

UNIVERSITY OF RWANDA



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RWANDA**

**COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
CENTRE FOR CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**

**CONTRIBUTION OF THE “16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GBV
CAMPAIGN” IN FIGHTING DEFILEMENT: CASE OF AREA 25
TOWNSHIP**

A dissertation submitted to the University of Rwanda in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a Master of Arts Degree in Peace Studies and Conflict Transformation

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AUTHORISATION TO SUBMIT THE DISSERTATION FOR EVALUATION

I, undersigned, **Dr. Furaha Umutoni Alida**, hereby testify that under my supervision,

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Therefore, he stands with my authorization to submit required copies to the Administration of CCM for evaluation.

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DECLARATION

I, **PETER MWALE KALAYA**, hereby declare that this study, titled “**Contribution of the ‘16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign’ in fighting defilement: Case of Area 25 Township**” is my original work and has, to the best of my knowledge, not been published or submitted to any university for any award before. All consulted materials and sources in the study have duly been declared in the references section.

PETER MWALE KALAYA

Signature:

Date:/...../2022

DEDICATION

To my dearest mother, MARGRET KALAYA, this study is dedicated to you. I know, it is taking a little more time, but my promise still holds. I will make you proud one day!

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Above everyone else, I thank the Almighty God for His abundant love and grace upon my life. “Lord, I rejoice at the thought that you always remember me in Your plans.”

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CEDAW	: Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRC	: Convention on the Right of the Child
CSO	: Civil Society Organization
CWGL	: Centre for Women Global Leadership
ECOWAS	: Economic Community of West African States
FGD	: Focus Group Discussion
GBV	: Gender Based Violence
IEC	: Information, Education and Communication
MHRRC	: Malawi Human Rights Resource Centre
MPS	: Malawi Police Service
SDGs	: Sustainable Development Goals
UNICEF	: United Nations Children Fund
VAW	: Violence Against Women
VIP	: Very Important Person
WGLI	: Women Global Leadership Institute
WHO	: World Health Organization
YONECO	: Youthnet and Counselling
YWCA	: Young Women Christian Association

ABSTRACT

At a time statistics from the Malawi Police Service (MPS) show an increasing trend of defilement cases despite numerous interventions countering with the vice, this study examined the contribution of the “16 Days of Activism against GBV” campaign in fighting defilement and ensuring positive peace in Area 25 Township, Lilongwe, Malawi. It endeavored to achieve the following objectives: i). Ascertain ways in which activities carried out under the “16 Days of Activism campaign are helping in fighting the crime of defilement in Area 25; and ii). Determine participants’ views on the significance of the contributions being made by the campaign in the fight against defilement and bringing peace. It is a qualitative study in which both primary and secondary data were collected and analyzed to inform findings. Primary data were collected through Key Informant Interviews with NGOs and government institutions that actively participate in the campaign and Focus Group Discussions were done with Block Leaders from Area 25 Township. Defilement statistics from Area 25 Township as captured by the Kanengo Police Station between 2017 and 2021 were analyzed as secondary data. The study was informed by Securitization Theory, Discourse Theory and Agenda Setting Theory. The study found that through raising awareness, the campaign is playing a very crucial role in fighting defilement and ensuring a peaceful Malawi for young girls as this allows action to be taken on the vice. Through the awareness, victims, witnesses and duty-bearers such as MPS, judiciary, NGOs, local leaders and parents are empowered to take action such as reporting and acting with speed and professionalism. The study also found that people consider the contributions being made by the campaign as very significant in the battle against defilement.

However, the study identified the following challenges with the campaign: i). Receiving duty-bearers such as MPS, judiciary and prison service are not well empowered to professionally handle the increasing numbers of cases of defilement, and ii). The period for the campaign is short. The study thus, recommends that: i). Authorities empower the MPS, judiciary and other duty-bearers to be able to effectively handle the increasing defilement cases, ii). Organizers of the campaign to extend the period of the campaign, and iii). Establish mechanisms for effective reformation of convicted defilers to prevent them committing same crimes when released.

Key words: *Positive peace, Defilement, 16 Days of Activism Campaign, Sexual violence,*

CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Among the many desperate interventions that concerned stakeholders at global level came up with to deal with Gender Based Violence (GBV) and promote positive peace is the “16 Days of Activism against GBV” campaign. The campaign takes place every year beginning on the 25th November (the International Day of the Elimination of Violence against Women) and ending on the 10th December (Human Rights Day) (UN-HR, 2021). GBV, which includes sexual violence such as defilement is a serious threat to society’s peace and security. Activists launched the campaign at the inaugural Women’s Global Leadership Institute in 1991. Since then, the campaign continues to be coordinated each year by the Center for Women’s Global Leadership (UN WOMEN, 2021). During the campaign, governments, UN agencies, international and local NGOs as well as individuals around the world join hands in calling for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls. The campaign is domesticated in individual participating countries under a shared theme. Some countries frame their own themes to reflect their local prevailing GBV issues.

Globally, the campaign provides a chance to governments, NGOs and stakeholders to intensify awareness and follow up on implementation of policies that fight GBV. At least 5 167 different organizations in 187 different countries engaged in the campaign efforts between 1991 and 2016 (Thompson, C. 2017).

In the United Kingdom, a number of activities are lined up each year during the 16-day campaign period to raise awareness, call for participation and garner support for the fight against GBV. As part of the campaign, researchers: Kayliegh Richardson and Ana Kate Speed of North Umbria University, during the 2017-2018 academic year, designed and delivered a range of teaching activities for clinical students with the aim of increasing students engagement in issues of gender justice and to develop their understanding of the different forms of gender violence as well as the domestic and international frameworks for protecting victims and the roles that different organizations play.

In 2020, the Hammersmith and Fulham Council organized a total of 25 different activities within the campaign period which aimed at raising awareness on reporting mechanisms of GBV, available services to victims and how to acquire them (Hammersmith and Fulham Council, 2020). Some of the activities that took place during the period include the Hammersmith & Fulham Raising Awareness Sessions, the Angelou Partnership Advance Talks and the Intersectional Conversation about the Impact of Covid-19 on Domestic Abuse.

The campaign gained momentum in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) from 1998 after heads of state in the region adopted the Addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children that year. The South African Government joins the international community each year, participating in the campaign as part of its commitment to reducing cases of GBV, with the country standing out as among those with the highest records in the world (UN Women, 2021). The country started participating in the campaign in 1999 and the development of communication strategies and materials for the 16 Days of Activism Campaign falls under the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) (Mutambuli, 2012). In 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa dedicated the November edition of his monthly newsletter to highlighting the impact that GBV had had on the country in which he emphasized four key points, namely: the need for collective efforts to add on legislative and policy changes, the need to salute the work done by those outside the government, the identification of essential fields for the care of survivors and the serious impact GBV had had on the country (Mlaba, 2020). Mutambuli, (2012) notes that in South Africa, people believe the campaign is important as it helps them to know what to do when faced with gender-based violence and how they can assist others who are affected.

Malawian activists started taking part in the 16 Days of Activism Campaign as early as 2000 with their activities mainly focusing on large scale awareness meetings in rural and urban areas, engagement with law enforcers and community leaders, meeting victims as well as organizing marches near parliament to influence policy (Swindle, 2016). Gender activist Emma Kaliya and her NGO, the Malawi Human Rights Resource Centre (MHRRC) expanded the activities beginning 2008 until later, when the government took notice and started taking a central role in planning and coordinating the event (Swindle, 2016). During the campaign, government

departments, local and international organizations working in Malawi and the civil society put resources together and join hands in consolidating and intensifying efforts to prevent and eradicate GBV. Among others, they unite in raising awareness on the evils of GBV and publicize ways in which victims and witnesses can report such abuses to the police for justice to prevail. In 2020, the campaign was launched by Minister of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare, Patricia Kaliati in Mangochi District under a localized theme, "Unite to End Gender Based Violence: Prevent, Report, Respond, Fund" (Mandala, 2020). The 2020 global theme was "Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect." After this launch, stakeholders went flat out on the ground in cities, towns and villages, as well as used the mass media to communicate GBV messages.

Among the worst forms of GBV in the world is defilement. Defilement is defined as having carnal knowledge of a girl under the age of 16 (Malawi Penal Code, 2011). It falls under sexual violence as a form of GVB. During the past few decades, GBV has gained international recognition as a grave social and human rights concern (McCleary, 2013). Globally, an estimated 736 million women, translating to almost one in three women, have been subjected to GBV (UN Women, 2021). GBV can include sexual, physical, mental and economic harm inflicted in public or in private (UNHCR, 2021).

Girls are the most vulnerable group to experience sexual abuse. In 2020, an estimated 120 million females aged under 20 suffered some form of forced sexual abuse globally, with the highest rates reported in the African region (WHO 2020, UNICEF 2021).

In Nigeria, a total of 2 154 reports of abuse of children were reported in 2020 out of which 1, 005 were defilements of girls (Okeke, 2021). The figures could even be more as 60 percent of cases of child abuse are never reported or made public in the Nigeria (Nagarajan, 2021).

In Malawi, cases of defilement are rampant and continue to put lives of girls at great risk (Mellish, et al, 2015). Annual reports on crime-management from the Malawi Police Service (MPS) covering a period between 2017 and 2020 revealed a steady increasing trend in cases of defilement. For instance, in 2020 alone, a total of 2 343 reports of defilement of girls were received, representing a percentage increase of 25 from the 1 766 cases that were received in the previous 2019 (MPS Annual Report, 2020). Graynor and Cronin (2017) found that one in every three girls

in Malawi who have sex under the age of 18 is coerced which practically means they are defiled. The 2016/17 Malawi Demographic and Health Survey found that 34 percent of women aged between 15 and 49 reported experiencing sexual violence (Malawi National Statistical Office Report [MNSR], 2019).

Area 25 Township is one of the most populous and eventful locations in Lilongwe City, Capital of Malawi. It is a residential location although some companies and factories have plants and offices within its precincts. In 2017, the township had a total population of 107,316 (MNSR, 2019). In matters of security, the township is served by the Kanengo Police Station. Just as mirrored by statistics at national level, cases of defilement in Area 25 Township are high and continue to rise. In 2020 alone, the Kanengo Police Station recorded 121 cases of defilement most of which were from the township (MPS Annual Report, 2020). This is despite the fact that various interventions to end defilement and other GBV related crimes continue to be implemented in the area by both government and NGOs. Different activities under the 16 Days of Activism against GBV Campaign take place each year in Area 25.

Globally, regionally and nationally, governments, NGOs and individuals continue to initiate and implement activities and programs that aim at reducing GBV in general and cases of defilement in particular. These interventions are diverse in nature and aim at achieving different specific targets within the general battle against GBV. The “16 Days of Activism against GBV Campaign” is a good example of these interventions which transcends international boundaries, implemented at international, regional and national levels. It is among the persistent efforts by government and NGOs that have managed to put GBV and HIV/Aids on the national agenda (Mkandawire, 2009).

With cases of defilement still going up in Malawi despite various programs and campaigns being implemented over the years, questions arise requiring that studies be conducted to evaluate or assess the performance and contributions these campaigns are making to the fight against GBV. While extensive studies have over the years been conducted on the “16 Days of Activism” campaign in different parts of the world, including Malawi, very few have focused on examining its contribution and impact. In a literature review on GBV in Malawi, Mellish et al (2015) identified what they termed “a critical gap in studies to evaluate GBV program interventions,” and

further suggested that studies be done to fill the information gap existing on the topic. This study thus, in examining the “16 days of activism campaign against GBV in fighting defilement” uncovers new knowledge and insight on the topic which it adds to the to the field and contributes to making Malawi a truly safe and peaceful nation even for young girls.

1.2 Problem Statement

Children, especially girls, must be protected at all times as demanded by Article 34 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989) which implores states members to put in place measures that guarantee such protection from all forms of abuse, including sexual exploitation under which defilement falls. In the same vein, Chapter 4 of the Malawi Constitution is the Bill of Rights which provides and declares protection of human rights for all, including children. The Malawi Penal Code (2010) criminalizes any sexual activity with a girl under the age of 16, calling it defilement and punishing offenders with a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

However, the increase in the number of girls being defiled in Malawi, as revealed by the MPS Annual Reports between 2017 and 2020 shows that Malawi is not a safe and secure country for girls. This is a sad reality and uncalled for especially when one considers the commitments shown by the Malawi government and its partners to protect children from sexual abuse. Such commitments include the ratification of international treaties on protection of children, the enactment of various laws, the country’s constitution as well as the drafting national policies that pledge to safeguard children’s rights.

It has been twenty-one (21) years since Malawi began taking part in the “16 Days of Activism against GBV” campaign which supports the afore mentioned commitments and other available initiatives in promoting the rights of children among others. Over the years, a number of studies have been done on the campaign and its impact, as well as on the crime of defilement in Malawi. However, among these studies is a paucity on those that establish a clear nexus between the two. In addition, as observed by Mellish, M., Settergren, S. and Sapuwa. H. (2015), in their publication, a “Literature Review to Inform National Policy on GBV in Malawi,” there is a “huge and critical gap” in studies to evaluate social programs and interventions on GBV. This study thus unearths new empirical knowledge on the topic as well as establishes a nexus between the “16 Days of

Activism campaign” and defilement cases in Malawi. The knowledge provided by the study adds insight on this and how Malawi can achieve positive peace where girls would enjoy safety and security as they stay safe in their local communities.

1.3 Research questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- (a). In what ways are the different programs and activities under the “16 Days of Activism against GBV” campaign helping in fighting defilement cases in Area 25 Township?
- (b). To what extent is the “16 Days of Activism against GBV” campaign significant in fighting the crime of defilement in Area 25 Township?

1.4 Research Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 General objective

The general objective of this study was to examine the contributions of the “16 Days of Activism against GBV” campaign to the fight against the crime of defilement in Area 25 Township, Lilongwe, Malawi.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

Specifically, the study endeavored to:

- (a). Ascertain ways in which various programs and activities under the “16 days of activism against GBV” are helping in fighting defilement cases in Area 25 Township.
- (b). To determine participants’ views on the significance of the contributions being made by “16 Days of Activism against GBV Campaign” in the fight against defilement and bringing peace to Area 25 Township.

1.5 Significance of study

This study, thorough and logical as it is, is significant in that it unearths new knowledge and insights on the topic under study as it relates to peace and security. With very few studies conducted in Malawi on the topic, and those studies, having focused on different areas, used different methods and applied different theories, this study provides valuable empirical and theoretical insights on the subject. It contributes valuable new knowledge into the field which adds onto that which was generated by other scholars. In examining the contributions of the campaign,

the study highlights the different activities and programs that are undertaken and how these are contributing to the fight against defilement. It also determines the extent of the significance of the campaign itself to the fight against defilement and assurance of positive peace in Area 25 Township, Lilongwe, Malawi. By doing this, the study brings out treasured information that fills the gap that has been in existence in the field as a result of limited studies as noted by Mellish, M., Settergren, S. and Sapuwa. H. (2015). This means studies that will be conducted on the topic in the future will, in part, rest on this knowledge on top of the that already provided by previous studies in the area. The study thus provides an important addition to the existing literature on the subject especially as it relates to peace and security.

