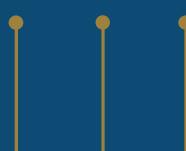




SOCHUM

Topic A:
**Exoneration of the Rights of
Women Refugees.**

Topic B:
**Elimination of Racial
Discrimination in Government**



COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

Introduction

The Social, Cultural and Humanitarian Affairs Committee (SOCHUM) is one of the six specialized subcommittees of the United Nations General Assembly and generally referred to as the Third Committee. It was established after the development of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Over the years, SOCHUM discusses questions relating to the advancement of women, the protection of children, indigenous issues, the treatment of refugees, the promotion of fundamental freedoms through the elimination of racism and racial discrimination, and the right to self-determination. The Committee also addresses important social development questions such as issues related to youth, family, ageing, persons with disabilities, crime prevention, criminal justice, and international drug control.

At the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, the Third Committee considered over 60 draft resolutions, more than half of which were submitted under the human rights agenda item alone. These included three so called country-specific resolutions on human rights agenda item alone. These included three so-called country specific resolutions on human rights situations.

TOPIC AREA A: Exoneration of the Rights of Women Refugees.

Introduction:

The world is witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record. An unprecedented 65.6 million people around the world have been forced from home by conflict and persecution at the end of 2016. Among them are nearly 22.5 million refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18. There are also 10 million stateless people, who have been denied a nationality and access to basic rights such as education, healthcare, employment and freedom of movement.

Violence against refugees has become a point of global humanitarian concern. Violence in any form constitutes a desecration of basic human rights in conflict: pre and or post zones implants fear in the lives of victims who are already intensely affected by their physical and psychological displacement. Violence against refugees is widespread however women and young girls are more vulnerable to brutality.

The issue of protecting refugees rights was first addressed in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and to this day the full protection of human rights for refugees, asylum seekers, returnees and displaced persons is a huge issue.

There are numerous forms of violence that can be committed against any refugee. The reason behind the increase in violence against refugees is simply because refugees are in a state of limbo, they cannot resist any form of physical transgression that leads to their psychological submission.

By the end of 2015 there was an estimated number of 16.1 million refugees, which is the highest level of refugees in the past two decades and approximately 1.7 million more than the 12 months earlier.

Additionally, in 2015 there was a reported 8.6 million people who were internally displaced due to armed conflict, violence, and human rights violations. The refugee crisis is currently at its peak especially in Africa and the Middle East, therefore we need to make efforts to make sure their settlement into their new homes is safe.

Brutalization of and towards women is not only deplorable but can be seen as a persistent trend. Desecration of womanhood as a conscious action has always been a platform to advertise power. During an armed conflict an effective manner of registering victory is to not only defeat the local population in arms but to damage their pride; hence the torture of women, who are sold into slavery forced into marriage and repeatedly raped to insure the loss of honour of their patriarchal heads.

Moreover, by 2015 forced displacement increased from 59.5 million to 65.3 million individuals, which is record high numbers. For that reason, due to the record high numbers in refugees, displaced persons, asylum-seekers and returnees we must make sure that their human rights are protected no matter where they go.

Glossary of terms

Refugees: A refugee can be an individual and or a community which have exited a state or a country which may or may not have become a conflict zone

As defined in the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees a refugee is defined as a person who has 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 or return there because there is a fear of persecution.

IDPS: An internally displaced person (IDP) is a person who has been forced to flee his or her home for the same reason as a refugee, but remains within his or her country's borders. They are often referred to as refugees, although they do not fall within the legal definitions of a refugee.

Refugee Camps: A refugee camp is intended as a temporary accommodation for people who have been forced to flee their home because of violence and persecution. They are constructed while crises unfold for people fleeing for their lives.

Victim: An individual will be perceived a victim whose mind and body is transgressed but not limited to only physicality. "Victims" means persons who, individually or collectively, have suffered harm, including physical or mental injury, emotional suffering, economic loss or substantial impairment of their fundamental rights, through acts or omissions that are in violation of criminal laws operative within Member States, including those laws proscribing criminal abuse of power. The term "victim" also includes, where appropriate, the immediate family or dependants of the direct victim and persons who have suffered harm in intervening to assist victims in distress or to prevent victimization.

Sexual Violence: Sexual violence is defined as: any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work. An act of forced violent behaviour that can result in a life-threatening situation. Just as other forms of torment, violence the purpose of this violence is often to control, humiliate and hurt an individual's mental and physical integrity.

Asylum seekers are people who move across borders in search of protection, but who may not fulfill the strict criteria laid down by the 1951 Convention. Asylum seeker describes someone who has applied for protection as a refugee and is awaiting the determination of his or her status. An asylum seeker must demonstrate that his or her fear of persecution in his or her own home country is well-founded.

Persons Most Vulnerable to Sexual Violence

Experience shows that unaccompanied women and lone female heads of household are at the greatest risk of being subjected to sexual violence. Children are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse given their high level of trust. Unaccompanied children and children in foster families also are especially at risk. Furthermore, refugees of all ages and both genders face a significantly increased risk of sexual violence when in detention or detention-like situations. Refugee workers should be aware that the very old, the infirm, and the physically and mentally disabled may also be vulnerable to attack. Refugees most at risk of being subjected to sexual violence: unaccompanied women lone female heads of household • unaccompanied children children in foster care arrangements. those in detention or detention-like situations.

