not necessarily a reflection of objective reality, but rather involves a process of "self-presentation." Our identities as researchers from the Global North mediated part of the context in which the interviews occurred. Despite our familiarity with several *Inamahoro* members, positionally, we were outsiders. While this allowed for the possibility of unearthing information that an insider would have taken for granted as too obvious to merit exploration (Cohn 2006), it might also mean, however, that we would miss elements of importance because the experience of our interviewees was so different from our own or, worse, ask questions that would make interviewees feel unsafe. As mentioned above, we designed our research to ameliorate those potential shortcomings. Whenever possible, we triangulated the information shared by interviewees with the archive as well as with external sources.

Mouvement Inamahoro, Exile, and COVID-19: Operationalizing a Continuum of Activism

Background: Inamahoro's Understanding of Peace and Insecurity

Since its creation in 2015, *Mouvement Inamahoro*'s objectives have been to contribute to the restoration of peace and security in Burundi, the well-being of Burundian refugees, and the meaningful participation of women and girls in formal politics and peace processes.[6] Until the COVID-19 pandemic, the movement pursued these objectives via two main channels. The first was advocacy in multiple spaces and on multiple scales—to states, international actors, and Burundian refugees—raising awareness of the Burundian government's human rights abuses and other political action that according to the movement is inconsistent with the Arusha Accords. For instance, in addition to advocating in-person to international actors and Burundian refugees, *Inamahoro* broadcasts weekly "Black Monday" messages on exiled Burundian radios and on social media in French, English, and Kirundi. These messages draw attention to perceived wrongdoing by the Burundian government and urge both the Burundian government and Burundian citizens to promote peace (Inamahoro 2020). The second course of action was efforts to "build the capacities" of women and girls (both economically and in terms of education) to participate in formal politics via seminars and providing funds for small businesses and education.[7] The beneficiaries of the capacity-building initiatives are Burundian refugee women and girls in Rwanda and Uganda, some of whom are members of the movement themselves.

Most of *Inamahoro*'s members are in exile, with only about ten members still residing in Burundi. In fact, most remain in East Africa—about 56 percent of those we interviewed live in Rwanda, 19 percent live in Uganda, and only about 22 percent lived in Europe and North America. Moreover, six members live in the Mahama refugee camp in Rwanda. Although most members have university education—about 69 percent of those we interviewed had at least a bachelor's degree—most were unable to find more than precarious employment in exile. As a result, the uncertainty and hardship associated with refugee status are all too familiar to *Inamahoro*'s membership. Thus, refugee status and its intersection with gender are highly influential on the movement's activities. Members have experienced first-hand the insecurities that come with exile and how they do not discriminate between "war" and "peace time," how they emerge in multiple arenas, at multiple scales, and are diverse in terms of type.

It is within this context that members felt "obliged"[8] to respond to the increased vulnerability of the Burundian refugee community that came with COVID-19.[9] To members, the widespread unemployment that COVID-19 brought to the Burundian refugee community—compounded by UNHCR cutting their rations (Manirambona et al. 2021; UNHCR 2021)—is highly incompatible with peace. As one member living as a refugee in Rwanda summarized,

> If COVID-19 reaches those with refugee status, the situation is grave. Those with small businesses and little jobs lost them. Those who worked in bistros lost their jobs. When there is famine, you cannot say there is peace and security. There is no peace, no security, when a person is hungry.[10]

Moreover, members identified poverty caused by COVID-19 as an underlying cause of other gendered threats to peace. For instance, members claimed that lockdowns brought increases in child pregnancies among Burundian refugee girls aged 12–14 years in Rwanda.[11] Members considered the "idleness"[12] catalyzed by school closures as well as parents being unable to feed—and thus unable to control their children—as direct causes of the unwanted pregnancies.[13] The hunger that accompanied COVID-19 often allowed predators to bribe the victim's family in order to avoid criminal charges.[14]

