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Book review
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ONLY RAPE! HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY FOR REFUGEE WOMEN: FROM REFUGEE CAMPS TO THE UNITED NATIONS

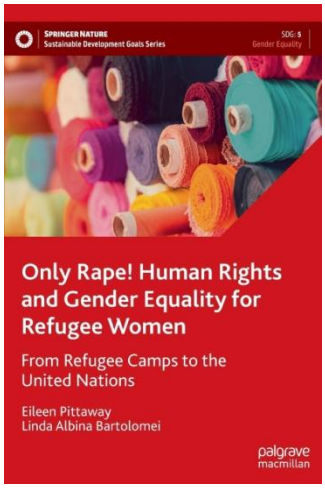
Authors: Eileen Pittaway and Linda Albina Bartolomei (Springer, Palgrave Macmillan Singapore 2022)

By **Mohammad Ramin Hakimy**[1*]

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" All my sisters, my mother, my friends - all the women have been raped. The military, they rape us. When we try to cross border they rape us, when we go for water they rape us, when we go for food they rape us, when we go to the bathroom they rape us. The police, they rape us. Our life is rape." (Rohingya Refugee Women 2019)

Pittaway and Bartolomei



In their groundbreaking book titled "Only Rape! Human Rights and Gender Equality for Refugee Women: From Refugee Camps to the United Nations", the authors Eileen Pittaway and Linda Albina Bartolomei bring to the forefront the pressing and frequently disregarded issue of sexual violence confronted by women seeking refuge. Released in the year 2022, this extensively investigated piece of literature delves deep into the firsthand accounts and experiences of women who find themselves in the often intricate and multi-faceted network of refugee camps, providing an all-encompassing examination of the numerous obstacles they face while simultaneously highlighting their unwavering struggle for both justice and equality.

Pittaway and Bartolomei, two esteemed individuals who are highly regarded in the realm of refugee studies, utilize a plethora of primary and secondary sources to construct a compelling and impactful narrative that not only reveals the immense seriousness of the problem at hand but also provides perceptive and astute recommendations for reforming policies. The extensive and comprehensive fieldwork, interviews, and case studies conducted by the authors serve to enhance the credibility and validity of their arguments, thereby enabling readers to obtain a profound and comprehensive comprehension of the multi-faceted challenges that refugee women encounter in various aspects of their lives.

The book is organized into 14 parts, each of which focuses on a particular time in the authors' 33-year quest to recognize, stop, and address rape and other sexual violence against women who are in war or fleeing their homes. The writers have collaborated in 22 countries with a global network of academics, refugee women, and human rights advocates.

The book exhibits a well-organized and coherent structure, thereby rendering it easily understandable and accessible to a diverse readership encompassing scholars, policymakers, activists, and general individuals inclined toward human rights and gender issues. Commencing with an enlightening introduction, the book astutely sets the foundation for the forthcoming chapters by offering an inclusive summary of the obstacles confronted by refugee women and highlighting the principal themes that the book addresses.

An inherent strength of this book lies in its robust reliance on empirical research. The authors adeptly employ a wide array of data from extensive fieldwork and in-depth case studies encompassing diverse refugee scenarios, thereby granting a voice to those resilient women who have undergone unimaginable adversities. This methodology, in turn, endows the statistics and policy discussions with a human touch, compelling readers to confront the harsh realities that refugee women endure and rendering it impossible to overlook or dismiss these stark truths.

The book's opening section emphasizes how critical it is to deal with rape and gender-based violence among refugees. The authors stress the need for global activism to bring about change and want to magnify the voices of those impacted via their collaboration with a worldwide network of academics, refugee women, and human rights activists.

In the next chapter that follows, the authors embark on an exploration of the profound and intricate subject matter encapsulated within the title "Opening Pandora's Box: Rape, Sexual Abuse, and Refugee Women: 1989-1990". With profound depth and diligent analysis, the authors delve into the historical context surrounding the profoundly problematic issue of rape and sexual abuse experienced by refugee women. Their meticulous and comprehensive research shed light on the early endeavors to confront this harrowing problem, meticulously examining the myriad challenges humanitarian organizations encounter in their valiant efforts to address the issue. Furthermore, the authors meticulously dissect the limited recognition granted to gender-based violence as a violation of the universally cherished principles of human rights. Drawing upon the wealth of their research, the authors shed light on the true extent of this pervasive problem and the dire need for a comprehensive response encompassing a broad range of dimensions. The reader will find an intellectual journey of immense magnitude and consequence within these pages. This exploration seeks to inform and provoke thoughtful contemplation and ignite a passionate call to action.