1.6 Scope/delimitation

It is important in any study to provide limitations and define parameters within which it dwells. This section specifies the scope of the study in terms of the geographical area, time and content or literature.

1.6.1 Geographical Scope

The study was conducted in Area 25 Township, Lilongwe, Malawi. The township is a well-defined residential area situated in the northern part of Lilongwe City and includes Mgoni town. It is bounded by the Kanengo Industrial Area to the East and South, Area 49 South and West and Choto to the north.

1.6.2 Time Scope

While the “16 Days of Activism Campaign against GBV begun in 1991 and Malawi started taking part in it in 2000, this study only focused on the period between 2017 and 2021. This five-year period was chosen because of its convenience. It was easier to obtain the data that was required to inform results during this defined period. It was not difficult for Kanengo Police Station to compile and share their data on defilement within this period. In the same vein, it was easy for respondents in various institutions and NGOs, as sources in the study who were interviewed to recall and relate what had happened within the last five years. Chances were high that people who were responsible for this campaign beyond five years in these organizations had been transferred or had changed departments. It was therefore sensible and realistic to consider this specific time period.

1.6.3 Content Scope

While the “16 Days of Activism against GBV Campaign” aims at fighting all forms of GBV, this study limited itself to the campaign’s contribution to the fight of the crime of defilement. It therefore did not consider the rest of GBV crimes that the campaign targets such as rape, wife battery and others. This narrow content scope was chosen to ensure thoroughness of the study considering the limited time and resources that was available.

1.7 Study Structure/Organization

The study was structured in such a way that it is organized around four chapters. Chapter One presents the General Introduction while Chapter Two provides a detailed Literature Review. Chapter Three is the Methodology of the study while Chapter Four presents the Analysis and Discussion of the findings of the study. Lastly, Chapter Five presents the Summary of study as well as the Conclusion, Challenges and Recommendation.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis and a review of literature on the 16 Days of Activism Campaign and the crime of defilement as a form of sexual violence and GBV. In the process of the discussion, a nexus between the campaign and defilement is established. Conducting a review of literature helps a researcher in a number of ways which include informing about the existing knowledge on a chosen topic and giving insights on how much the topic has already been researched (Creswell, 2014). It helps the researcher to make informed decisions based on what has already been written, thereby preventing a repetition of studies. It also helps the researcher in identifying methodologies that have been used in the past by other researchers when tackling similar topics. A review of literature also presents an opportunity to the researcher to show how much he knows of the topic being researched.

The sources of literature include textbooks, journal articles, research papers and reports from NGOs, governments and think-tanks among others. The review is primarily concerned with condensing and aligning relevant information as well as identifying researchable gaps and deficiencies in knowledge with the aim of filling them up later. The review connects the discussed literature and the identified gaps to the study objectives presented earlier in the paper. The literature review also presents a theoretical framework that informs the study. Relevant theories and frameworks that seem to explain the relationships existing between the two variables are analyzed to see how they help in clarifying the phenomenon in the study.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

This study is guided and informed by two theories, namely, Securitization Theory and the Agenda Setting Theory of the media. These theories are briefly discussed in the following section.

2.2.1. Securitization Theory

Securitization Theory was conceived in 1988 by Ole Waever and expanded afterwards by the Copenhagen School. The theory postulates that security is a speech act, that just by saying ‘security’ something is “being done” (Taureck, 2006.) The theory states that by labeling something as a security issue, it becomes one. The theory tries to answer the question how an issue becomes a security issue (Ejdus, 2009). Its development was inspired by the works of Wendt, Austin and

Searle, and it rests on the social-constructivist assumption that language exists prior to security and not vice versa (Eroukhmanoff, 2018). As Potter and Wetherell, (1995), put it and captured by Jorgensen and Phillips (2002), the idea of security in this sense is constructed by language itself as in discursive psychology where language is considered not merely to express experiences but also to constitute experiences and the subjective, psychological reality of society.

Putting weight on the theory, Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde (1998) as cited by (Eroukhmanoff, 2018, p. 3) argue: ‘by saying the words, something is done, like betting, giving a promise or naming a ship.’

The theory posits that countries ‘strategies on security are not “natural givens,” but are carefully chosen by those in power or with authority. Scholars who support this theory say matters of political nature are mostly labeled to look like more serious in terms of their threats so that investments can be made to deal with them quickly and decisively as they are *dangerous, menacing, threatening and alarming* by ‘securitizing actors.’ Securitization actors are people who yield powers in society to catapult any issue forward ‘beyond politics’ (Ejdus, 2009). The theory thus, states that it is only by calling or naming certain issues as “security matters” that they really become ones, hence it challenges other methods to security.

In expounding the theory, Sethi E. (2015) argues that the meaning of security is constructed through subjective representations regarding what a security issue is made by various social and political actors, including state officials, non-state organizations, and communities. He contends that it is the opinionated conception of an issue on the part of actors and their setting, background or situation in which they choose to represent the issue that define something as either a security matter or not.

The theory of securitization is mainly concerned with the job that institutional actors do in giving meaning and labeling security issues, with emphasis on how these actors’ positions of power over the rest of the public and capability to influence government decisions that make them legitimate “securitizing actors” (Buzan and Waever, 2003, p. 72). Such institutional actors can be politicians, local leaders or other individuals or people with influence

Balzacq (2005, p. 171-3) argues that a social matter is sufficiently and adequately securitized if it is audience-centered and contextually appropriate. This is to say, it becomes successful if the

labeling is accepted by the audience. In this sense, security is thus a social construction and is done through the subjective representations of actors who have a socially valid voice in global politics such as state officials, non-state organizations, communities, and even individuals.

Theorists on securitization consider the following areas as specifics in which securitization frequently occurs: the political, military, economic, societal, and environmental sectors. Individual security issues are expressed as threatening a referent object in each area. For instance, identity is often pinpointed as the referent object. In the same vein, endangered species and the ecosystem among others are seen as referent objects in the environmental sector.

Eroukhmanoff (2018), argues that ordinary social matters become securitized when the public jointly approves on the nature of the security issue and agrees to take special actions against it. In this sense, securitization is considered to have failed when the public does not agree with a securitization actor's speech act, in which case, it only shows a securitizing move.

Securitization theory applies to this study in that it explains how defilement and GBV in general have over the year been labeled security issues. At first, it was through the work of activists and NGOs and now it has become a government issue, taken up by politicians to give meaning to defilement and sexual violence as serious security issues. Today, unlike in the past, defilement is so serious in Malawi and the world at large that government, through its agencies such as the police or the Ministry of Homeland Security and Ministry of Gender, Disability and Social Welfare have specific policies that aim at addressing the problem. These institutions have to come out to the public to explain what they are doing in addressing the problem, emphasizing the meanings attached to it through the process of securitization.

2.2.2 Discourse (analysis) Theory

Closely related to Securitization Theory for its focus on language and the social construction of security is Discourse Analysis. Just as securitization theory is rooted in the social-constructionist assumptions that language exists before security and considers 'security' as a speech act, Discourse Analysis Theory is concerned with explaining the role of language in the social construction of the world (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002). It is one of the many social constructionist approaches available and focuses on language and identity. In general, discourse analysis is wide, composed of different approaches used to explore varied issues in different fields.

According to Rear (2013), central to discourse analysis as a theory, as put forward by Laclau and Mouffe (1985), is that discourse constructs the social world in meaning and that since language is ever evolving, meaning cannot be permanently fixed. He asserts that the fixed meaning of language or hegemony comes about as a result of a ‘discursive struggle’ where different discourses wrestle with each other on the understanding of the world. It analyses language as it is used to enact activities, perspectives and identities (Gee, 2001).

Maquibar (2018), quotes Fairclough’s seminal work, *Language and Power* (1989), as arguing that the use of language in everyday context (discourse) has the power to construct reality and influence our worldview. That is to say language is powerful and has the potential to maintain or challenge power relations in society. Commenting on discourse theory, Oparinde, et al. (2021), in their study: “*Powerful Discourse: Gender-Based Violence and Counter-Discourses in South Africa*” argue that language has the potential to unite or divide, and that it possesses the power to influence, through the ways it shapes and is shaped by culture and society. They further assert that the way we use words and language influences and is influenced by how we understand and perceive the world around us, quoting other scholars who have also written extensively on language and discourse such as Foucault (1970), Fairclough (1989), Van Dijk (2006), and Wodak (1995).

Fairclough, (1989), as quoted by Easteal, et al (2018) understands discourse as a social practice made visible using language which is underpinned by ideological and structural power relations. As an illustration of discourse, Mosha (2013), in a study titled: “*Discourse Analysis of Gender-based Violence in Contemporary Kiswahili Fiction: A Case Study of Selected Novels of the Past Three Decades (1975–2004) and Young Tanzanians’ Interpretations,*” analyzed textual representation of GBV in Kiswahili novels in which she uncovered the dominance of male power as a cause of violence against women depicted in the novels. She argued that the discourses produced in these novels ended up exonerating abusers while vilifying survivors thereby concluding that textual representation of GBV in Kiswahili novels failed to challenge dominant discourses that maintain oppressive power relations in Tanzanian society.

Discourse Analysis, as a theory applies to this study in that it explains how language, in the form of oral or text, is used by organizers of the 16 Days of Activism Campaign to advance messages of GBV in general and sexual violence and defilement in particular. During the campaign, messages about GBV are carried out in language as a vehicle and disseminated at different levels

to targeted audiences. As put above by Fairclough above, language is powerful and has the potential to construct, challenge or maintain reality. Such is that power at the disposal of those who plan and implement the campaign.

2.2.3. Agenda Setting Theory

The Agenda-Setting Theory describes the ability of the media to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda (Matsaganis and Payne, 2005). The main postulate of the theory is that if an item or issue is frequently covered in the media, the audience end up regarding it as more important. The theory was developed by Max McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1968. In essence, the theory explains the mass media's influence and powers to make certain issues public agendas.

This theory illustrates the connection in the relationships between the emphasis that the mass media put on an issue and the media audiences' or the public's reaction to such issue (Littlejohn and Foss, 2009). In his research, Bernard (1963) as cited by Zain (2014, p. 72) found that the mass media are only capable of telling what to think about and not on what to think. Therefore, the mass media are only responsible in delivery of information and not to set what the opinion of the audiences.

Matusitz and Ochoa (2018) note that news media set public agenda by discussing certain topics more frequently or less frequently which in turn influence the public into focusing on such topics or taking particular stance on them. Thus, by filtering, shaping and concentrating on specific issues, the media lead the public into thinking that the issues are more important than they really are. Adding weight to this, Littlejohn and Foss, (2009) post that media audiences tend to form their own opinion and beliefs or focus on only those issues that are considered as worthy of inclusion on their mental agendas.

While the original version of the Agenda Setting theory focused solely on describing the media's influence on politics, scholars who further developed it expanded its application and scope to other non-political dimensions of social life such as advertising and sports (Weaver, 2007). This is further echoed by Matsaganis and Pyne (2005) who assert that not only does the theory apply to politics but also explain how the mass media colors particular events for their media audiences. The media is thus seen as being responsible for manipulating, swaying and shaping a wide range

of public opinions and agenda. It further states that such influence on the public agenda can happen intentionally or unintentionally.

Reese (1991) contends that the theory is relevant not only to mass media and communications, but also to other related social sciences such as political communication. In the case of this study, it can be extended that the theory applies even to the field of peace and security.

Over the years, studies on scholarly materials on the Agenda Setting have given emphasis on more important issues such as who is responsible in setting the mass media's agenda? What are the mass media's agendas, and how far the mass media able to influence or frame the public agenda? (Zain, 2014).

Some researches propose that agenda setting can equally and effectively be done by politicians and public relations practitioners (Walgrave and Aelst, 2006; McCombs and Shaw, 1993). These studies create an opening in the possibility of the state's role in endorsing their policies through the agenda setting of mass media. This is true and makes sense as seen when it comes to election periods or political agenda (Walgrave, Soroka and Nuytemans, 2008).

Although the has Agenda Setting Theory has several strengths, which include its high predictive, organizing and explanatory powers, it is limited in a number of ways. Some scholars question the extent of the media's influence such as how directly and to what extent the media can set public agenda. Some studies suggest that people's variables such as education background and understanding of the media by audiences on the agenda which is presented by the mass media can lessen the effects of media agenda setting on individual or audience (Matsaganis and Payne, 2005; McCombs and Shaw, 1997). Lippmann, (1922), as cited by Zain (2014, p. 56) argued that such influence from the mass media in forming opinion is impossible to those people who live far away from the information provided or to those who are difficult to access the information from the mass media.

Everett Rogers and James Dearing (1988) as cited in Zain (2014, p. 72) believes that the Agenda Setting Theory, in connection with mass media stand with interrelationships between three agendas, namely: public agenda, media agenda and policy agenda.

The Agenda Setting Theory informs this study in that it explains how the media is used by organizers of the 16 days of Activism Campaign to set the agenda for the public. The campaign mainly uses the media, such as radio, Television and newspapers among others. During the Campaign, GBV messages, including those on defilement are carried out frequently in these media, thereby using them to form the agenda. In the end, consumers of media content (people) start thinking and discussing these topics because the agenda is successfully set through the media.

2.3. Theoretical Literature

2.3.1. The power of language in the 16 Days of Activism Campaign: A Mirrored reality of the changing discourse on conceptualization Peace

The birth and popularization of the “16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign” can better be expressed and discussed from a social constructionism and discursive psychology point of view for it rode on the shoulders of language as a social force. According to discursive psychology under discourse analysis, language is not just a channel that transparently communicates a pre-existing psychological reality which is the basis of experience. Rather, subjective psychological realities are constituted through discourse, defined as situated language use or language use in everyday texts and talk (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002). The initial launch of the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign in 1991 by gender activists at the inaugural Women’s Global Leadership Institute (WGLI) in 1991 did not sprout out of the blue. It mirrored and reflected the changing global discourse on the meaning and definition of the concepts of “peace” and “security” in the Post-Cold War period. In the field of International Relations, the Post-Cold War Period saw the emergence of “Critical Studies and Theories of Security” which challenged the traditional conceptualization of “security” and “peace.” John de Bhal, (2014) concedes that security is a contested concept.

Critical theory, informed by Gramsci and the Frankfurt School, both of which have a Marxist lineage, became part of a larger post-positivist challenge to the discipline and to the development of critical security studies (Fierke, 2017). From a Critical Security Studies’ point of view, security is looked at from the perspective of the individual as a referent object differentiated from the traditional standpoint where the “state” is security’s referent object (Booth, 2005). It was during this period that seeds that led to the publication of a report on Human Security in 1994 which spelt out the seven areas of concern by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) were sown.

The period after the Cold War again saw the emergence of feminists and the intensification of women and girl's rights as human rights. The 16 Days of Activism Campaign became a major global intervention in the promotion of women and girls' rights, riding on the wave of heightened activism by feminists, which became more pronounced during the United Nation's Decade for Women. The UN Decade for women was a period between 1975 and 1985 during which women around the world held meetings that produced reports and lay foundations for interventions and actions on women's' rights in later years (Gemelli, 2018). During this period, three major global meetings for women took place from which the 16 Days of Activism Campaign was birthed among others, following the establishment of the Centre for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) Institute at Douglas College, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey in the United States of America in 1989 which is credited for the roll out of the campaign and its coordination worldwide (Thompson, 2017).