Most notably, members expressed that COVID-19-related poverty is a gendered threat to peace because it makes women unable to "satisfy or fulfill the roles expected of her in the family"[15] such as mother, wife, and provider.[16] Members stressed the differential impact of extreme poverty on men and women, which they substantiated with their own experiences in addition to reports they received from recipients of their humanitarian aid.[17] According to these accounts, fewer refugee men dealt with unemployment

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[6] Interviewees 1, 3, 4, 10, 32, 33, 34, and 36. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021; Inamahoro's website, https://en.barundikazi.org, accessed October 28, 2021. It states that the movement's objectives are to "promote and safeguard cultural values that form the foundation of Burundian society, promote respect and protection of human rights in general and of women's rights in particular, ensure the systematic and equal participation of women in all national and international decision-making bodies and in all mechanisms for dialogue on peace and security in Burundi, participate in the restoration of a constitutionally respectful rule of law and the Arusha Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation."

[7] Interviewees 2, 4, and 33. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[8] Interviewees 20 and 33. Interview with the authors. 07/2021.

[9] Interviews 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29, 20, 30, 32, 34, 33, 35, and 36. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[10] Interviewee 6. Interview with the authors. 06/2021.

[11] Interviewees 7, 10, 15, 23, 27, 33, and 35. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[12] Interviewees 23, 27, and 33. Interview with the authors. 07/2021.

[13] Interviewees 7, 23, and 27. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[14] Interviewee 7. Interview with the authors. 06/2021.

[15] Interviewee 5. Interview with the authors. 06/2021.

[16] Interviewees 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 34, 35, and 36. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021. See Iyakaremye, Musabyimana, and Umutoni (2019) about how Burundian refugee women in the Mahama camp are often providers in the family.

during the pandemic than did women and youth, which members attributed to women and youth often having precarious employment.[18] Moreover, members thought that women were "resilient"[19] and took charge of COVID-19 prevention measures despite witnessing their children's hunger, whereas men were unhelpful around the home[20] and sometimes violent:

> We saw that there were many more instances of gender-based violence that occurred during the lockdown. So, most of the women who suffered these acts of violence said that as they were confronted with a nameless poverty… their husbands who were not used to this kind of situation, who were not used to seeing their children spending a night without eating, spending two or three days without eating… became a little bit more brutal and violent. Not because it was their nature or how they were. But, it was a sudden behavior that developed in response to the living conditions.[21]

As this member based in Rwanda notes, *Inamahoro*'s membership was alarmed by the increase in domestic violence that seemed to come with pandemic-related unemployment.

Clearly, to members of the movement, all of these growing insecurities were within the purview of a peace organization, and thus necessitated an expansion of the movement's activities.[22] *Inamahoro*'s president, Dr. Marie Louise Baricako, who leads the organization from Rwanda, explained the reason for this expansion as follows:

> Peace and security, yes, it is absence of war, part of it. But it is not only absence of war. We talk of human security and whatever makes people become restless, makes people feel insecure and in danger is threatening peace and security. Like us, we call ourselves "women peace builders". We seek peace, we seek peace in every meaning of peace. Which means that COVID-19 is our issue because it is threatening the peace and security of the population. And whatever is threatening the peace and security of the population, it is the problem of the peacebuilders. So, we don't look at peace and security as only the absence of war, as only silencing of the guns in the African Union, but we look at the daily living of our people, and whatever threatens their security or their safety becomes our issue.[23]

It is with this intention to "seek peace in every meaning of peace,"[24] even during so-called peace times, that *Inamahoro* embarked on a series of COVID-19-related activities in 2020. As will be highlighted in subsequent sections, for *Inamahoro* "seeking peace in every meaning of peace" can be understood using the lens of a continuum of activism. For instance, *Inamahoro* continued peacebuilding during so-called peace times. It also acted to address insecurities on multiple scales regardless of the space where they occurred, including the home and community. Finally, *Inamahoro*

aimed to combat a variety of "types" of insecurity, such as hunger, gendered violence, and poverty.