The subsequent discussion on the book, titled "From the Local to the International: Domestic Politics and International Advocacy 1990-1992", delves into the subject matter at hand in a manner that builds upon the previous chapter's content. This section aims to explore the intricate process of transitioning from local advocacy efforts to international ones. The esteemed authors undertake a comprehensive examination of the pivotal role that domestic politics plays in shaping the responses to instances of gender-based violence within refugee situations. In doing so, they bring the utmost significance of fostering collaboration between civil society organizations, academics, and policymakers to drive change effectively. Furthermore, the chapter delves into the multi-faceted challenges encountered to bring this issue to the

international community's attention, shedding light on the complexities inherent in this endeavor.

The following two chapters of the book "Rape as a War Crime: The Road to the 4th World Conference, Beijing 1993-1995" and "Interleague" delves into the period leading up to the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing, examining the recognition of rape as a war crime. The authors explore the efforts of advocates and activists to raise awareness about this issue and the significance of the Beijing Conference in shaping international policies and addressing gender-based violence. The book also serves as an introspective juncture, emphasizing the need for continued action and the crucial role of academia, civil society, and affected refugee women in driving change. The chapter urges readers to remain committed to tackling rape and gender-based violence in refugee situations.

The most argumentative section of the book, Intersectionality, Identity, and Refugee Women-2001-2002: "I Will Give You a Prize If You Can Find a Woman in This Camp Who Has Not Been Raped", go into the intricate nature of identity and the encounters of refugee women. Pittaway and Bartolomei analyze the multi-faceted dynamics of gender, nationality, race, and ethnicity that Mold the experiences of these women. They underscore the difficulties encountered in addressing gender-based violence within diverse refugee communities and emphasize the necessity for tailored approaches that take into account the distinct experiences and vulnerabilities of various groups.

In addition to the book's next chapter emphasizing the value of hearing from refugee women, the book looks into the idea of reciprocal study. It talks about the moral issues that come up while studying sensitive topics like sexual abuse and rape. The writers support a collaborative strategy that gives refugee women agency and guarantees their narratives are not misrepresented. The chapter also emphasizes women's influence on bringing about change and the strength of their voices. In order to identify and address the dangers encountered by refugee women, it addresses the creation of a risk assessment and response tool. The writers also go into how international organizations like the UNHCR and the Commission on the Status of Women support the rights of women who are refugees.

In the following chapter, "Survivors, Protectors, Providers: Refugee Women Speak Out from Gender Mainstreaming to the Regional Dialogues-2009-2011", the authors examine the advancements made in incorporating gender considerations into refugee policies and programs from 2009-2011. The chapter highlights the importance of survivor-led initiatives and the urgent requirement for comprehensive support systems that address the physical, psychological, and social needs of refugee women. It also emphasizes the significance of regional dialogues as platforms for sharing knowledge and experiences. In the following chapter, "Anger and Despair-Naming the 'Elephants in the Room'-2012-2016", authors look into the period between 2012-2016, characterized by frustration and a pressing sense of urgency in addressing the persistent challenges faced by refugee women. The authors aim to confront the underlying issues hindering progress in combating gender-based violence. They stress the crucial need to openly acknowledge and address these issues as the catalyst for driving substantial and transformative change.

The chapter before the last chapter, "Refugee Women From the Margins to the Centre-2017-2020", focuses on the efforts to center the experiences and perspectives of refugee

women, emphasizing their role in decision-making processes and policy development. The final chapter, "Epilogue-The Move from Rhetoric to Reality-2021-2022", reflects on progress and underscores the need for concrete action to ensure gender equality and human rights for refugee women. Ongoing collaboration and advocacy are essential to create a safer and more just world for them.

"Only Rape!" is a book that highlights the experiences of refugee women, focusing on the issue of sexual violence and the urgent need for gender equality within refugee camps. The book provides a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by these women, contextualizing them within the broader framework of forced displacement. It emphasizes the gendered nature of displacement and the specific vulnerabilities faced by women in these circumstances. The book also emphasizes the voices and stories of refugee women themselves, providing insights into the physical, psychological, and social impact of sexual violence and the barriers they face in accessing justice and support. The authors critically analyze the power dynamics within refugee camps, examining the role of humanitarian organizations, international agencies, and governments in addressing these issues. They call for a comprehensive and coordinated response to protect the rights of refugee women. The book also examines the role of the United Nations and other international bodies in promoting gender equality and addressing sexual violence in refugee contexts.