

Helping to Break the Cycle: Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence

An Afghan woman, exchanged by her father for a new wife when she was eight and raped daily, wants to save her daughter from a similar life. A Sudanese woman risks rape if she leaves her camp to look for food or firewood, but her family must eat. A Karen woman fled conflict in Burma years ago, but still endures violence in her home.

The U.S. Government's Commitment

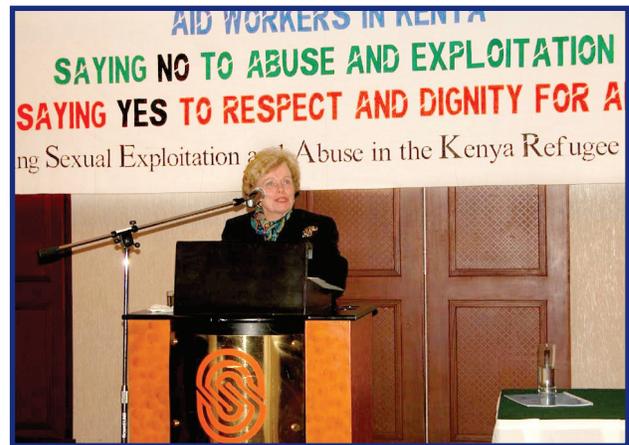
Gender Based Violence (GBV) is a feature of virtually every recently concluded and current armed conflict. GBV may increase during war and conflict, in parallel with poverty and despair – particularly in refugee situations. As part of the U.S. Department of State's transformational diplomacy efforts, the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) has been at the forefront in protecting and assisting refugees and victims of conflict, particularly refugee women and girls.

PRM-sponsored programs focus on four key goals: awareness raising, prevention, response, and capacity building. PRM seeks to challenge the ambivalence in some societies toward GBV, examine and address its root causes, and to involve the entire community in preventing GBV while meeting survivors' special medical, social, psychosocial, and legal needs.

Since 2000, PRM has provided over \$14.7 million for specific GBV prevention and response projects through international organizations, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and non-



Community members in Mundri, southern Sudan, enact a GBV drama. After the drama concludes, Cooperative Housing Foundation International - a PRM funded NGO - engages the community in discussions on GBV prevention as part of its innovative outreach effort.



Assistant Secretary Ellen Sauerbrey speaks at the signing of the Interagency Protocols for the Prevention of Exploitation and Abuse in the Kenyan Refugee Programs in March 2006. PRM requires that each of its overseas implementing partners adopt a code of conduct to protect beneficiary populations from abuse and exploitation. These protocols spell out how humanitarian agencies in Kenya will operationalize the code of conduct.

governmental organizations (NGOs). In Fiscal Year 2006 alone, PRM directed over \$4.4 million to GBV programs. PRM also works on global efforts to eliminate trafficking in persons, and funds anti-trafficking programs worldwide through the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

In combating GBV, PRM seeks to break the cycle of violence, to empower survivors to become agents of their own protection, and to promote human dignity, a key U.S. foreign policy goal. PRM funds projects that raise awareness of GBV in the refugee community, and educates police, guards, NGO, and community workers about the impact of GBV, and about legal protection and services that are available to help survivors. PRM also supports literacy and education initiatives for refugee women and other activities to increase their income potential through livelihoods and marketable job-skills training.

PRM Sponsored Program Highlights:

- Community-based education programs among refugee communities in Eritrea, Moscow, Pakistan, and Thailand for Karen refugees.
- Courses in tolerance, democracy, and human rights for children in Gaza, West Bank, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.
- Basic education, rights awareness, and vocational training for Afghan women and girls.
- An Anti-Female Genital Cutting program for refugee camps in Kenya.
- Health and psychosocial support including counseling for refugees and returnees in Liberia and Ethiopia.
- Refugee and internally displaced women's empowerment programs in several countries in Latin America and Africa.
- Counseling, mediation, legal services, and community sensitization in Mundri, southern Sudan.
- An Ambassador's Fund project to support vulnerable teen mothers in Budumburam refugee camp in Ghana.

GBV Programming: A Proven Impact

PRM's efforts to mainstream Gender-Based Violence have increased the focus, dialogue, research, and response to GBV among our implementing partners, while PRM's targeted interventions have had a significant positive impact in refugee communities. A PRM-sponsored program in refugee camps in Kenya has encouraged an increasing number of girls and families to renounce the harmful traditional practice of female genital cutting (FGC). In 2005, as part of this program, 207 girls and their families vowed not to undergo FGC. This number is expected to double in 2006.

Another PRM-funded project has focused on implementation of the Kenya Code, in cooperation with the Government of Kenya, on the prevention of sexual abuse and exploitation by agency staff members. In 2006-2007, the project will focus on several initiatives, including awareness-raising for refugee populations and aid workers, dissemination of educational films, as well as instituting

mechanisms within the police force to create awareness and advocate against sexual exploitation and abuse.

PRM has also supported a legal aid clinic in Guinea for GBV cases, 95 percent of which were resolved in the clients' interests. In Thailand, PRM funds several GBV awareness programs. GBV coordinators in camps work with the community to improve social support and the short and long-term needs of victims. Social stigma prevents many from reporting GBV, but in one particular program, the number of reported cases doubled within months of starting a GBV community education program. A very successful project for Afghan refugees will focus its activities in 2006-2007 on the role of in-laws and in engaging men in the fight against gender-based violence.



Related Links for More Information:

- PRM Website: <http://www.state.gov/g/prm>
- USG Protection Statement at UNHCR's 2006 EXCOM: <http://www.usmission.ch/Press2006/1004EllenSauerbrey.htm>
- UNHCR Website on refugee women: <http://www.unhcr.org/protect/3b83a48d4.html>
- UNHCR's Operational Protection in Camps and Settlements: A Reference Guide of Good Practices in the Protection of Refugees and Other Persons of Concern June 2006: <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/openssl.pdf?tbl=RSDLEGAL&id=44b381994>
- USG Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons: <http://www.state.gov/g/tip>
- Gender-Based Violence Bibliography: <http://www.rhrc.org/resources/gbv/bib/index.cfm>
- UN Security Council Resolution 1325: <http://www.womenwarpeace.org/toolbox/1325.pdf>

"I know that I have to help my daughter achieve her goals, help her aspire higher in life and allow her to choose a husband of her own choice...I could very easily have been just one of the millions of voiceless, faceless [women who have been victims of violence] in our community. But this program has given me a purpose in life and conviction to work with my inner strength"

– Afghan Program Participant