Small- and Large-Scale Advocacy

The movement used the pandemic as an opportunity to advocate for a positive peace at various scales and in various places. At the local level, *Inamahoro* raised awareness of COVID-19 prevention measures within the Burundian refugee community in Rwanda. This awareness-raising campaign also had the goal of lessening the impact of the pandemic on the community (Mouvement Inamahoro 2021e). The content of this campaign—which was created by public health experts—included correct information about COVID-19 prevention (Mouvement Inamahoro 2020a). To inform both the content and the method of their awareness-raising efforts, the movement conducted an online survey of 161 Burundian refugees' knowledge and attitudes toward COVID-19 (Mouvement Inamahoro 2021d). *Inamahoro* executed the campaign via audio and video messages disseminated in the media (i.e., radios and social media) in addition to "large-scale community engagement" (Mouvement Inamahoro 2021e).

The community engagement involved *Inamahoro* training thirty-nine community leaders—both movement members and nonmembers—on how to effectively teach members of the public about COVID-19 (Mouvement Inamahoro 2020a). On behalf of the movement, these community mobilizers raised awareness and distributed personal protective equipment (Mouvement Inamahoro 2021e).[25] They also taught others to raise awareness, including nonmember residents of the Mahama refugee camp, which houses over 60,000 Burundian refugees.[26] The movement also directly engaged with the public by hosting in-person and virtual meetings where public health experts answered questions in addition to hosting "experience-sharing sessions" where members who had previously contracted and recovered from COVID-19 explained its seriousness (Mouvement Inamahoro 2021e). Both initiatives were successful, attracting hundreds of participants (Mouvement Inamahoro 2021e).

The movement also engaged in advocacy beyond the individual level. Specifically, *Inamahoro* attempted to draw the attention of several groups—Burundians living in Burundi, the Burundian government, and the international community—to pandemic-related insecurity in Burundi. In terms of advocacy directed at Burundi, since its creation, *Inamahoro* has transmitted weekly advocacy messages—called "Black Monday" messages—via social media and exiled Burundian radios. Each message raises awareness of ongoing insecurity in Burundi, aiming to mobilize Burundians and the general public for peace. During the pandemic, these messages encouraged the Burundian government to improve its weak response to COVID-19.

Inamahoro's members stressed that Burundi's lack of concern for the pandemic continues to have disastrous consequences for the population.[27] Members in Rwanda have heard reports—from Burundian members—of many more COVID-19 cases and deaths in Burundi than the government is reporting.[28] They also emphasized that the

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[17] Interviewees 6, 8, 19, 26, 27, and 33. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[18] Interviewees 7, 10, 11, and 26. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021. See Sibomana's (2021) article on typical employment of Burundian refugee women in Rwanda.

[19] Interviewees 6, 5, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 16, 19, 20, 25, 33, and 36. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[20] Interviewee 19. Interview with the authors. 07/2021.

[21] Interviewee 27. Interview with the authors. 07/2021.

[22] Interviewees 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 18, 19, 20, 23, 27, 28, 29, 32, 33, 34, 35, and 36. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[23] Interviewee 33. Interview with the authors. 07/2021.

[24] Interviewee 33. Interview with the authors. 07/2021.

[25] Interviewees 2, 7, 8, 10, 14, 15, 18, 24, 25, 27, 28, 33, and 36. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[26] Interviewee 7. Interview with the authors. 06/2021.