The first Global Women's Conference was held in Mexico City, Mexico, in 1975, with the second following five years later in 1980 in Copenhagen, Germany. The third UN Women Conference was held in Nairobi, Kenya in 1985 which basically celebrated the accomplishments of the Decade for Women and established an agenda that would guide future efforts to promote worldwide equality for women and girls. At these meetings, participants discussed, planed and produced reports and papers that have guided the direction and fight of violence against women and girls over the years, including promotion of basic human rights, pay equity and landholdings (UN Women, 2020). The UN Decade of Women and its conferences helped establish the legitimacy of women issues among which was the rolling out of the 16 Days of Activism Campaign. The fourth World Conference on Women would be held in Beijing, china in 1995 (Thompson, 2017).

Thus, the initial roll-out of the campaign in 1991 was not an isolated event but part of a larger Global Current of Narrative On What Constitutes Security.

2.3.2. Framing of the Campaign on the Calendar and its Evolution Over the Years

According to Rocke and Reilly (1995), the 16 Days Campaign against GBV was tactically planted between the dates: November 25 and December 10 to encompass four significant dates that capture noteworthy events in the fight for women's rights. The dates are November 25 which is the International Day against Violence against Women, December 10, the World's Aids Day,

December 6 which is the anniversary for the Montreal massacre and December 10, the International Human Rights Day.

Of the dates above, 25 November (International Day Against Violence Against Women) was chosen to commemorate the lives of the Mirabal sisters who were murdered on that date in 1960 in the Dominican Republic during the Trujiro dictatorship. The date was declared by the first Feminist Encuentro for Latin America and the Caribbean in 1981. December 6 commemorates the lives of 14 female Engineering students at Ecole Polytechnic - University of Montreal Canada in 1989 who were shot dead for being feminists, according to the man who gunned them down (Fairbrairn, J. Et al, 2021). December 10 (International Human Rights Day) commemorates the date the Universal Declaration on Human Rights was proclaimed in 1948. Taken together, the 16 day-period of the campaign paints and reflects the grief, sorrow and hope that illustrate the victimization and activism of women (Rocke and Reilly, 1995).

In trying to give a fair analysis of the evolution of the campaign, Thompson (2017) splits it into four phases, namely: The Beginnings, The UN World Conferences, a Global Campaign and Focus on GBV and militarism.

The first phase, (the Beginnings) cover a period between 1991 and 1992 in which groundwork for the campaign was done, as well as its establishment with its main objective and mission clearly spelt out by the WGLI. The decision to frame it within the dates it occurs and the reasons behind the choice were also made during this phase. In 1991, the WGLI partnered with the International Women's Tribune Centre and the World Young Women Christian Association (YWCA) to organize a global petition drive that included the following demand to the United Nations:

“We, the undersigned, call upon the 1993 United Nations World Conference on Human Rights to comprehensively address women’s human rights at every level of its proceedings. We demand that gender violence, a universal phenomenon which takes many forms across culture, race, and class, be recognized as a violation of human rights requiring immediate action.”

During this phase, in the USA, the Centre for Women Global Leadership (CWGL) managed eighteen different activities with the help of other interested sponsors and featured participants from local organizations, national non-governmental organizations, Unions and Native American

women, to mention but a few. The function on which the 16 Days of Activism was launched in New York in North America on November 26 was also the official launch of the 1991 petition drive (Thompson, 2017).

Fourteen nations participated and contributed to the first International Campaign Activities in 1992 with extra nine countries assuring the CWGL of their planned events. About one third of those countries also took part in the initial WGLI. In 1992 the event also comprised CWGL and the International Women's Tribune center which called for international hearings and more effort to documentation of abuse of women's rights. The first of such hearing started during that same year's campaign.

The second phase (The UN World Conferences) cover the period between 1993 and 2001 (Thompson, 2017). During this phase, many appeals which demanded the UN World Conference on Human Rights to decisively deal with abuse and violations of women's human rights were made as part of the Global Campaign for Women's Human Rights initiated by CWGL and its associates. The appeals, were interpreted in twenty-four different by local campaigners. They amassed a total of 175,000 signatures from 115 countries. The campaign contributed immensely in bringing in energy in demonstrating through the popular process, the significance of international awareness to local issues. It turned out to be the integral part and a reflection of the upcoming actions to achieve accountability and compensation for all GBVs through the use of a human rights framework.

During the period 1993 to 1995, the campaign worked hard to strengthen links between women's concerns and the claiming of rights through UN forums and mechanisms. In 1994, the campaign was aimed mainly to call for a continued raise in awareness on women's rights, with regard to the then fresh UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women which was approved in December of 1993, the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women (adopted in April 1994), and to the requirement to amplify the good results of the Cairo World Conference on Population and Development.

At the center of the 1995 campaign was the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women whose slogan was "Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing: Bringing Women's Human Rights Home."

In 1999, CWGL decided to implement a triple advocacy focus: follow up on governments' commitments in Beijing, lobby to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), remove reservations, and calls for the official recognition of November 25 as International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

2001, which is considered the year of the UN World Conference on Racism came out as the end of the use of world conferences in coming up with calls for action. In the next two years, the theme, Racism and Sexism – was chosen with the aim of encouraging NGOs to emphasize their attention on the operationalization and execution of the pledges made by countries in Durban, South Africa and on the connection between gender and race in as far as Violence Against Women (VAW) was concerned.

The third phase, according to Thomson (2017) covers a period from 2002 to 2009 and is named “*A Global Campaign.*” during this period, a number of reasons contributed to the steady growth of the campaign. The included: The increase of NGO websites which ensured enhanced exchange of information and ideas and the expansion to new areas, the ever-increasing number of regional and international NGOs participated directly or gave it the support and visibility that would accelerate the pace of its expansion, the expanded media coverage due to the campaign's institutionalized anniversary dates and track record.

It was during this phase that the campaign became well known and popularized around the globe including in Africa and Malawi in particular. For instance, while 108 countries and less than 800 organizations participated in the campaign in 2000 165 countries and over 3000 organization took part in 2009.

Thompson, (2017), in an article titled: An Assessment of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign, submitted to the CWGL, Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences, The State University of New Jersey, calls the period between 2010 and 2015 of the campaign as the “Focus on GBV and militarism.” In the report, she points out the change in of the direction and priorities in the campaign emanating from the corresponding change in leadership at CWGL between the Founding Director, Charlotte Bunch who was replaced by Radhika Balakrishnan, an economist and international human rights expert. Among the changes effected in 2010 to the campaign include the adoption of GBV and militarism where each year, the central theme links

GBV with militarism. The other change is the increased use of social media in the campaign to increase its visibility and reach. There is thus an increased use of social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Flickr, Tumblr, and Twitter among others. There has also been an emphasis on documentation of the reach and implementation of the campaign. Since 2009/10 a new database has allowed the Center to better track participating organizations and the types of activities they engage in.

The period between 2015 and 2021, the 30th anniversary of the campaign, has seen an increased use of social media to increase the campaign's reach as well as the participation of more and more numbers of countries and NGOs taking part in the event. The coming in of Covid-19 in 2019 and improvements and penetration of technology has made the last two editions of the campaign relying more on the social media.

2.3.3. The 16 Days of Activism, a Global Campaign

From its establishment to date, the campaign has always had a global touch with a global agenda. Ground work of the campaign involved participation of women from different parts of the world and its general objective and mission, as well as the nature of programs that are implemented carry a global theme. At global level, the campaign is coordinated by the center for Women's Global Leadership (Swindle, 2016). However, most of the programs and activities under the campaign are funded and supported by international and local NGOs, governments and their agencies and philanthropists. Globally, NGOs such as UN Women, World Health Organizations and Plan International have continued to play a major role in the campaign world over, their activities include supporting local NGOs and governments, plan and implement activities and programs and assist in the coordination of the campaign.

The United Nations began sponsoring the campaign in 2000 (Swindle,2016). It officially supports the 16 Days Campaign through the "United-Nations Secretary General's UNiTE Campaign to End Violence against Women Campaign (UNiTE) (UNHCR, 2021).

The campaign thus has footprints across all continents of the world, from Europe to Asia, Africa to Australia, and North America to South America.

As pointed out in Chapter One, the campaign gained much momentum in Southern Africa from 1998 after Southern African Development Community heads of adopted the addendum on the

Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children that year. Today, the campaign is commemorated in each of the 16 countries in the regional block. From 1999 when South Africa began participating in the campaign, four NGOs can be crowned the founding status as they have always remained an integral part, coordinating the event and planning activities to raise awareness and hold authorities accountable. The organizations are *Ilitha Labantu* based in Cape Town, *Masimanyane*, based in East London and *People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA)*, bases in Johannesburg.

In Malawi, it was ardent human rights activist, Emma Kalia and her organization, the Malawi Human Rights Resource Centre (MHRRC) that are on record to have been among the first to take on board and start implementing activities under the “16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign” around 2001 (Swindle, 2016). Gradually, the campaign gained momentum with more and more NGOs, civil society organizations, government departments and playing an active role. The campaign has grown to become one of the main annual interventions that that bring together government and its stakeholders in such as NGOs, faith groups, the police, political and local leaders to show solidarity in their work as they raise awareness on the violence against women and girls such as rape and defilement and the need to report to authorities. The campaign is coordinated by the Malawi Government through its Ministry of Gender, Disability and Social Welfare (Kalero, 2021). The ministry domesticates the international theme to speak to local GBV issues ensures a harmonized and streamlined approach to GBV issues by all stakeholders. The 2021 16 Days of Activism Campaign in Malawi was launched by the country’s first lady, Monica Chakwera in Nkhatabay District, indicating how popular it has become (The Daily Times, 2021). The campaign plays a big role in ensuring that information of sexual violence against women and girls, such as defilement get the attention of responsible authorities and are reported to the Malawi Police Service for action.

From the time the 16 Days of Activism Campaign was launched, it has continued to play a major role in the fight of GBV in general and sexual violence and defilement in particular. Globally, it set the agenda and provided direction on how future activists would proceed in the promotion of rights of women and girls. The campaign unites different stakeholders in the fight for the rights and freedoms of women around the world in which they come together, pooling resources and combining activities to show solidarity in their work.

2.3.4. Defilement as a peace, security and human rights issue

Defilement is a serious crime that falls under sexual violence as a form of GBV. A definition of defilement has already been given in Chapter One, taken from Malawi's Penal Code and is the one that will be used throughout this document in the study. It is a debilitating experience for the victimized children with negative psychological, social, educational and physical health outcomes that are not only detrimental to the affected child but also their families and society at large (Reza et al., 2009; Madu et al., 2010; Collin-vezina et al., 2013; WHO, 2014). It is a serious security concern, as well as a human rights issue and an impediment on positive peace.

Capturing Johan Galtung's conception of positive peace, Islam, (2013) describes positive peace as that which goes beyond negative peace which only considers peace as the mere absence of direct violence, conflict or war to mean the enjoyment of human rights, presence of social justice, absence of structural violence, gender equality and equality in opportunities. Kappler, (2017), argues that positive peace should be characterized by the presence of additional values such as equality, political freedoms, empowerment, human rights and social justice. Echoing the above, Preston et al (2021) give 23 quantitative indicators of positive peace that can be used to measure what positive peace is, among which are human rights security, health, safety and gender equity. In this case, it can fairly be concluded that any society in which the number of girls being defiled is increasing is neither peaceful nor secure.

Global statistics on trends of defilement and sexual violence are worrying. In 2021, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reported that worldwide, an estimated 120 million girls aged under 20 years (one in every ten) have been forced to engage in sex. Another report from studies that covered a period between 2014 and 2016 analyzing data from 24 mostly high and middle-income countries showed that the prevalence of defilement ranged from 8% to 31% in girls aged under 18 years while in 14 low and lower-middle-income countries, the percentage of girls aged between 18 and 24 years who experienced sexual violence before the age of 18 years ranged from 4% and 7% in Cambodia and Lao respectively, to 33% in Zimbabwe and 35% in Uganda by (Ligiero, et al. 2019).

In Kenya, Mutavi, et al, (2018) in a study to examine psychosocial outcomes in defiled children and their caregivers' perceptions of the children's trauma after defilement, quoted the "CRADLE" Foundation report of 2009 which reported that approximately 79 percent of girls in Kenya aged

between 13 and 15 years had been defiled. While the authors expressed skepticism of the figures, they again reported that fairly high rates were also reported by The National Survey on Violence Against Children report (2010) which stated that 32% of adult females experienced sexual violence during their childhood (National Survey on violence against children, Kenya, 2010).

Among the findings of the study was that defilement was the leading form of sexual violence against children in terms of reported cases at the Gender Based Violence Recovery Centres (GBVRCs) of the Mental Health Departments of Kenyatta National Hospital and Nairobi Women's Hospital (Mutavi, et al, 2018).

In 1998, Ghana established the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit of the Police Service to help with speedy follow-up and prosecution of defilement and sexual violence offences (Morhe and Morhe, 2013).

Crime Statistics Reports from the Malawi Police Service (MPS) indicate that there has been an increasing trend in cases of defilement. A summary of defilement cases reported in various police stations in Malawi shows that in 2017, 1 487 girls were defiled. In 2018, the number of defiled girls recorded by the MPS jumped to 1 539. The number further increased in 2019 to 1 766. In 2020, it further jumped to 2 343 while in 2021, it shot to 2 387 (MPS Annual Crime Reports, 2017-2021). Graynor and Cronin (2017) reported that one in every three girls in Malawi who have sex under the age of 18 is coerced which practically means girls indeed continue to be defiled.

2.3.5. Global Action Against Defilement and Sexual Abuse

As serious a crime as it is, defilement of girls has been at the center of discussions in different forums world over and the need for action to have it thwarted cannot be emphasized.

Global action on sexual violence and GBV in general, and defilement in particular can better be analyzed by looking at what the world is jointly doing through international organizations such as the UN and the international conventions, agreements and treaties signed by countries in which they pledge to take action in the protection of girls thereby ensuring safe and secure nations for all.

The most important international instrument on the protection of girls from defilement is, albeit arguable, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). In general, the UNCRC

compels parties or states members to take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect children from all forms of violence including defilement and sexual abuse. Specifically, Article 34 of the convention implores governments to put in place measures that protect children from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation (Convention on the Rights, 1989). The Convention is the most rapidly and widely ratified human rights treaty in the world, with 196 countries as states parties, with only the USA remaining (UNHCR, 2020)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) pledge to attain gender equality and ensure all that women and girls are empowered by 2030. Among the objectives for this is to end all forms of abuse to women and girls both in public and private spheres and encompasses trafficking, sexual and other types of mistreatment and eradicating dangerous practices such as child and forced marriage (UNDP, 2021)

Several UN agencies, in many publications and conferences have declared that sexual violence which include defilement is an impediment to the attainment of the aims of equality, development and peace (Hoff 2010, p. 18–20). The United Nations and the Council of Europe have come up with instruments that give lawful tools for ending sexual violence, an example of which is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which was adopted in 1979 which compels members to make sure that they satisfy the measures to eliminate biased laws, create public institutions so that there is good defense for girls and women against discrimination and the removal of all acts of biasness by either individuals, institutions or organizations.