Forced migration: a migratory movement in which an element of coercion exists, including threats to life and livelihood, whether arising from natural or manmade causes. Forced migrants are also defined as displaced persons.

Stateless person: someone who is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law". Persons under the stateless conditions encounter many difficulties in accessing rights in the host

country and this might be the conditions of children born from women who are displaced at the moment of giving birth.

Situations where violence may occur:

Not[es] also distressing reports that refugees and asylum-seekers, including children, in many instances have been subjected rape or other forms of sexual violence during their flight or following their arrival in countries where they sought asylum, including sexual extortion in connection with the granting of basic necessities, personal documentation or refugee status.... Executive Committee Conclusion No. 73 (XLIV) (1993). Preamble Refugee Protection and Sexual Violence The following are some situations in which sexual violence against refugees has been known to occur:

Prior to Flight:

Men, women and children may be targeted for abuse by the police, the military or other officials in the country of origin. Individuals may be detained, which heightens the risk of sexual violence and torture. Sexual violence may also occur at the hands of irregular forces in situations of internal conflict. Sexual violence may even occur with the complicity of male leaders, in the form of bartering women or girls for arms and ammunition or other benefits.

During Flight:

Refugees may be sexually attacked by pirates, bandits, members of the security forces, smugglers or other refugees. Border guards may detain and abuse women and girls, sometimes for extended periods; pirates may capture women as they travel by boat and extort sex in exchange for their safety and onward passage. Smugglers may assist female refugees across the border in exchange for sex and/or money and valuables.

In the country of asylum:

The country of asylum does not necessarily provide sanctuary from sexual violence. Whether refugees live in camps or in urban situations, they may be subjected to sexual attacks by persons in authority or otherwise in a position to take advantage of their particularly vulnerable situation. In a variety of asylum situations, officials who determine the refugee status of the applicant may extort sex in exchange for a positive determination. Refugee women and girls may be approached for sexual favours in exchange for assistance, such as during food distribution. Unaccompanied children, in particular girls, placed in foster care may suffer sexual abuse by the foster family members. Refugees may be sexually attacked by members of the local population, by officials, including those responsible for their protection such as border guards, police or military personnel, by international refugee workers, or by fellow refugees. Forms of domestic violence often escalate in direct proportion to the pressures of refugee life. Sexual attacks may occur while women go about daily chores, particularly if these involve visiting isolated areas. Attacks can take place at night in the homes of victims and in front of family members or an individual may be abducted and sexually violated away from her home. Armed assailants may attack in groups, converging on a camp. In extreme situations, some refugees, who initially fled their country of origin due to internal conflict, have been known to return home in order to seek relief from the general insecurity

existing in the country of asylum. In addition, coercive prostitution, or the exploitation of the prostitution of women and girls by camp officials in collaboration with local prostitution rings may also occur.

During repatriation operations

Where large population movements may separate women and girls from their usual support systems, crowding and other changes may make normal control and protection measures difficult to implement. The same dangers found during flight and exile may be faced once again on the return journey or upon return in the country of origin.

During reintegration phases

Returned refugees may be targeted by the Government, military or others in retribution for having fled. Women in particular may be susceptible to sexual extortion in exchange for material assistance or for identification cards or other forms of documentation required by government officials.

International standards

Several instruments, guidelines, standards, conventions, and protocols have been issued under international law in order to guarantee proper protection to refugee and asylum-seeking women. Some of them are specifically destined to the situation of forcibly displaced women; others are aimed at the general protection of women, at fostering gender equality, and at eradicating gender-based violence. An attempt to provide a list of the most recent and well-known material is provided below:

- 1951 Refugee Convention and UN Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (1967)¹;
- UN Convention on the elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)², known as "CEDAW";

- UNHCR Policy on Refugee Women (1990) whose aim is to integrate resources and needs of refugee women into all aspects of programme planning and implementation;
- UNHCR Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women (1991)*; > UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, known as 'DEVAW'. (1993);
- UN Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, Fourth World Conference on Women (1995);
- UN Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1999)³;
- UNHCR Five Commitments to Refugee Women (2001); these commitments are of absolute relevance and include: meaningful participation of women in all management and leadership committees of refugees in urban, rural, and camp settings. including return areas; individual registration and documentation; access to and control over food and non-food items management and distribution; economic empowerment; and prevention and response to gender-based violence;
- UNHCR Guidelines on International Protection: Gender-related Persecution within the Context of Article 1A(2) of the 1951 Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees (2002); these guidelines are particularly relevant because they are aimed at introducing a gender-sensitive interpretation of the 1951 Refugee Convention, which did not originally include a specific provision of persecution based on gender discrimination.
- UNHCR Sexual and Gender-based Violence against Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons. Guidelines for Prevention and Response (2003)⁴;

- UNHCR Handbook for the Protection of Women and Girls (2008)¹;

1 Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.html>.

2 Available at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm>.

3 Available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3bf1338f4.html>.

4 Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/3d4f915e4.html>.

5 Available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f25d2e.html>.

6 Available at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>.

7 Available at: <http://daccessddsny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N99/774/73/PDF/N9977473.pdf?OpenElement>.

8 Available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/479f3b2a2.html>.

9 Available at: <http://www.refworld.org/pfid/3d36fc64.pdf>

10 Available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3edcd0661.html>.

11 Available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/47cfc2962.html>.