[27] Interviewees 1, 2, 6, 8, 10, 11, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 26, 28, 33, 35, and 36. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[28] Interviewees 4, 7, 16, 18, 19, and 33. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021. See also Human Rights Watch (2020a).

government's narrative is not merely one of denial and lack of action, but is one of active suppression of any awareness of COVID-19.[29] Members claimed that the government enforces its denial of COVID-19 among the population by stifling doctors who raise awareness of COVID-19 and treating those who wear masks "like deviants."[30]

Although most of their advocacy to Burundi does not take a critical tone and instead encourages the government to improve its response (Mouvement Inamahoro 2020b),[31] *Inamahoro* has criticized a number of the government's actions and inactions pertaining to COVID-19 in its "Black Monday" messages. For instance, one message highlights Burundi's seemingly arbitrary COVID-19 quarantine policy:

> They decide to quarantine all those returning from abroad. But what kind of quarantine is this? On a discretionary basis, the services in charge let some go home and lock up others. No one knows the criteria for choosing who can return home and who is quarantined. (Mouvement Inamahoro 2020b)

The movement's messages also directly address the Burundian people, since in Burundi, public health information is not readily available. These messages identify the lack of transparency in the Burundian government's response to COVID-19 and encourage Burundians to protect themselves during the pandemic.[32] Some messages specifically appeal to women, characterizing their roles as "in the family and country" as "invaluable" and calling on them to "teach children to follow the rules to fight the pandemic and remind adults what health authorities are teaching us" (Mouvement Inamahoro 2021c). Messages directly aimed at women promote *Inamahoro*'s broader aim of encouraging the political participation of women both at the level of formal politics and within the community and home. The movement transmitted these messages via radios, television, social media, WhatsApp, and online articles.[33] Members living in Burundi also discreetly transmitted the movement's advocacy through organizations currently working in Burundi.

Lastly, *Inamahoro* called on the international community with regards to various COVID-19-related issues facing Burundian refugees. For instance, the movement called on the Rwandan government to include Burundian refugees in its vaccine rollout (UNHCR 2021) and for urban refugees to receive food aid that local Rwandan authorities distributed in cities during the lockdown.[34] The movement also regularly advocates for the needs of refugees in the Mahama camp (Mouvement Inamahoro 2021b), and has been especially dedicated to convincing UNHCR to reconsider the reduction of their rations.[35] Although *Inamahoro* has yet to persuade UNHCR to change its policy, it successfully participated in advocating for single women and child mothers to receive full rations.[36]

In sum, *Inamahoro*'s inclusion of COVID-19 in its original advocacy for peace and security in Burundi is indicative of the organization's broad conception of peace and understanding that insecurity occurs in many places and in various political arenas.

Humanitarian Aid

As previously discussed, for Burundian refugees, COVID-19 made the already precarious experience of exile catastrophic. In addition to hunger in the broader Burundian refugee community, *Inamahoro* was especially concerned with the consequences of pandemic-related poverty for women, namely domestic violence. Since its formation in 2015, *Inamahoro* has had a "gender-based violence committee" that has advocated against gender-based violence and provided support to victims. However, members felt that the unprecedented rise in domestic violence in the community was a gendered effect of extreme poverty on a large scale, something that could not be addressed solely through the movement's existing initiatives. As such, *Inamahoro* was faced with what members considered an "obligation" to engage in humanitarian aid in order to combat insecurities within the home.[37]

Inamahoro's membership has always offered "mutual aid"[38] to members facing difficulties. This "mutual aid" was expanded significantly during the pandemic to include helping members with COVID-19-related expenses such as funerals, lost wages, and medical expenses. As Dr. Baricako explains, "we don't remain indifferent whenever there is one of us who is facing a challenge."[39] Members living in Rwanda who had dealt with extreme poverty during the pandemic reflected positively on the solidarity among members[40]: "as a member of the movement, you cannot cry alone."[41]

Nevertheless, providing humanitarian aid to nonmembers on a large scale was new to the movement. However, members in Rwanda repeatedly stressed the large number of fellow refugees who reported to the movement that they had not eaten for days due to unemployment and/or loss of rations during the pandemic[42]:

> In March 2020, there was a total lockdown and … known movement members were told: "we are dying of hunger." We realized that "this community for whom we have been advocating is dying of hunger. Now what do we do?"[43]

The movement initiated its humanitarian aid by sending a member with a car to buy food and distribute it to refugees in need, but the initiative soon grew in scale and complexity.[44] The movement would go on to collaborate with other exiled organizations, including a Burundian youth organization,[45] to distribute over 17,000,000 Rwandan francs (about 17,000 US dollars) to refugees in need via mobile-phone money transfers (Mouvement Inamahoro 2021a).[46] Most of the funds were raised in Europe and Canada and came

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[29] Interviewees 7, 8, 18, 19, 31, and 33. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021. See also Human Rights Watch (2020a).

[30] Interviewees 7, 8, and 19. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021. See also Human Rights Watch (2020a).

[31] Interviewee 33. Interview with the authors. 07/2021.

[32] Interviewee 6 and 33. Interview with the authors. 06-07/2021.

[33] Interviewees 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 14, 16, 27, and 33. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[34] Interviewees 8, 10, 27, 32, and 33. Interview with the authors. 07/2021. Note that there is no evidence of a causal link between the movement's advocacy and the Rwandan government including Burundian refugees in these programs.

[35] Interviewees 7, 8, 10, 16, and 32. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[36] Interviewee 7. Interview with the authors. 06/2021. Note that there is no evidence of a causal link between the movement's advocacy and UNHCR adjusting the ration categories.

[37] Interviewee 33. Interview with the authors. 07/2021.

[38] Interviewees 2, 3, 5, 8, 28, and 33. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[39] Interviewee 33. Interview with the authors. 07/2021.

[40] Interviewees 2, 4, 5, 6, 28, and 33. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[41] Interviewee 2. Interview with the authors. 06/2021.

[42] Interviewees 6 and 30. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[43] Interviewee 6. Interview with the authors. 06/2021.

[44] Interviewees 10 and 13. Interview with the authors. 07/2021.

[45] The organization is called "Le Mouvement International des Jeunes Burundaises" (MIJB).

[46] Interviewee 10. Interview with the authors. 07/2021.

from members and their networks as opposed to funding organizations.[47] As one member in England explained:

> I talk to church people and some friends and we try to fundraise at least to buy some food for the families. It has been a really big success. If you send £20 to Rwanda it is a lot of money. We have really been able to fundraise from members and our friends.[48]

However, fundraising was only one of many tasks, as the number of refugees in need exceeded the movement's resources, complicating the process of determining the recipients and the amount they would receive. The aid was reserved for "the most deprived of the deprived"[49] and had to be capped at 4,000–5,000 Rwandan francs (about 4–5 US dollars) per head (Mouvement Inamahoro 2021a).[50] In order to distribute the aid fairly, the movement assessed potential recipients in terms of need, using factors such as employment, number of children, and health conditions.[51] *Inamahoro* did not discriminate based on ethnicity or political affiliation when distributing the aid.[52] In the end, *Inamahoro* was able to provide aid to 2,904 refugees (Mouvement Inamahoro 2021a) in the midst of a lockdown:[53]

> It took a lot of organization: fundraising, distributing, making lists, verifying if someone has been forgotten. People always called us and said "us too." This really occupied us even though we weren't leaving our houses.[54] But we accomplished something that we hadn't planned. This was not part of our 2020 objectives.[55]

The movement also expanded its pre-existing forms of assistance to Burundian refugees such as helping pay the school fees of refugee children (Mouvement Inamahoro 2021a). Members found that the need for school fees increased during the pandemic,[56] especially for girls, who were more likely than were boys to be pulled out of school due to a lack of funds.[57]

Despite their rather successful humanitarian efforts, *Inamahoro*'s members were painfully aware of the movement's limited means and the reality that relying on precarious work and inconsistent humanitarian aid will not ensure the long-term survival of Burundian refugees (Mouvement Inamahoro 2021e).[58] This has shaped the movement's forward-looking approach to advocacy, as the movement contends that long-term survival of refugees requires investments toward their financial independence and security, another element of a positive peace (Mouvement Inamahoro 2021e). Nevertheless, members did not feel that engaging in COVID-19-related aid and activities hampered their advocacy for peace and security significantly, given that food security "was already in [*Inamahoro*'s] objectives" and vision of peace.[59]

Capacity Building

According to members, peacebuilding involves building capacity—not only for future political processes, but also to contend with insecurities that occur outside of the spotlight of peace processes.[60] For instance, *Inamahoro*'s leadership aspires for its members to return to and participate in leading a peaceful Burundi when it becomes safe to do so.[61] To build the capacities of its members to pursue this goal, the movement has always hosted training seminars for its members on topics related to good governance, leadership, peace and security, and conflict resolution. It also builds the capacities of members (and nonmembers) to contend with short-term goals, such as thriving during exile by teaching women how to run their own small businesses.[62]

However, COVID-19 required *Inamahoro* to pivot its capacity-building activities to account for new forms of insecurity. One aspect of building members' capacity to thrive was transitioning to online activities, which was a challenge as some of the movement's members had never used Zoom or social media—apart from WhatsApp—prior to 2020[63] and others are unable to access the internet due to poverty.[64] Nevertheless, the movement hosted seminars teaching members how to use social media and paid some members' data fees so that they could access movement meetings.[65]

Members also remarked that the avenues of advocacy available during the pandemic—letters, radio messages, social media, telephone calls, and virtual meetings—were far less effective than advocacy in-person.[66] In fact, even though members never traveled to do advocacy in Burundi for safety reasons,[67] Dr. Baricako noted that prior to the pandemic, the movement would run into Burundian officials at international events and get "really good" opportunities for advocacy.[68] Losing these opportunities "slowed down the movement's political struggle."[69]

However, *Inamahoro* seized the opportunity for capacity-building that online advocacy presented to its members. Specifically, members took advantage of online work removing the requirement to travel in order to meet with external partners, something that previously prevented most members from meaningfully interacting with the movement's transnational network.[70] The shift to virtual events allowed members to participate extensively in panels, meetings, and webinars hosted by other organizations.[71] Members appreciated these opportunities to learn and connect with other organizations, with one member from the Mahama refugee camp declaring that "COVID-19 has opened new horizons for women. Women are more open to the world than before COVID-19."[72]

The pandemic also expanded *Inamahoro*'s efforts to build the capacities of nonmembers.[73] Specifically, a spike in child pregnancies that occurred during the lockdown prompted

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[47] Interviewees 1, 8, and 10. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[48] Interviewee 13. Interview with the authors. 07/2021.

[49] Interviewee 23. Interview with the authors. 07/2021.

[50] Interviewee 30. Interview with the authors. 07/2021.

[51] Interviewees 6 and 30. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[52] Interviewees 7 and 33. Interview with the authors. 07/2021.

[53] Interviewees 4, 8, 13, 14, 18, 19, 21, 25, 27, 28, 30, 32, and 33. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[54] Contactless transfer of funds was accomplished using Mobile Money.

[55] Interviewee 6. Interview with the authors. 06/2021.

[56] Interviewees 4, 8, 13, 14, 18, 19, 21, 25, 27, 28, 32, and 33. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[57] Interviewee 33. Interview with the authors. 07/2021.

[58] Interviewees 1, 30, and 33. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[59] Interviewees 3, 8, 11, 18, and 19. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[60] Interviewees 2, 4, and 33. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[61] Interviewees 2, 4, and 33. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[62] Interviewees 2 and 4. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[63] Interviewee 6. Interview with the authors. 06/2021.

[64] Interviewees 5, 10, 21, and 22. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[65] Interviewees 5, 10, 21, 22, and 33. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[66] Interviewees 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 17, 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 31, 32, 33, 34, and 35. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[67] Interviewees 15, 29, 33, and 36. Interview with the authors. 07/2021.

[68] Interviewee 33. Interview with the authors. 07/2021.