The Council of Europe (2006) replicates this, emphasizing that violence against women retards development and obstructs women's participation in political, social and economic life. More recently, the Istanbul Convention obliges signatories to develop a comprehensive legal framework and approach to combat violence against women, through preventing violence, protecting victims and prosecuting perpetrators.

Several regional bodies and individual countries across the globe have over the years adopted and operationalized various frameworks and policies that promote child rights.

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, a continental human rights treaty which was adopted in 1990 but came into play in 1999 sets out rights and gives philosophies for

the position of children in Africa. It is a powerful tool of holding African governments accountable for ending defilement and child protection (Lloyd, 2002).

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) adopted a Strategic Framework for Strengthening National Child Protection Systems in Niamey, Niger on 5th October 2017, meaning that 15 western African Countries pledged to strengthen their legislation and take special measures to protect children from abuse and exploitation, including sexual abuse and defilement (OCHA, 2017).

Several countries across the globe and within Africa are signatories to these international instruments and conventions in which they pledge to take action in protecting children from abuse. Uganda ratified the UN Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC) in 1990 and the African charter on Rights and Welfare of Children in 1994 thereby pledging its commitment to protect children, especially girls from sexual abuse such as defilement (Musekera, 2019). Other national documents that show Uganda's commitment to the protection of the rights of children are the country's constitution (1995) and the Children's Statute (1996). It also adopted a National Youth Policy which aims at empowering the youth and protecting them from abuse.

2.3.6. Malawi's National Response to Defilement and Sexual Violence

The Malawi government recognizes that sexual violence in general and defilement in particular are serious security and health problems that have a great bearing on the peace of the country hence, require immediate and concerted actions as their impact on young girls and women is huge. (Kalero, 2021).

Malawi is a signed and committed itself to a number of international treaties that address sexual violence and defilement. They include: Convention on the Rights of the Child 1990, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1979, African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights 1986, Vienna Declaration on Human Rights 1993, Beijing Platform for Action 1995, SADC Declaration on Gender and Development 1997 and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa 2005 (Thompson, 2017).

Again, Malawi has developed seven national policies that guide its actions in protecting rights of children. Among these are National Youth Policy National Policy (2003), National Gender Policy

(2014), Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights Policy National (2009) and HIV/AIDS Policy (2003).

Malawi has laws that directly address issues sexual violence and GBV. They include: The Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, Gender Equality Act, Child Care, Protection and Justice Act, the Penal Code, the Constitution, and the Deceased Estate (Wills, Inheritance and Protection) Act.

2.4. Empirical Literature

Globally, regionally and locally, extensive studies have over the years been conducted on both the “16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign and the crime of defilement. Conspicuously missing however among these are specific studies that directly connect and establish relationships between the two. I have never come across a study, in Malawi or outside, that has clearly established a nexus between the two. The sheer magnitude of individual studies on each of the two variables however, points to their relevance and a need to specifically explore any relationship that may exist between them to find out how they affect each other.

In Kyrgyzstan, a 2012-2014 UNiTE study assessing the “16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign” found that civil society’s efforts and increased participation in the campaign had produced results, among which were: the amendment of Article 155 of the Criminal Code criminalizing bride kidnapping, amendment of the code increasing sentences for child abuse including defilement, approximately 50,000 people were informed about the forms of GBV in the country and youth participation had been highly strengthened (Thompson, 2017).

In South Africa, Buthelezi (2006), in her study titled “*16 Days of Activism and gender stereotypes in Ilanga, Isolezwe and UmAfrika newspapers,*” cited two other studies, one done in 1998 and another in 2005 which showed that GBV, including defilement receive increased media coverage during the annual 16 Days of Activism campaign. the study found that During the 16 Days of Activism campaign in 2005, the isiZulu newspapers, *Ilanga, Isolezwe* and *UmAfrika*, published an increased number of articles related to gender-based violence among different Zulu communities in South Africa. The study results however also showed that the language used in *reporting isiZulu newspapers* and the news selected reinforced traditional gender stereotypes. The article argued that women are and girls were presented as weak and passive victims of violence. The study further

found that where women had successfully acted against violence, their actions were marginalized in reporting. It also found that *isiZulu newspapers* showed violent situations in which girls and women were exposed, reinforcing gender stereotypes in the process, which in themselves enforce the very gender-based violence that the 16 Days of Activism campaign is trying to counter. The study used Dirven and Verspoor's (2004) framework of conceptual event schemas to analyze the printed language and pictures in articles that were carried out in three isiZulu newspapers.

Swindle (2020), in his study titled “Cultural Diffusion and Intimate Partner Violence in Malawi,” found that the media, human rights projects and social movements serve as important diffusion mechanisms shaping the cultural models people in Malawi know and use. The study which endeavored to examine the influence of cultural models on intimate violence and examined the “16 Days of Activism Campaign,” as among the available human rights intervention, revealed that individuals interviewed after the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV” in Malawi in which messages denouncing GBV emphasized, were more likely to reject physical partner violence than individuals interviewed before the campaign. In addition, the study found that women’s willingness to report physical partner abuse to authorities increased following the campaign.

Most studies done on society’s efforts to deal with defilement have mostly revolved around legal provisions and instruments, and how to improve the justice systems so that they can effectively perform in protecting children from sexual exploitation.

In Brazil, Rates et al (2011), did a study to analyze the reporting of violence against children in order to comprehend incidents of abuse against children according to its types and determinants so as to give defensive actions for victims. The study was issued by the Public Health Services in the country and was titled “Violence against Children: An Analysis of Mandatory Reporting of Violence (2010). The study found that while physical violence predominated boys at 95 percent, sexual violence predominated among girls at 95 percent as well with most of it occurring at home. This means that in Brazil, physical violence and neglect are higher among boys, and the odds of sexual and psychological violence are higher among girls. The study also revealed underreporting and discrepancies among the data on violence against children.

In a study done in Botswana titled “A *Content Analysis of Botswana Media Coverage of Child Sexual Abuse,*” to determine the content reported in the media and determine if they contained

messages on Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) prevention, Ramabu, (2020) found that the media plays a crucial role in informing the general public on all issues in general, and in child sexual abuse in particular. The study, which was a content analysis, also found that most people who reported knowing about child sexual abuse reported having known through media. The results also showed that Botswana's child sexual abuse media reports were centered around criminal justice and where, prevention messages were mentioned, it was at the backdrop of court cases. The study concluded that the news media can be a very important platform to help the general public and policymakers to understand child sexual abuse and how it can be prevented in the future.

In their study to assess the implementation of the law on defilement at the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) of Police in Ghana, Morhe and Morhe (2013) found that Ghana has a comprehensive law on defilement and that although many cases are filed with the police, the majority of those are abandoned or withdrawn for settlement outside the court which violets the very spirit of the law of defilement. The study recommended further research on why most defilement cases are withdrawn after being filed with the police.

The effects of defilement on children, parents and society at large are dire. Psychosocial outcomes related to defilement of children demonstrate its negative impact on children with deleterious and far reaching negative consequences on their physical and mental health (Jewkes et al., 2010; Kisanga et al., 2013; Jaffee and Christian, 2014). Dunju and Lutz (2016) reported that the children's parents/caregivers developed symptoms of distress in response to their children's exposure to sexually traumatic events. Similarly, Alisic et al., (2016) in their study also found that parents/caregivers experienced secondary trauma as a result of their children being exposed to sexually traumatic events. In their narratives, the parents/caregivers used words with negative emotions and anxiety to describe their children's trauma experiences which, in turn negatively impacted their children (Fivush et al, 2007). Mutavi, et al (2016), agree that the traumatic impact of defilement on a child as well as the resulting psychological problems on caretakers and parents are serious and require specific attention. In a study to examine psychological outcomes in defiled children and their caregivers' perceptions of children's trauma after defilement in Kenya, Mutavi et al conducted a qualitative descriptive design research which used interviews to collect data from purposefully selected sources. The study revealed that caregivers felt significant psychological

stress and recommended for a routine screening of such problems for both victims of defilement and their guardians as well as caregivers.

A number of studies on defilement have been done in Malawi which provide insight on the extent and magnitude of the problem. In a study that reviewed existing literature on GBV in Malawi whose aim was to strengthen the information base and promote the use of GBV data in decision making, Mellish M, Settergren S, and Sapiwa H, (2015) found that there are many serious information gaps that need to be addressed quickly. The most serious and critical gap that the study revealed was the lack of studies to examine and evaluate GBV programs, policies and interventions, as well as how these are contributing to the national response on GBV such as sexual violence. Among other gaps that the study found out were the lack of research on boys' and men's experience of GBV, prevalence and factors associated with perceptions of GBV and the understanding of risk and protective factors play out in different settings and among different populations. This study provides a direct reason to researchers like this one to proceed and examine a specific intervention in the fight against sexual violence like the 16 Days of Activism Campaign.

In her article, *“Suffering in Silence: The Failure of Malawi’s Sexual Offense laws to Protect Children – A Human Rights Report on Proposed Legislation*, Liu M, (2020) writes:

“Malawi has a duty to ensure that all Malawian boys and girls are protected from sexual violence and that justice is served on sexual abusers. Yet sexual violence in Malawi is pervasive and survivors face significant barriers in their quest for justice”

The article further argues that Malawian laws on sexual offenses relating to children such as the Penal Code on defilement and incest fail to adequately protect both boys and girls below the age of 18 from sexual abuse and exploitation. It suggests review of the Malawi Penal Code and the Child Care, Protection and Justice Act to ensure that the protection of children is aligned with the rights guaranteed by the constitution and international rights treaties.

Kangaude, (2017) published another relevant study in the African Human Rights Law Journal, titled “Adolescent Sex and Defilement in Malawi Law and Society. The study examined assumptions underlying the development of the law of defilement and rape in the Penal Code of Malawi (Section 160B and 130 respectively), their origins and historical developments. The study found that these legal provisions only serve the interests of adults and not children. It further

submitted that the laws were “inherently” heterosexist, promoted gender stereotyping of the meanings of sexuality and stigmatized the normative development of sexuality in children. It finally proposed the review of sections 138 and 160B so that they could be aligned with the commitments that Malawi made to promote gender equality, sexual health and the rights of children, mainly the right to protection from sexual exploitation (Kangaude, 2017). The study and its findings revealed the extent to which defilement cases are in Malawi and the need to do more in improving the legal system so that it could serve children, especially girls better. The study however was purely concerned with laws and how the Malawi’s legal system could be improved to effectively protect girls. It did not touch on interventions that are there to prevent the commission of such crimes or whether such interventions are effective or not. It also never extended to assessing whether social interventions were contributing positively to the fight against sexual violence like the crime of defilement.

Malunga, et al (2017), in their study titled “Access to Justice of Children with Disabilities in Defilement cases in Malawi” also examine in details the legal treatment of cases involving children with disabilities in defilement offences in Malawi. The study examined the four components of the right to access justice namely: access to information, legal representation, a child’s ability to participate in legal proceedings and the availability of appropriate training to relevant professionals in the field criminal justice. Among the findings of the study were that children with disabilities require comprehensive social and legal support. The study recommended for a review and analysis of the legal structures in place that make it difficult for children with disabilities in defilement cases to empowered by the law.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology that was used in this study. It gives details of the research design, study area, study population, data collection methods, data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.2. Research Design

This is a qualitative study. Qualitative research involves the collection and analysis of non-numerical data to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences (Bhandari, 2020). It uses a varied range of data, including spoken and printed word, logged and visual, and image forms and structures in various media (Polonsky, 2010). It endeavors to interpret the world through the use of methods that flexibly use data and produces complete understandings on the foundation of contextual rich, and complete data. Several techniques are used for data collection in qualitative studies. They include: interviews, focus groups discussions, case studies, critical discourse analysis and field observations (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011). Qualitative research allows a researcher to physically observe his subjects. It allows individuals carrying out the research to see the behavior setting without the inauthenticity that most of the times is involved in most methods such as experimental or survey research (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011).

According to Bryman (2012), a research design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data. The study used exploratory design. The purpose of exploratory research design is to seek new insights and find out what is happening (Rahi, 2017). In exploratory designs, there is an attempt to ask questions and assess phenomena in a new light. Exploratory designs are mostly underpinned in qualitative approaches of research and their focus is to obtain new insights into current situations and issues. George, (2021) posts that exploratory designs investigate research questions that have not previously been studied in depth. This design was thus chosen to adequately guide the exploratory process of whether and how the “16 Days of Activism Campaign” contributes to fighting the crime of defilement and making Malawi a peaceful and secure country for girls.

3.3 Study Area

The study was conducted in Area 25 Township, Lilongwe, Malawi. The township is a residential area located in the northern part of Lilongwe City. The area is uniquely defined both socially and geographically. Socially, residents share the same social amenities provided by the government such as the Area 25 Market, Area 25 Community Ground and Area 25 Clinic. The area is subdivided into 11 (eleven) smaller social and geographical units known as sectors and a small township called Mgoni. The sectors are numbered from 1 to 9 and then A to C. Administratively, each of these is overseen by a local lord known as a “block Leader.” Block leaders report to Ward Councilors who represent their respective areas at the Lilongwe City Council. In 2018, Area 25 Township had a population of 107, 316 (National Statistical Office [NSO], 2018) The area was chosen for this study because it is densely populated and an increasing trend in defilement cases was observed starting from 2017 despite many activities under the “16 Days of Activism against GBV Campaign” taking place in there every year (MPS Annual Reports 2017-2020).

3.4 Sampling Technique

There are different sampling techniques at the disposal of researchers which they use depending on type of studies they conduct. This study used Purposive Sampling Technique. Purposive Sampling is a form of Non Probability Sampling in which subjects do not have the same chances of being picked but are chosen based on special characteristics that they possess which relate to the issue under study. Kumejor, (2002) asserts that in case it is clear that certain units, by their very physiognomies, will give better information on a given subject, such units are purposefully picked up for a study. Their choice does not require complicated procedures such as those that are used in other methods like such as random sampling. It just involves choosing units on the foundation that their characteristics are known.

3.5 Study Population

Population categories for this study were NGOs that play an active role in the 16 Days of Activism Campaign in Malawi, the Malawi’s Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare in Malawi, the Malawi Police Service, Ward Councilors and Block Leaders in Area 25 Township.

3.6 Data Collection Methods/Techniques

In this study, three different methods of data collection were used and these were: key informant interviews, focus group discussions and documentary review. Each of these methods has been discussed in details in the following sections.

3.6.1 Interviews

An interview, as a method of data collection in social research, is a technique which involves asking open-ended questions to converse with respondents and collect elicited data about a subject (Question Pro, 2021). This study used Key Informant Interviews. Key Informant Interview is a method of data collection that involves verbal interactions between a field researcher and a local informant who has specialized knowledge that would otherwise be unavailable or difficult to access (Allen, 2017). Key Informant Interviews provide detailed background information about the reasons why respondents give certain answers (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011). They allow for a lengthy observation of respondents' nonverbal responses during a conversation. Chakraborty, (2009) posits that Key Informant Interviews are a far more personal form of data collection than questionnaires because the interviewer works closely and directly with the respondent. This implies that the interviewer has the opportunity to probe or ask follow-up questions.

