

Survivors of War, Oppression, and Torture:

Information for Students

This packet was created by volunteers and staff of the Center for Victims of Torture as a resource for high school and college students seeking information on survivors of war-related violence residing in the United States. Whether your interest is personal or academic, this packet will give you a starting point for research on these survivors, both internationally and locally. It is divided into sections by topic (Refugees, Asylum, War Trauma, etc.) Each section contains a short definition or relevant quote, followed by a list of resources such as books, websites, videos, and organizations. The activities section contains exercises that can be used in discussion groups to increase awareness of what refugees in the United States may have experienced. We also provide a list of organizations that can give you information about what you as an individual can do to support human rights. Our hope is that by providing these resources, we can help students increase their interest in and awareness of survivors of torture and political trauma in this country.



THE Center
FOR VICTIMS OF
TORTURE

The Center for Victims of Torture

The Center for Victims of Torture was founded in May 1985 as an independent, nongovernmental organization. CVT exists to heal the wounds of torture on individuals, their families, and their communities and to stop torture worldwide. CVT works locally, nationally, and internationally to build healing communities where torture survivors feel welcomed, protected and healed.

The Healing Services staff at CVT helps torture survivors regain control by helping them rehabilitate physically, mentally and emotionally. Each survivor works with a team of care providers, including doctors, nurses, psychologists, social workers, massage therapists and physical therapists. Trust and confidentiality are essential to this healing process. CVT has helped torture survivors from more than 60 countries heal and rebuild their lives.



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These survivors are mothers, fathers, sons and daughters.

In their home countries they were leaders in their communities and beloved family members.

With help, they will not only survive, they will flourish.

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I. REFUGEES

A refugee is, according to the 1951 Convention of Relating to the Status of Refugees, a person who 'owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such, unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.'

-United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees

Refugees apply and are granted legal status before they enter the United States. Asylum seekers fit the definition of refugees, but apply for status after entering the country.

BOOKS:

Bentley, Judith. (1986). *Refugees: Search for a Haven*. Messner.

Donahue, David M. & Flowers, