



# Seeking Safety Finding Terror

**Refugee Women and Girls at  
heightened risk of rape  
sexual violence and other  
gender related human rights  
abuses**

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# Who is a refugee?



**....a person who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country..."**

**Article 1, The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees**





# Refugee Women Do talk about rape!



# Journeys of Rape



**Rape and sexual torture in armed conflict by soldiers, rebels, peacekeepers**

**Rape during flight by police and border guards**

**Rape in refugee camps and urban areas in countries of first 'asylum'**



# Women and Girls at Extreme risk in Refugee Camps



***‘This is rape camp. It does not matter what you wear. If you wear shorts, they will rape you; if you wear Muslim dress they will rape you. This is a rape camp.’***

**(Refugee woman, Kakuma Camp, Kenya June 2003)**



# Women and Girls at Extreme risk in Refugee Camps



*‘ All the women in this camp are at risk... Do you want to resettle them all?’*

*‘I will give you a prize if you can find a woman who has not been raped.’*

**(Head of UNHCR Field Office Kakuma Camp, Kenya 2002)**



# Women and Girls at Extreme risk in Refugee Camps



- **Woman or girl victims of rape ostracised by family and/or community**
- **Unaccompanied minors without family support**
- **Women and girls forced to marry, live in unwanted relationships or engage in survival sex in order to survive**
- **Children living with unsuitable foster parents**
- **Abuse of children by step fathers in particular when the mother is in a forced relationship**
- **Abuse by religious leaders and other men in positions of authority in including camp committees, INGOs, UNHCR and peace keepers**





***“The women have to go to the market at night to get the spoilt vegetables. The women are sexually harassed at the market. They ask the stallholders for the spoiled vegetables – but the stallholders just laugh and throw the vegetables to the animals and crows, so people are fighting with the animals for food.” (New Delhi 2005)***





# Women and Girls at Extreme risk in Urban areas



- **Rape and sexual harassment by employers in domestic service and factories**
- **Overcrowding leading to sexual abuse for single women and married women**
- **Increased domestic and family violence**
- **Unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortion**
- **Rape and sexual abuse by men in the local community while collecting food or water**
- **Survival sex**



# Compounding factors



**Extreme poverty and lack of safe livelihoods**

**Loss of citizenship**

**Loss of identity/assuming the identity of “refugee”**

**Loss of hope and depression**

**Loss of autonomy**

**Distortion of Culture and cultural practices eg. Dowry**

**Notions of Justice eg. Camp Justice**

**Xenophobia and racism**