This study chose Key Informant Interviews because they allow the researcher to have a face to face dialogue with respondents and give him a chance to ask follow-up questions. Key informant interview allows to probe more on issues that arose in the course of the interviews. The face-to-face conversation also provided the possibility to develop personal rapport with respondents which is not possible with other methods such as questionnaires. This allowed to get more detailed information from the interviewees. Based on the research questions, interviews were conducted with key informants such as Coordinators of GBV campaigns in identified NGOs, the National Coordinator of GBV programs at the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare and the Public Relations Officer of the Malawi Police Service. A total of five interviews were conducted to get their views, experiences and general perceptions on the 16 Days of Activism Campaign in relation to defilement cases in Malawi.

3.6.2 Focus Group Discussions

A Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is a strategy for understanding peoples' attitudes and behaviors (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011). In FGD, participants are simultaneously asked questions with a moderator controlling respondents in an unstructured discussion on a topic under the study (Polonsky, 2010). Ideally, a FGD should be composed of 6 to 8 individuals who are chosen on the basis that they share some characteristics which are important for the topic being studied (Orodho, 2009). A total of three (3) FGD were conducted with Block Leaders and Ward Councilors in Area 25 Township to find out whether they are aware of the 16 Days of Activism Campaign, their understanding of it and their opinion on the campaign in relation to cases of defilement in their areas.

3.6.3 Documentary Review

Documentary review, as a technique for data collection in research methods involves analyzing documents such as government documents and institutions' annual reports. In this study, Annual Crime Reports between 2017 and 2021 from Kanengo Police Station on reported cases of defilement which is the only authority that documents crime statistics in Area 25 Township were analyzed. The analysis also involved monthly comparisons of reported defilement cases in the months during and soon after the campaign (November to February) and those far away from the campaign (May to August) over a five-year period under study to establish differences in trends.

3.7 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data analysis refers to the process of assembling, cleaning and examining data (Polonsky, 2010). Interpretation on the other hand is the process of making sense or deciphering meaning out of the data. Data collected from the field is raw, hence not sensible enough until it is analyzed and interpreted. In this study, data was collected in form of narratives through Key Informant Interviews and FGDs. From these narratives, patterns and themes were observed and noted down from which meaning was construed or derived. The patterns and themes informed meanings which were later presented in simple and clear language as part of the results of the study.

Again, data on defilement cases for Area 25 Township, as captured at Kanengo Police Station, was analyzed through comparing their trends between two periods, namely: a period during and soon

after the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign (November to February), and a period far away from the campaign (May to August). Monthly trends in these two periods were observed, recorded, summarized and presented to make meaning on the trends.

3.8 Validity and reliability of study

Validity refers to the accuracy and meaningfulness of inference, which are based on the research results (Orodho, 2009). Muhammad et al. (2008) define validity as the extent to which data is plausible, credible and trustworthy so that it can be defended when challenged. It thus, describes how true the results of a study represent the issue under investigation. Neuman, (2011) defines reliability as the degree of dependability or consistency of results. He further posits that it is impossible to achieve perfect reliability and validity and that these two concepts are ideals that researchers strive to achieve.

One of the most important techniques in ensuring reliability and consistency in research is self-monitoring by the researcher (Bashir, et al, 2008). This activity happens during both data collection and analysis phases. There is a need for a researcher to continuously refine the sample and data collection methods and techniques in the whole process of the research to increase reliability and credibility (Macmillan and Schumacker, 2006).

In this study, validity and reliability were increased through the researcher's strict self-monitoring from the beginning of data collection to the end of data analysis in which he ensured that all procedure abide by conventional research standards in data collection and analysis. Again, interview guides that were in data collection were continuously refined so as to capture what was needed in the field.

3.9 Research Ethics

Research ethics refers to a complex set of values, standards and institutional schemes that help constitute and regulate scientific activity (Madushani, 2016). This study respected and considered all ethical issues as provided for in academic social science research and discussed in Chapter One. Written authorities (letters) were sought from the University of Rwanda and National Police College for identification during data collection in which it was clearly specified that the

information obtained during the study was to be used solely for academic purposes. Again, clearance was sought from the MPS National Headquarters and Kanengo Police Station. Participants were informed that their involvement in the study was on voluntary basis. They were also assured of the total confidentiality of the information they shared.

3.10 Challenges

The study faced a number of challenges but two of these are worth highlighting. The first challenge that the study faced was inadequacy of time during data collection. There were only three weeks to collect data. Worse still, the three week coincided with Christmas and New Year holidays. As such not all interviews that were planned were conducted because some people reported to have been on holiday despite that appointments were made with them.

The other challenge that faced the study was Covid-19. One of the preventive measures for the disease is reducing contacts with people. With the study requiring face-to-face interviews, it ended up being impossible to meet directly with other NGOs employees because of their organization's strict insistence on this. As such, improvisations, such as arranging phone calls, had to be made to carter for this.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents, discusses and analyses findings of this study as guided by the logical and systematic methodology given in Chapter Three. The results are presented in two parts. The first part is an analysis of primary data obtained through Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions from the respondents who were involved in the study. The second part is a descriptive analysis of secondary data on the trends of defilement cases in Area 25 Township obtained from Kanengo Police Station. They both respond to the following objectives, as outlined in Chapter Two of the study: Ascertaining ways in which various programs and activities under the “16 Days of Activism against GBV” are helping in fighting defilement cases in Area 25 Township, and determining participants’ views on the significance of the “16 Days of Activism against GBV Campaign” to the fight against defilement in Area 25 Township.

4.2. Socio-Demographic characteristics of respondents

To ensure that the study produces good results, exhaustive and thorough Key Informant Interviews were conducted with the National Coordinator for GBV Programs at the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare in Malawi who coordinates the “16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign” at national level, Communications and Campaigns Managers/Program Coordinators from three NGOs that play active roles in the planning and implementation of the campaign in Malawi, namely: PLAN International - Malawi, Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO) and CARE International – Malawi. Another Key Informant Interview was conducted with the National Public Relations Officer for the Malawi Police Service who represented the service in general and the Public Relations and the Community Policing Branches in particular, which are departments that participate actively in the “16 Days of Activism Campaign Against GBV” in Malawi. Apart from these, three Focus Group Discussions were also conducted with groups of Block Leaders from different sectors of Area 25 Township to ascertain their knowledge and understanding of the campaign as part of the local community.

4.3. Ways in which different programs and activities under the “16 Days of Activism Against GBV” are helping in fighting defilement in Area 25 Township

This objective aimed at identifying different activities and programs that participating institutions and organizations implement during the campaign and how these are contributing or helping in fighting defilement in Area 25 Township, making it safe and secure for young girls. To thoroughly address this objective, respondents were specifically asked of: Programs/activities they undertake during the campaign, methods or media used to reach out to their target audiences, specific intention of their participation in the campaign, whether or not there are specific messages in their program that aim at dealing with defilement and how their different programs under the campaign are helping in fighting defilement.

4.3.1. Programs/Activities undertaken during the campaign

This theme aimed at understanding how different stakeholders participate in the campaign. Thus, questions sought to identify specific activities that participating partners implement as part of the campaign. Respondents to this theme were officers who coordinate the campaign in the three NGOs that were involved in the study, the National Coordinator of GBV Programs in the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare in Malawi and the National Police Public Relations officer of the MPS. All responses under this theme were collected through in-depth Key Informant Interviews with the above mentioned officers.

In general, respondents agreed that the “16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign” is not an isolated or independent intervention on GBV but that, as other available interventions, it complements the rest of other programs implemented by stakeholders in the fight of GBV and sexual violence, including defilement through the intensification of awareness. Participants in the study mentioned the following as activities that they carry out during the campaign: Organizing a grand national event on November 25 of each year to launch the campaign, carrying out community awareness, advocacy sessions, stakeholder engagements and dialogues and provide service and support when a GBV incident happens during the campaign period.

4.3.1.1. Organizing a Grand National Launch on November 25 each year

All the respondents indicated that they contribute to the National Grand Launch of the Campaign which takes place on 25th November of each year coordinated by the Ministry of Gender, Children,

Disability and Social Welfare. They all said they belong to a National Organizational Committee of the campaign which pools resources and expertise together and assist the ministry in ensuring that the national launch of the campaign is widely publicized so that GBV messages are taken to all corners of the country. They, independent of each other, said that the main purpose of this grand national launch is to raise awareness on GBV issues and what they, as important stakeholders, are doing in dealing with such issues. To that end they all mentioned that they ensure that the national launch is attended by a very important person (VIP) such as a Cabinet Minister or in other cases, the First Lady of the country to give the function prominence. One of the respondents said:

“The national launch provides a platform to us to amplify GBV messages to every corner of country. It is organized in such a way that it gets the necessary publicity so that the messages can go far and wide.”

It was also unanimously agreed from all the respondents that apart from amplifying the messages of GBV, the national launch is also taken as a platform for demonstrating their commitment to fighting against GBV. By being part of the grand launch at a higher national stage, each stakeholder shows the world how committed it is to the cause of fighting the vice. One responded further said that the collaboration and coming together of different organizations and prominent people in itself is a strong message to perpetrators of GBV. He said the unity in this sends a strong message that authorities are serious on the issue, and as such, every individual should also take it seriously. One respondent said:

“The main message is actually in the coming together of different organizations and prominent people during the function. By having the First Lady, a cabinet minister and country representatives of these international organizations, the message is strongly sent to perpetrators of GBV and sexual violence which include defilement that these are serious crimes.”

The reliance and dependence of the campaign on VIPs and prominent/influential people confirms what securitization theory, as discussed under “Theoretical Framework Section,” posits, as put forward by Buzan and Waever (2003) on who ‘securitization actors’ are and the roles they play in making an issue a security matter in society? The two argue that security is a social construction and is done through the subjective

representations of actors who have a socially valid voice in global politics such as state officials, non-state organizations, communities, and even individuals. In part, the theory focuses on the role of institutional actors such as political leaders in labeling some social problems so that they can be considered as threats and security issues.

The fact that organizers of the 16 Days of Activism Campaign rely on politicians and other VIPs such as cabinet ministers and the First Lady during the launch and in subsequent activities agrees to what Securitization Theory postulates. In this case, the VIPs such as cabinet ministers or the First Lady are ‘securitization actors’ who, since the time the campaign began, have helped in changing the discourse on defilement and sexual violence making them security matters that deserve immediate action using their influence in society.

4.3.1.2. Public Awareness through media and community engagements

All respondents mentioned Public Awareness as the main activity they do during the campaign although their approaches to it are different. Most of the respondents said before the launch of the campaign, they sit down and prepare a communication plan for the event which outlines objectives, key messages to be communicated and the methods to be used in the communication process. Respondents mentioned the following as the main methods of Public Awareness used during the campaign: Community meetings, Road-shows Media debates, Radio and TV Jingles and Street parades. One of the respondents said:

“We normally come up with a plan of the activities we intend to do and how we will do those activities during the campaign. The Community Policing Team conducts road-shows, community meetings and street parades while our department arranges radio and TV debates and media programs in which we ensure that messages about defilement and the rest of sexual violence and GBV given out and amplified. At times, we produce Radio and TV Jingles that run in the media throughout the campaign period. All this is to make sure that we reach as many people as possible with GBV messages”

It was noted from the responses that after the launch of the campaign on November 25, a number of stakeholders come together and jointly conduct road-shows and community meetings in which they engage local leaders to mobilize their subjects to participate in the activities. During such community meetings and road-shows, banners with GBV messages are raised and branded materials such as T/shirts and brochures are given out to participants. One respondent said:

“We normally jointly pool resources together such as vehicles, fuel, Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials and our teams travel around the whole country in vans to which a Public Address System is affixed, conducting awareness meetings in Trading Centers engaging people on GBV issues.”

The above explains how much the Agenda Setting Theory is relevant to this study. It is clear from the presented findings that the campaign relies much on the media such that GBV and defilement messages have, since the beginning of the campaign, frequently been carried and emphasized on by the media. According to Matsaganis and Payne (2005), the Agenda-Setting Theory describes the ability of the media to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda. It explains the mass media’s influence in making a certain issue as a public agenda. The theory states that if a news item is covered frequently in the media, the audience regard it as more important. As Littlejohn and Foss (2009) put it, the theory illustrates the connection in the relationships between the emphasis that the mass media put on an issue and the media audiences’ reaction to it. The heavy usage of the media in the 16 Days of Activism Campaign means that defilement messages have always enjoyed the limelight in all the years the campaign has been on. This has forced people into believing in the importance and seriousness of such an issue as put forward by the theory.

4.3.1.3. Increasing GBV awareness messaging in already existing programs

Some of the participating NGOs and institutions said they already have specific GBV programs that they are implementing across Malawi which fall under varied thematic areas such as women’s rights, girls’ rights and children’s rights. They thus indicated that during the “16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign,” they arrange special awareness activities which aim at amplifying GBV and sexual violence publicity in such already existing programs. The activities aim to teach people

about what constitute GBV and encourage them to report such incidents to responsible authorities such as the police. For instance, one respondent explained:

“Gender and gender mainstreaming is a central theme in our programs. We have different specific gender related projects that we are implementing across Malawi depending on thematic areas. This campaign thus accords us a chance to increase awareness in those programs.”

Yet another respondent explained it in a rather different way as:

“After the National Launch, our district officers across the country roll-out their awareness activities in their district or regional programs that they are implementing. The idea is for people to understand the programs we are implementing on GBV and ensuring that such GBV messages reach as many people as possible. We encourage people to make sure that they take action when they experience or witness GBV. Such action could be in form of reporting to the police, our officers or local leaders who work closely with the police on such matters”

4.3.1.4. Stakeholder engagement

Two of the respondents said during the campaign, their NGOs also arrange discussions with other stakeholders, partners and duty-bearers to account on what they are doing in protecting girls and women from abuse such as GBV and sexual violence. They said the 16-day period gives them a chance to remind duty-bearers such as the police and the responsible ministry (Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare) of their national duty to fight such human rights abuses. One of them said:

“During the campaign, we also organize sessions with duty-bearers, mainly the police, ministry of gender and the judiciary where we follow-up on prominent cases and find out if they are being handled accordingly. It is a good platform where we remind each other of the duties we have

and the need to support each other when we meet challenges as we work towards this common cause.”

4.3.1.5. In-house (Workplace) GBV awareness

One respondent indicated that apart from taking part in the National Launch of the campaign and increasing awareness in their already existing programs, his NGO also conducts workplace (in-house) training with its employees to on GBV and sexual violence. He said at the onset of the campaign each year, they arrange sessions with employees and based on the theme, teach them all they need to know about GBV, workplace sexual violence and violence in the homes. He said:

“The 16 Days of activism Campaign also gives us a chance to teach our staff and orient them on workplace related sexual violence which include the rest of GBV related issues. The knowledge is so vital that it helps them with GBV and sexual violence issues even in their homes.”

The ‘increasing of GBV awareness messaging in already existing programs,’ ‘stakeholder engagement’ and ‘in-house (Workplace) GBV awareness,’ as captured in the preceding three sub-topics speak volumes of the relevance of Securitization Theory to the study which postulates that security is a speech act. According to the proponents of the theory, security is a speech act in that by calling and labeling something as a security issue, it becomes one (Taureck, 2006). It is clear that during the campaign, as organizers engage stakeholders, increase awareness of defilement and GBV messages and emphasize these issues at work-places, they contribute to making it a more serious security matter through their words (speech). Continuous labeling of defilement as a serious security issue in various programs of the campaign as seen in the discussion above i.e. during debates and discussions, has, over the years contributed, and continues to contribute to making it a serious security issue.

4.3.1.6. Providing immediate assistance and support to victims

One the respondents said during the campaign, one of the activities that they conduct is to offer immediate, instant and on-the-spot assistance to victims of GBV. He said due to increased awareness during the period, some victims come forward to them asking for help. As such, they have an arrangement in place in which officers are ready to such provide that they can afford or

coordinate in referring such people to appropriate service providers such as social welfare, police or hospitals. He said:

“We observed from our earlier participation in the campaign that when we conducted outdoor community meeting, people, especially witnesses and few cases, victims could come forward seeking immediate solutions for incidents they knew. As such, we now have a special arrangement where, when we go out for community engagements, we are ready to provide immediate support services such as advice, counselling or facilitating quick reference of victims to responsible institutions such as the police, hospital or social welfare offices.”

4.3.2. Purpose of participation in the campaign

This theme aimed at understanding stakeholders’ main reasons for participation in the campaign. This was pursued to identify and establish clear differences between participating institutions’ activities and programs that they already implement outside the campaign and those that they do during the campaign. Respondents to this theme were participating NGOs and institutions, the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare and Block Leaders from Area 25 Township. Information from these participants were gathered through in-depth Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions.

4.3.2.1. Raising awareness

All respondents said that their main purpose in participating in the campaign is to help raise awareness of GBV issues, including sexual violence and defilement to the masses. They indicated that the campaign itself is aimed at raising enough awareness of GBV and that they join the campaign for that main reason. On the relationships between the campaign and other activities or programs that they each implement independently, they separately stressed that they each have different programs under varied thematic areas on GBV and promotion of human rights which have a component of awareness and that the 16 Days of Activism Campaign provides them with a chance to amplify such awareness on a unified platform in collaboration with others. The major aim thus for each stakeholder in the campaign is to raise awareness. While three participants added

other reasons for their participation in the campaign, they still indicated that the other reasons were peripheral. One of the respondents said:

“As an organization, we have different programs within the thematic area of gender that we implement one of which is awareness. Our participation in the campaign is mainly to raise awareness. That is why the awareness component of each of our programs is enhanced during this period. So the main reason for participation is awareness and that is also what the campaign is all about globally. For other themes in the general gender equality promotion, we have different programs that are also implemented differently. Of course they complement each other with awareness as this is a cross-cutting theme in the promotion of gender equality.”

4.3.2.2. Showing solidarity to send a strong message

Four of the six respondents mentioned “showing solidarity so as to send a strong message” as one of the reasons they participate in the campaign. In general, this came as a second reason, in addition to “raising awareness” which was unanimously agreed upon by all respondents. One respondent said:

“Apart from the primary reason of raising awareness, the campaign also gives us a chance to speak with one voice and send a strong message that GBV issues are serious and must be dealt with the same seriousness. This solidarity does not only happen here in Malawi but at global level as well. As such, having the whole world coming together in these 16 days to speak with one voice on such a social problem is a strong voice on its own.”

The results above show that participants generally partake in the campaign with one major reason of playing a part in raising awareness of GBV issues so that people can begin to take action through reporting as victims and witnesses, or playing their roles right such as arresting and prosecuting suspects. Showing solidarity on GBV issues which the study has revealed as a second reason people participate in the campaign again can be seen to also aiming at achieving the same action among people and stakeholders.

Results of the study from participants' responses in the preceding two sub-sections above reveal that activities carried out during the "16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign" in Malawi are somewhat similar to those conducted in other countries during the same campaign as discussed in the Literature Review. Just as in Malawi, other countries such South Africa, Kyrgyzstan and Botswana also heavily use the media i.e. radio and TV during the campaign (Thompson 2017, Buthelezi 2006, Ramabu 2020).

4.2.4. Methods of communication used in the campaign

This theme aimed at ascertaining the communication methods or vehicles of GBV messages that are used by organizers and implementing partners during the campaign. Methods of communication used during the campaign were considered because their choice have a bearing on the results (success/failure of the campaign itself). Respondents to this were organizations and institutions that organize activities and use different methods of communication to take their messages to their targeted audiences. Respondents indicated that they do not use a single mode of communication but rather simultaneously combine a variety of methods to reach a lot of people. They specifically agreed on heavily using various forms of mass media such as radio, TVs, Newspapers and others on top of direct engagements with people. Three of them said even when they go out and do community meetings with the public, they make sure that they invite reporters from local radio stations and TVs for coverage. The following sections provide a detailed discussion on the section.

4.2.4.1. Radio

All respondents to this theme mentioned radio as their most preferred and commonly used media during the campaign. While they all emphasized that they use a combination of different media, when asked to mention one they mostly use to carry their messages during the campaign, the all mentioned radio as the commonly used. One of the respondents said:

"We use a variety of methods and the choice really depends on audience we intend to reach and cost. However, of all the available methods around, radio is the one that we use the most because with it, it's is easy to reach a lot of people at once, especially in the rural area because almost

everyone has a radio these days. Even when we have public meetings with chiefs and their communities, we invite journalists from radios and newspapers and items carried out on radio reach out to more people than those on newspapers and other media. We have different radio stations around and with them, we free programs, invite their reports to function or do paid jingles.”

4.2.4.2. Television

All the respondents acknowledged using TVs during the campaign. However, they also all indicated that their use of TVs cannot be compared to the way they use radio stations saying TVs might come second or third. They all said they ensure that all programs and news items carried out on radio are also carried out on TVs but said paid TV programs and jingles are more expensive. One respondent said:

“From the day of the launch of the campaign throughout the whole 16-days period, we make sure that we also invite TV reporters for those activities that require media coverage. We do the same with other programs but buying airtime for TV is a bit expensive when compared to radio. Again TVs have limited reach compared to radio. But we cannot do without.”

4.2.4.3. Direct engagement (direct meetings with people)

Five of the respondents said they are involved in direct engagements with communities although in somewhat different ways or at different frequencies. They indicated that they do this through awareness activities they plan with community members in which messages about GBV are given out mainly through methods such as road shows and community rallies and parades. They said to attract people to their meetings, they use either a brass band that leads in parades or invite popular musicians. They indicated that during such meetings, branded IEC materials such as T/shirts, pens and banners are distributed. One of the respondents said:

“Our awareness activities during the 16 Days of Activism against GBV take many forms. We mainly plan and implement outreach and awareness

meetings with people in their communities. At times, we invite the media to cover the functions so that the message is amplified. However, this direct engagement with people gives us a chance to connect with them as we receive instant feedback and we are also able to respond to their questions.”

4.2.4.5. Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Materials

All respondents indicated that they use different forms of IEC materials in the campaign to stress messaging. The most common IEC materials that respondents mentioned were posters, banners, stickers, branded materials like T/shirts, brochures and billboards. One of the respondents said in his response:

“In all our community engagements during the 16 Days of Activism Campaign, we distribute IEC materials. These are part of crowd pullers and they also help in clarifying and augmenting the messages that we tell them about GBV. In some years in the past, we erected billboards along strategic positions along major roads in all the regions of the country. These help a lot in passing the messages to the audience we target.”

4.2.4.6. Websites and social media

Respondents to the theme also acknowledged using their websites and social media platforms as media for communicating messages during the campaign. They all said they carried general messages on their websites about the campaign and that they normally have intensified messaging on their social media platforms, mainly Facebook and Twitter. One respondent said:

“The coming in of Covid-19 has indeed forced us to change the way we do things, including carrying out campaigns. It came as we were already exploring other ways of reaching out to the people with messages. As such, we are slowly moving digital and specifically using social media platforms in the campaign.”

The way language is used in the findings above explains how far the study is informed by Discourse Analysis as a theory. In the different methods of communication used in the campaign as observed above, language, oral or written, plays a central role to the whole awareness process. The campaign relies on the power of language as its organizers strive to construct new reality or influence and skew people's views on how they perceive GBV. Through radio and television, organizers of the campaign use oral language while in newspapers, magazines, billboards websites and social media, they rely on the power of written language to shape or influence how people view defilement and GBV in general. It is clear from the above that since the time the campaign started being implemented in Malawi, organizers have relied on the power of language to influence the way people perceive defilement and GBV in general so as to change their viewpoints that they start considering these as serious social ills and crimes (new reality). The repetitive representation of GBV messages over time in the campaign through the use of language either in the media or direct engagement with people thus explain how far this study is informed, to a greater extent by Discourse Analysis as a theory.

Again, much as other methods such as community engagements are used, the media, mainly radio and TV are the most common. The findings agree to and are in line with findings by a study by Ramabu (2020) done in Botswana which also found that the media play a crucial role in informing the general public on most crucial issues, and about child sexual abuse in particular. The study found that most people who reported knowing about child sexual abuse reported having known through media and concluded that the news media can be a very important platform to help the general public and policymakers in understanding child sexual abuse and how it can be prevented in the future. The use and importance of the media as a vehicle for communication on GBV and sexual violence is thus neither exclusive to Malawi nor to the "16 Days of Activism Against GBV" campaign.

4.2.5. Inclusion of defilement messages in the campaign

This theme was included to find out how much defilement messages are included in the campaign. This is because the 16 Days of activism Campaign against GBV is very wide in its scope and aims at raising awareness of a wide range of GBV issues. Respondents to this were all representatives of institutions and NGOs that plan and implement GBV activities during the campaign.

In their responses, they all indicated that they include messages about the criminality and dangers of defilement. They all emphasized that defilement falls under sexual violence to which most young girls are victims. In their narratives, they all indicated that defilement is a big problem in Malawi and that specific content about defilement and sexual violence to girls in the campaign take approximately 40 percent of all content. As such, they agreed in their responses that specific messages on defilement are included in their activities that they carry out during the campaign. one respondent said:

“Defilement is a very serious issue in Malawi which falls under sexual offences. During the 16 days of Activism Campaign, most of the messages that we disseminate are actually of violence against girls and women and defilement is always part of that. We therefore make sure that we raise as much awareness as possible on the evils and criminality of defilement to the public.”

4.2.6. Perception of increased messaging on GBV during the campaign period

Respondents to this theme were Block Leaders from Area 25 Township and they were asked about this as an introduction, before the discussion on the “16 Days of Activism Campaign” was introduced. Specifically, all the three groups of Block Leaders were separately asked to tell if there is a specific period or month in the year when they notice any increased messages/awareness activities on GBV, and if yes, to mention that specific period or month. In their responses, they were all in affirmative that they observe a period of increased awareness on GBV.

On the specific period of the year in which they notice the increased change, members of one group echoed with each other that it was in December while members of the other two groups said this happen in the run-up period to Christmas (which is also December). In addition, two names of well-known gender activists in Malawi (Emma Kalia and Patricia Kaliati) kept on popping-up in the Focus Group Discussions though independent of each other. For instance, to answer the question above, in his or her narration, a respondent from a FGD would go on to narrate that during this period, he/she notices Mrs. Patricia Kaliati or Mrs. Emma Kalia on radio talking of GBV especially defilement. They also said they notice Community Policing Officers from Kanengo

Police who team up with people from other NGOs engaging locals in GBV related activities. One respondent said:

“In December every year, from the beginning of the month, there is a lot of activity and talk on radio and TV as well as in the communities on GBV messages. You will always hear Mayi (Madam) Kalia and Kaliati on radio talking about gender issues. The police also move around in their vehicles with a public address system talking to people in markets or football ground. They are accompanied by individuals from these other NGOs.”

4.2.7. Knowledge of the campaign by locals

Block Leaders were also asked if they knew the “16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign” and what was involved in. This theme was included to gain understanding of local people’s knowledge of the campaign itself as an annual event to determine its reputation among the public. It should be noted that this question was asked after a discussion on “*Perception of increased messaging on GBV during the campaign period*” captured in the previous section had already been done. After posing the question to each of the FGD sessions, it could be observed from their faces that not all of them knew the campaign by name. Out of the average eight discussants in a group, only two or three people were observed to know the campaign by name and what it really was. However, after this, other members could relate to the “increased messaging on GBV during the campaign period” as discussed previously and make a connection. Surprisingly, participants in each group directly related the campaign to Mrs. Emma Kalia, Mrs. Patricia Kaliati and Police Officers under community Policing Department. One of the respondents said:

“I know the Campaign. It is that in which Mrs. Emma Kalia, Mrs. Patricia Kaliati talk about violence against women and girls. They are always on radio or TV and sometimes with the police conducting public rallies on gender issues.”

4.2.8. Defilement cases in Area 25 in relation to the campaign

To relate the campaign to defilement cases, a question was posed to Block Leaders to get their perceptions on occurrences of defilement cases in their areas and establish any link or relationship

between the two. They all said defilement cases were still happening in their areas and that there was a seemingly an upward trend in such incidents. Asked why they felt this was so when there were different interventions being implemented, such as the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV, they all said a combination of interventions have over the years made communities to open up on matters that were taken as private in the past, hence people are now free to report. They agreed in saying that campaigns like the “16 Days of Activism against GBV” and others initiatives i.e. opening up of the police through the Victim Support Units and related programs being implemented by NGOs have made it easy and safe for people to report. On defilement and promotion of rights of children, interventions were almost synonymous to an organization called Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO) among the participants. One participant said.

“Unlike in the past where GBV incidents were treated as in-house issues, the world is opened-up today. The police are open nowadays and there is a lot of information on the importance of reporting and how to report such incidents to police or YONECO. YONECO (an NGO that champions children’s rights in Malawi) is everywhere these days and very few incidents can be hidden. Any rumor of defilement is taken up by neighbors and reported to police or YONECO. Even when families decide to hide a defilement incident happening within a family, neighbors report such an incident and the perpetrator is arrested the following day. GBV campaigns like this (16 Days of Activism) have made people aware that such incidents are crimes and that people must report them to police.”

In addition to the above, most of the respondents in the FGDs said the fight against defilement to be effective, there is a need to go beyond awareness and also empower duty bears that handle results of effective awareness i.e. increased reported cases so that the whole judicial system is effective. They mentioned MPS, judiciary and the prison service as those that must also be empowered. One of the participants said:

“One of the results of increased awareness from the campaign is increased reporting of cases to the police. The police therefore must also be empowered

in the same way, together with the law courts and prison service. It is sad that some people who have served jail for defilement come out to commit the same crimes.”

The findings of the study on increased messaging of GBV during the campaign compliment and echo those obtained in a slightly different study also done in Malawi by Swindle (2020) on cultural diffusion and intimate partner violence. The study which, apart from analyzing other social interventions, also analyzed the “16 Days of Activism Campaign,” found that after the campaign, women were more willing to report physical abuse while men were more likely to reject and denounce physical partner violence against women. It is only possible to come to this when the public is successfully reached with the messages and is empowered to take action. Hence the two findings can be seen as to complement each other.

Again, the study identifies a gap in the judicial system that must be addressed if the battle against defilement is to be won.

4.3. Significance of the campaign in the general battle against defilement cases

This objective aimed at ascertaining the significance and extent to which the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign is important in the general fight against the crime of defilement. As such, different questions were framed and asked to gain participants’ perceptions on the significance, worth or value of the of the campaign in the battle. Participants were specifically asked to tell whether the campaign meets or satisfy its yearly set objectives, weigh between the campaign’s strengths and weaknesses, and give a general rating of its significance in relation to fighting defilement cases. Respondents were all participating institutions and NGOs that play active roles in the campaign and Block Leaders in Area 25 who observe the impact of the campaign on the ground with the people they live with.

4.3.1. Ability of the campaign to meet its objective(s)

This theme aimed at finding out from participating organizations whether activities and programs that they plan and implement during the campaign achieve their purposes. In their answers all respondents indicated that the major aim of the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV campaign is to raise awareness of all forms of the vice to people and different players who have stakes. They said

the awareness is aimed at goading action from such stakeholders. As such, on the ability of the campaign to meet its objective of raising awareness, they all agreed that the campaign has over the years proved to be very effective and able to raise enough awareness.

They indicated that there are a lot of different programs and activities that are being implemented by different government institutions and NGOs and that services given in such programs are substantially highlighted during the campaign. They also indicated that from the awareness that the campaign has been raising from the time it started in Malawi, people have been empowered to report all GBV issues to relevant authorities such as the police. They also said the campaign, through its engagement of different stakeholders, has helped duty-bearers to improve the quality of services they provide to victims of GBV. They all mentioned of how quickly it has become now for the police to act on GBV issues and defilement cases and the establishment of One Stop Centers in major hospitals where victims of defilement and other cases of GBV get all the necessary support as being a result of intensive awareness that the campaign has contributed over the years to the fight of GBV and defilement. One of the respondents said:

“The purpose of this campaign is mainly to raise awareness on GBV that include sexual violence like defilement and rape. Looking back at where we are coming from, it is true that this campaign has helped a lot in helping people understand what constitutes GBV and what to do, in this case, reporting to police when they experience or witness such an incident. So, this ‘reporting’ is the action that the awareness in the campaign aims at achieving. Even service delivery at the police and the courts of law has improved because officers in those offices know that we follow what they do and will always speak out through this campaign when something is not being done right.”

One respondent in a FGD with Block Leaders said:

“The campaign has been very effective. Most of the information about defilement, rape, wife battery or financial violence as GBV crimes have been clarified during this period. Again, when the police and other NGOs conduct

meetings in our areas and talk about gender issues, everyone takes it seriously and the strong message is sent out, especially to the men who perpetrate this.”

As an extension to the above, respondents indicated that while the campaign’s objective of awareness is mostly met, the general fight against defilement is wide and involves other stakeholders who perform different tasks other than that of awareness. They said there is need for other programs to be launched targeting such stakeholders for the battle against defilement to be effectively won. They mentioned the MPS, Prison Service and Judiciary as some of such stakeholders.

From a Securitization Theory point of view, the results of the study from this section shows that the process of securitization of the crime of defilement in Area 25 Township is successful. The findings affirm what Balzacq (2005, p. 171-3) contends that securitization becomes successful if the labeling is accepted by the audience. As argued further by Eroukhmanoff (2018), an issue becomes securitized when the audience collectively agrees on the nature of the threat and supports taking extraordinary measures. With Block Leaders and the majority of residents in Area 25 accepting that they are aware of the campaign and its objectives, and most importantly, that they take part in making sure that the campaign achieves its objectives shows that the campaign has managed to securitize the crime of defilement with the audience agreeing that it is a serious threat to society. This is why locals support measures that are in place to stomp out the crime of defilement such as reporting to the police of any suspected incident.

4.3.2. Comparison of strengths and weaknesses

As part of ascertaining the significance and value of the campaign in fighting defilement, participants in the study were also asked to weigh between the strengths and weaknesses of the campaign. This was aimed at determining the importance of the campaign and areas in it that require improvement. In their responses, participants indicated that the period in which the campaign takes place (16 days) is short and thus not enough. They all wished that the campaign took more time than this. One of the respondents said:

“The main weakness that I observe in the campaign is limited time. While most organizations continue with their awareness up to January or February, the main activities are observably done within the 16 days. It could have been better

if the campaign went on for up to two months per year so that the messages could really sink through in people.”

On the strengths of the campaign, respondents unanimously came up with a long list of strengths which included its ability to open up societies and change the way people view GBV from being normal incidents within homes to criminal acts that require reporting, its ability to bring together and unify different players in fight against GBV and most importantly, its ability to raise enough awareness that has resulted in action being taken by victims and witnesses as well as duty bearers in fighting the vice. One respondent said:

“The strengths of the campaign are many. Over the years, it has managed to bring together different stakeholders who pool resources and expertise and work towards ensuring that messages of GBV go as deep as possible in the people whose results we are able to witness now. I am talking of victims and witnesses being able to freely report these issues to the police and other authorities as well as creating a platform on which we express our commitment to fighting the vice.”

4.3.3. Significance/value of the campaign in relation to fighting defilement

This theme aimed at determining participants’ views or perceptions on whether the contributions being made by “16 Days of Activism against GBV Campaign” are significant or have any important value to the fight against the crime of defilement. In their responses, all respondents said the campaign is playing a very important role in the fight against defilement and that its significance to such a fight is worth it. Each of the participating NGO or institution and Block Leaders praised the important role the campaign has played over the years and continues to play right now in raising awareness of GBV so that action can be taken. One responded said:

“The campaign has played and continues to play a very significant role in the fight of defilement. The campaign aims at raising awareness and it does that very well. Awareness is the first stage in the fight of the vice. After people are aware of GBV, they can then take action such as reporting and assisting victims in whatever capacity they can. The increase in reported cases at different police stations can actually, to a large extent be attributed to the 16 days of Activism campaign. People should understand that the campaign does

not aim at arresting perpetrators but raise enough awareness so that cases are reported, perpetrators are arrested and justice prevails for victims.”

A member of one FGD said:

“This campaign is playing a very significant role in the whole fight against defilement cases and GBV at large. Its contribution to this fight is priceless. It aims at raising awareness and that is done excellently in the 16 days that the campaign happens. Therefore, the campaign is very significant and important.”

Findings of the study above agree with what the Agenda Setting Theory postulates, as put forward by its proponents, McCombs and Donald Shaw (1968). By relying much on the media which has the powers to influence public opinion, organizers of the campaign have over the years been successful in changing the way the public perceive defilement, from being an ordinary crime to such a serious and grave offence that should be treated as a national security issue for its impact on young girls. Among others, the Agenda Setting Theory explains how the media is able to influence and set the public agenda by deciding which topics the public should be discussing. It explains the powers of radio, TV and the rest of the mass media in influencing and shaping public opinion and agenda (Cohen, 1963).

As seen in the results of the study, during the “16 Days of Activism Campaign,” messages about the crime of defilement are carried out frequently in all forms of the media across Malawi. By being exposed to such messages, the public, as consumers of the content, start thinking about and discussing such issues because the agenda is successfully set by the different media institutions that publish and air such messages across the country.

4.4 Trends of reported defilement cases

This second section presents a descriptive analysis of reported cases of defilement in Area 25 Township as captured at Kanengo Police Station in a period of five years from 2017 to 2021. The statistics were captured according to months and were meant to help in establishing if there are any immediate effects or results of the “16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign” in terms of reporting of incidents to police. As such, data on reported cases of defilement was captured and

is herein divided into two sections during presentation. The first four-month period covers the two months (November and December) in which the campaign takes place and their immediate subsequent two months (January and February) in which it is expected that the direct effects of the campaign can reasonably still be felt. The second four-month period covers the months: May, June July and August. This period is quite far away from the campaign for the immediate effects of such a campaign to be felt.

Again, the section presents the total annual reported cases of defilement for Area 25 Township in each of the five years from 2017 to 2021. This was done to establish if there was any increasing trend in the reported cases which, when connected to the previous analysis could be attributed to the success of the campaign. The same is done for reported defilement cases at national level as provided by the Research and Planning Office at National Police Headquarters in Lilongwe. This was done to establish if the results found in Area 25 Township could also reflect those captured at national level. Thus a comparison was also made among annual totals of each year as recorded from 2018 to 2021. (2017 was not included because its data was not well captured and thus had issues).

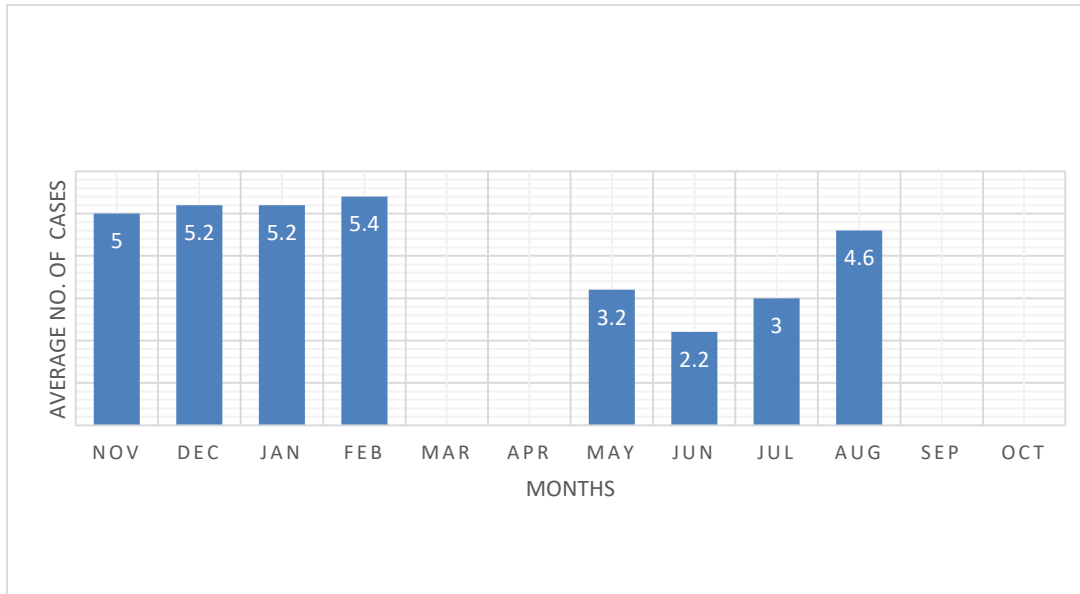
Table 1: Monthly comparisons of defilement cases for Area 25 Township from 2016/2017 to 2020/2021

	CASES PER MONTHS											
YEAR	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT
2016/2017	5	6	4	5			1	5	5	5		
2017/2018	6	5	5	6			5	0	3	7		
2018/2019	5	6	7	4			5	2	3	6		
2019/2020	4	5	5	4			3	1	2	3		
2020/2021	5	4	5	8			2	3	2	2		
TOTALS	25	26	26	27			16	11	15	23		
MONTHLY AVERAGE	5	5.2	5.2	5.4			3.2	2.2	3	4.6		
FOUR MONTHS' AVERAGE	5.2						3.25					

SOURCE: Kanengo Police Station

The table above shows that reported cases of defilement in Area 25 Township from 2016/2017 to 2020/21 increased in the months between November and February and dropped in the months between May and August. For the five-year period under study, the monthly average reported cases of defilement were 5 in November, 5.2 in December, 5.2 again in January and 5.4 in February. The average number of cases in the four months' period is 5.2. This is higher when compared to the period from May to August in the same years. From the table above, the average monthly reported cases of defilement cases 3.2 in May, 2.2 in June, 3 in July and 4.6 in August. The average monthly number of cases in this period is 3.25. From the above, it can be deduced that the “16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign” has remarkable immediate effect as victims and witnesses take action from the messages they get and go to report to police. This confirms what respondents said during Key Informant Interviews and FGDs that the campaign is very effective. The following graph summarizes the data in the table above.

Figure 1: Monthly averages of defilement cases for Area 25 Township from 2017 to 2021



SOURCE: Kanengo Police Station

Data for reported cases of defilement from Area 25 Township for five years from 2017 to 2021 was also collected and analyzed to determine trends and make comparisons with those captured at national level so that meaning could be deciphered. The data is provided in the following table.

Table 2: Annual totals of reported defilement cases for Area 25 Township

YEAR	TOTAL REPORTED DEFILEMENT CASES
2017	52
2018	65
2019	56
2020	58
2021	66

SOURCE: Kanengo Police Station

The data, as presented in the table on the previous page indicate that reported cases of defilement at Kanengo Police Station from Area 25 Township have been increasing over the years i.e. from

52 in 2017 to 65 in 2018 and 56 in 2019 to 58 and 66 in 2020 to 2021 respectively. While there may be other factors that might have contributed to this increasing trend, it is clear, as revealed from respondents in the previous sections that the “16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign” is among such reasons.

In a nutshell, this chapter discussed and analyzed findings of the study by presenting and deducing meanings from responses given by participants and making inferences from the data on the trends of defilement cases as provided by the Kanengo Police Station in relation to the research objectives and questions that guided this study as presented in Chapter One. The findings clearly show that both the research objectives and research questions have thoroughly been addressed. The study, among others, identified different programs and activities that participants implement during the “16 Days of Activism Campaign” and how these activities are contributing to the fight against GBV and sexual violence in general and defilement in particular. Ensuring thorough awareness on the vices and showing solidarity to express national commitment came out as among the ways in which the campaign is supporting the fight. The results also showed that people consider the campaign as a very significant component of the fight against defilement whose role is very crucial.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the main findings of the study based on the analysis of the data that was collected and presented in Chapter Four. It also gives a conclusion and outlines recommendations for further studies.

5.2. Summary of key findings

The study aimed at examining the contributions that the “16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign” is making in the fight against the crime of defilement in Area 25 Township, Lilongwe, Malawi to determine its significance in such a fight, as one of the many available interventions. Specifically, the study endeavored to achieve the following:

- a. Ascertain ways in which various programs and activities of the “16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign” are helping in fighting defilement cases in Area 25 Township.
- b. To determine participants’ views on the significance of the contributions being made by “16 Days of Activism against GBV Campaign” in the fight against defilement and ensuring peace in Area 25 Township.

5.2.1. Ways in which the 16 Days of Activism against GBV Campaign is helping fighting defilement cases in Area 25 Township

This first objective mainly aimed at finding out ways in which different activities carried out under the “16 Days of Activism against GBV Campaign” are helping in the fight against cases of defilement as a crime in Area 25 Township. To get a thorough understanding of this, different questions were asked to participants which sort to identify the actual and specific programs carried out during the campaign, the specific aims that the programs/activities seek to achieve, whether in such activities, defilement messages are included, perception of people on increased messaging of GBV issues during the campaign, knowledge of the campaign by locals and people’s perception on the nexus between the 16 Days of Activism campaign and defilement cases in Area 25 Township.

In summary, the study revealed that programs and activities under the “16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign” have over the years been helping (and continue to help) in fighting the crime of defilement in Area 25 Township through raising awareness about the vice and goading action on the part of victims, witnesses and duty-bearers. The study found that the activities under the campaign are helping people understand what constitute GBV (different forms of GBV which include sexual violence in which defilement falls) and are empowering them to report such incidences, either as victims or witnesses, to police or other authorities. They also are helping duty-bearers, both in the justice system such as the police, and outside such as local leaders to act swiftly and with professionalism when dealing with cases of defilement and GBV in general.

The study revealed that the annual increasing trends in figures of reported cases of defilement at Kanengo Police Station (From Area 25 Township) and the rest of Malawi Police Stations in general are, to a greater extent, as a result of the awareness activities that takes place during the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign. Respondents in the study agreed in saying that the campaign has over the years opened up societies and empowered them by giving them knowledge on what constitute GBV, including defilement, and the importance of reporting such incidents to the police when they fall victim or witness such acts within their communities. Results of the analysis of data from Key Informant Interviews that produced this was confirmed and vindicated by results from the analysis of secondary data on reported defilement cases obtained from Kanengo Police Station from Area 25 Township which also showed the immediate impact of the campaign. The analysis found that the station records more cases of defilement in the months of November, December January and February as compared to the rest of the months in the year which can confidently be concluded to be the result or immediate impact of the campaign. Again, the study found that recorded defilement cases from Area 25 Township, as recoded at Kanengo Police Station and those for the whole Malawi, as captured at National Police Headquarters are increasing with each passing year from 2017. When analyzed together with what respondents said in the study, one can confidently conclude that this is also partly as a result of campaign.

Specifically, the study found that activities conducted under the campaign by different stakeholders mainly aim at raising awareness of GBV. Apart from raising awareness, the activities

under the campaign, especially the Grand National Launch, helps stakeholders to show commitment and solidarity in the fight against GBV which sends a strong message to perpetrators of GBV about the seriousness of the crimes and to duty bearers which compels them to act with speed and professionalism on such cases.

The study found that specific programs and activities done as part of the “16 Days of Activism Against GBV” by NGOs and institutions that participate are: Organizing a Grand National Launch on November 25 of each year, Community Awareness, Increasing GBV awareness messaging in participating organizations’ existing programs, stakeholder engagements, In-house awareness and provision of immediate support and services to victims.

The study also found that the main methods of communication or vehicles of GBV messages that participating organizations and institutions use during the campaign are: the mass media, especially radio and television. The campaign also uses direct engagement of the masses through community meetings, road-shows and street parades. It was established in the study that IEC materials such as banners, posters, stickers, branded T/Shirts and brochures are also used. These are mainly distributed during community meetings and road-shows. Bill-boards erected in strategic positions along major roads and highways are also commonly used which feature celebrities or prominent individuals in society i.e. the First Lady of the country or any female cabinet minister. It was also found in the study that from 2020, the use of social media platforms such as Facebook and twitter have gained prominence in the campaign due to restrictions on public gatherings as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

As one way of finding out ways in which activities under the “16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign” are helping in fighting defilement cases in Area 25 Township, the study also sought to find out how much messages of defilement are included in the awareness messages disseminated during the campaign and whether locals know the campaign itself by name as well as perceive any increasing messaging of defilement and GBV during the campaign.

The study revealed that messages about defilement are included and make up a greater part of all the messages that are disseminated during the campaign. Respondents agreed that defilement is

part of sexual violence which forms the core of messaging of the campaign and constitute the larger percentage of all messages that are disseminated during the campaign. Asked give an approximation in percentage on defilement messaging in the campaign, respondents estimated it at between 40 and 50 percent of all the messages that are given out during a single campaign period.

The study also found that people in Area 25 Township perceive an increased change in GBV messaging during the “16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign.” Participants indicated that they normally observe such a change towards the end of the year or close to Christmas. It was found out during the study that most locals do not know the campaign by name but are aware that it happens each year towards the end of the year in which GBV messages wherein defilement information is contained increases.

Again, the study established that there is a connection and positive correlation between the “16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign” and the number of reported defilement cases from Area 25 Township as recorded at Kanengo Police Station. While all groups of participants in the study felt that the campaign, by virtue of it being concerned with the awareness of defilement and GBV issues, is responsible for the increasing number of reported defilement cases, analysis of data on such reported cases from Area 25 township also confirmed the same with the campaign showing sign of producing both immediate and long term impact on reporting of cases. The study results show that with the campaign taking place each year, more and more awareness is being done which is resulting in people opening up, being empowered and taking action to report either as victims or witnesses of defilement or GBV in general.

5.2.2. Significance of the campaign to the fight against defilement

The second research question aimed at finding out participants’ perception on whether the “16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign” has any significance in the battle against defilement or not. To establish this, participants in the study were asked to give their views on the importance of the role played by the campaign (awareness role) in the battle and if the campaign is able to perform this role as required. Participants were also asked to rate the campaign and recommend

its continuation or not based on their perception on its significant to fighting the crime of defilement.

The study found that the campaign is very significant in the fight of defilement because the role that it plays in this a battle is vital, important and critical. It found that people perceive the campaign to be very significant because it plays an important role of awareness, ensuring that there is enough information about defilement and GBV. This awareness, according to the study, is a precursor to the required actions, mainly reporting and swift professional action on duty bearers. Over the years therefore, the campaign has allowed people and their communities to open up and start reporting such cases to authorities either as victims or witnesses. Again, the campaign has forced duty-bearers such as local leaders, the police, NGOs and the judiciary to start taking defilement and GBV issues seriously, ensuring that they get their deserved priority and professional treatment. The study also found that the campaign is able to achieve its aims. All participants were convinced that the campaign has always been successful at achieving its objectives. The gave reasons such as the increasing trend of reported cases of defilement over the years as one of the reasons why they believe the campaign has always been a success and that this makes it a very significant component in the fight against defilement. In addition, participants' perceptions of the strengths of the campaign outweighed its weaknesses. Based on these, they all rated the campaign highly and recommended for its continued existence. They all said they would love to see the campaign continue taking place and expanding in scope because of the of the significant role that it is playing in fighting defilement and the rest of GBV.

In their specific responses, participants agreed that the role of ensuring awareness played by the campaign in the battle against defilement is very important and crucial because best action in dealing with an issue depends on how well-informed an individual is on that issue. They also agreed that participants who take part in the campaign do their best in ensuring that such information reach out to target audiences which results in actions like reporting of cases by victims, witnesses and local leaders, and quick action to incidents by the police as well as priority being given to them by the judiciary. After weighing the strengths and weaknesses of the campaign from participants' views and perceptions, the study found that the strengths outweigh the weaknesses,

giving it an edge to be a significant, crucial and important part in the battle or fight against the crime of defilement and GBV at large.

5.3. Challenges

From the analysis and review of the data captured as responses from participants and defilement statistics of Area 25 Township from Kanengo Police Station, the study has identified the following challenges associated with the contribution of the 16 Days of Activism against GBV Campaign in fighting the crime of defilement and bringing about peace:

a). Important duty-bearers in the justice system such as the police, judiciary and prison service lack the capacity to adequately and professionally handle resultant effects of the campaign. For instance, there are gaps within the MPS to professionally deal with the increasing numbers cases of defilement from the campaign and other social interventions. This has spill-over effects to the judiciary.

b). The period in which the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV campaign takes place is not enough. From respondents' observations, the period is too short for organizers to take the messages across the whole breadth of the country. Respondents observed that participating organizations in the campaign recline on the awareness front once the campaign period comes to an end.

c). There are great deficiencies with the Malawi Prison Service in effective reformation of prisoners as some ex-convicts of defilement end up committing the same crimes when released back into the communities.

5.4. Conclusion

The study aimed at examining the contribution of the “16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign” to the fight against the crime of defilement and ensuring peace in Area 25 Township, Lilongwe, Malawi as one of the available interventions in such a fight, with a view to establishing its significance and relevance at a time defilement cases in Malawi continue to rise despite so many of such interventions in place.

Thus, the study endeavored to specifically ascertain ways in which various activities carried out under the “16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign” are helping in fighting the crime of defilement cases in Area 25 Township and determine participants’ views on the significance of the campaign in the whole battle against defilement.

The study found that the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV is playing a very important and crucial role in battle of ensuring that people are aware of what constitute GBV including sexual violence like defilement and that from this they are able to take action through reporting such incidents either as victims or as witnesses to authorities. It also found that the campaign is contributing immensely in the fight against defilement by ensuring that relevant duty bearers such as local leaders, the police, relevant NGOs and the judiciary take quick actions and are accountable for what they do in as far as the fight against defilement is concerned. The study thus finds that the campaign is contributing a lot to in making Malawi a peaceful and secure country for young girls.

The study has also brought clarity and explained the reason behind the increasing trend in the numbers of reported defilement cases at Kanengo Police Station from Area 25 Township and in Malawi as a whole from 2017 to date as being to the greater extent the positive contributions of the “16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign.” The study was able to establish and reveal both the positive immediate and long term impact of the campaign on reported cases of defilement from Area 25 Township at Kanengo Police Station.

The study also established that people perceive the period in which the “16 Days of Activism Campaign Against GBV” takes place as not enough. While most organizations and institutions that take part in the campaign indicated that they continue with awareness activities on defilement throughout the year, it was found that this kind of awareness does not have the same impact as that which happens during the campaign period. All participants as well indicated that they wished that this campaign should have been given more time than the 16 days.

The study’s final finding therefore is that the “16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign” contributes positively to the battle against the crime of defilement in Area 25 Township by effectively playing a very important role of awareness of the vice. It is thus a very critical and important part or component in such a fight and its significance needs not to be emphasized.

5.5. Recommendations

Based on the study findings as presented in the previous sections, it is recommended that:

- ❖ Government and other relevant stakeholders and partners to consider empowering the Malawi Police Service and the judiciary so that they can ably cope with and professionally handle the increasing numbers of cases of defilement emanating from increased awareness from the campaign.
- ❖ Organizers of the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign should consider extending the time in which they carry out the activities of the campaign so that awareness of defilement and GBV can reach more people throughout the year.
- ❖ Government and its partners to establish a system of tracking the progress of GBV perpetrators' reformation in prisons to ensure that such people truly change to prevent them from committing the same crimes when reintegrated into society.

5.6. Areas of further study

The following are suggested areas for further studies:

- ❖ Three decades after the initial roll-out of the “16 Days of Activism Against GBV Campaign,” which has produced positive results in terms of reporting and swift action, why is it that cases of GBV have not started to go down?
- ❖ The impact of increasing cases of defilement and GBV cases on receiving duty-bearers such as the police, judiciary and prison service.
- ❖ Comparison of the security statuses of Malawi in various periods in relation to GBV issues
- ❖ Assessment of the reformation process of GBV and sexual violence perpetrators in the Malawi Prison Service in relation to status of ex-convicts at reintegration stage.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE - FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

My name is PETER MWALE KALAYA, a University of Rwanda student, currently conducting an academic study titled: *Examining contributions of the 16 Days of Activism against GBV Campaign in Fighting Defilement: Case of Area 25 Township* which is a requirement for the award of a Masters Degree in Peace Studies and Conflict Transformation. The purpose of this is to acquire your views on the above topic. All the information shared during this discussion will solely be used for the purpose of the said research.

Bio data for the respondents

Gender:	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. How much is the crime of defilement a problem in your respective areas?
2. How do you/your people get messages about defilement or GBV in general?
3. Is there a specific period/months in which you think you observe increased messaging of defilement and GBV cases from different quarters? Explain.
4. Are you aware of a campaign that aim at raising awareness of GBV issues known as 16 Days of Activism against GBV?
5. Do you participate in the activities of the campaign? If yes, explain how and in what ways do you participate?
6. Explain how significant you think the campaign is to fighting defilement and ensuring peace in your areas?
7. What is the status of defilement and GBV in general in relation to the campaign in your areas?
8. What would you say are the strengths and weaknesses of the campaign as people at the receiving end of the messages?

Thank you very much!

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE - PARTICIPATING NGO/INSTITUTION

My name is PETER MWALE KALAYA, a University of Rwanda student, currently conducting an academic study titled: **Examining contributions of the 16 Days of Activism against GBV Campaign in Fighting Defilement: Case of Area 25 Township** which is a requirement for the award of a Masters Degree in Peace Studies and Conflict Transformation. The purpose of this is to acquire your views on the above topic. All the information shared during this interview will solely be used for the purpose of the said research.

Bio data for the respondent

1. Position of the respondent at the institution:

.....

(a). Gender: Male Female

- 2. As an organization which participate in the 16 Days of Activism against GBV Campaign, for how long have you been taking part in the campaign?
- 3. What programs/activities do you plan and implement during the campaign?
- 4. What methods of disseminating messages do you use when implementing your programs?
- 5. Do you include messages about defilement in the programs/activities that you implement?
- 6. How significant do you think is the 16 Days of Activism against GBV campaign in the general battle against defilement cases?
- 7. Do you think the campaign is on the right track and is achieving its objectives?
- 8. How would you compare the strengths and weaknesses of the campaign?
- 9. From your experience, do you think the campaign is contributing to the fight against GBV in general and defilement in particular? Explain.
- 10. As an organization that has been taking part in planning and coordinating the campaign for sometime, how would you rate the campaign in the past five years against:

(a). Its general objective? (b) Fighting Defilement cases

Thank you very much!

Musanze, 16 Dec 21

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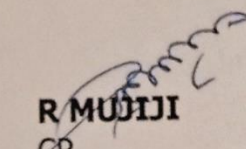


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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that **SSP PETER MWALE KALAYA** is a student at Rwanda National Police College, undertaking a Master's Degree in Peace Studies and Conflict Transformation for the academic year 2021-2022. He is conducting a research on: "CONTRIBUTION OF THE "16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE CAMPAIGN" IN FIGHTING DEFILEMENT: CASE OF AREA 25 TOWNSHIP", for which he is required to collect data from relevant sources.

Any assistance rendered to him in this regard is highly valued by the College.


R. MURJI
CP
COMMANDANT



Peter Mwale Kalaya Dissertation

ORIGINALITY REPORT

SIMILARITY INDEX **19%** **18** INTERNET SOURCES% **7** PUBLICATIONS% **8%** STUDENT PAPERS

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AUTHORISATION TO SUBMIT THE CORRECTED DISSERTATION

I, undersigned, **Dr. George Wiclyffe BUTARE**, member of the panel of examiners of the dissertation done by **PETER MWALE KALAYA** entitled: **CONTRIBUTION OF THE “16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GBV” CAMPAIGN IN FIGHTING DEFILEMENT: CASE OF AREA 25 TOWNSHIP**

Hereby testify that he successfully entered the suggested corrections by the panel of examiners and stands with authorization to submit required copies to the administration of CCM for administrative purpose.

Done at Kigali

Date: 17/06/2022

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. W. Butare', written over a light blue rectangular stamp.

George WYCLIFFE BUTARE, PhD

For Administration of the CCM MA Program: Name, Signature