[69] Interviewees 5 and 34. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[70] Interviewees 4, 6, 7, 10, and 23. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[71] Interviewees 2, 7, 10, 33, and 36. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

[72] Interviewee 7. Interview with the authors. 06/2021.

[73] Interviewees 2, 4, and 33. Interview with the authors. 06–07/2021.

the movement to devote significant energy to building the capacities of child mothers. For instance, to encourage child mothers to continue their studies,[74] the movement pays for the housing, tuition fees, and childcare of sixty-eight child mothers in Rwanda who have been rejected by their parents after becoming pregnant (Baricako 2021).[75] The movement also sends a member who is a psychologist to speak to the child mothers:

> We have discussions with them, just to encourage them, just to rebuild them. Just to, you know, to make them regain confidence and trust in themselves.[76]

Ultimately, the new insecurities brought on by COVID-19 expanded the scope of *Inamahoro*'s capacity-building efforts. However, the capacity building remains geared toward promoting long-term stability and security, consistent with a feminist understanding of peace.

Conclusion

For these activists, the vast majority of whom are refugees themselves, hunger, domestic violence, displacement, isolation, and lack of access to healthcare and education all constitute security threats and are conditions that *Inamahoro* sought to mitigate. It did so using a broad approach to peacebuilding that was continuous, conducted in various spaces, at various scales and, importantly, was aimed at several types of insecurity. *Inamahoro*'s pursuit of a continuum of activism was thorough and active despite Burundi being designated by international actors and other states as "at peace."

Examining *Inamahoro*, which formed following the breakdown of a peace process that had been panned as successful in a country that still struggles for a positive peace, highlights that insecurity does not discriminate based on whether international actors have deemed a situation to be "war" or "peace." By examining an organization during a period of instability due to nonspectacular insecurities falling short of war, we find an active group that is pursuing a multidimensional continuum of activism. *Inamahoro*'s understanding and execution of its efforts to advocate for peace, engage in humanitarian aid, and build the capacities of women and girls suggest that in the face of nonspectacular insecurity, women's peace organizations may operationalize feminist understandings of peace using this proposed "continuum of activism." Employing this understanding of women's peace activism as being operationalized on a continuum sheds light on the political work that women do out of the spotlight of the formal processes associated with "war" and "peace."

In conclusion, we have sought to offer a preliminary framework to examine women's grassroots peace activism during inauspicious times and places. We have also aimed to emphasize the multiple ways in which an organization with limited resources seeks to improve life for its members, Burundian women in exile, and create a more inclusive Burundian political landscape. *Inamahoro*'s pivot to pandemic-related work aligns with its mandate as a feminist peace association and demonstrates its multifaceted approach to peacebuilding that is steeped in its feminist views and first-hand experiences living in exile. The movement's activities illustrate the importance of conceptually recasting work on women and critical junctures through a feminist peace lens. The continuum of activism that women peace activists engage in merits consideration by both policymakers and scholars, as it offers us a space to bring into conversation the temporality of critical junctures and a feminist conception of peace. Neither analysis nor policy implementation can be considered complete without bringing the two together. Positive peace is not a punctuated event, but rather a process. Future study on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) should extend consideration beyond the signing of peace agreements and the installing of transitional governments, especially in situations involving displacement. This would offer a more complete picture of the relentless work by women activists that is often obscured by the present paradigm. We suspect that there are multiple organizations similar to *Inamahoro* that fly under the radar, but are making notable interventions in global politics at times and in places often overlooked. We call on other scholars and policymakers to look for the critical work done by women activists in "unremarkable" times and places.

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[74] See Ruzibiza (2021) for a discussion of attrition rates of pregnant teens in the Mahama refugee camp as well as the stigma surrounding teen pregnancy in the camp.

[75] Interviewees 22, 23, and 33. Interview with the authors. 07/2021.

[76] Interviewee 33. Interview with the authors. 07/2021.

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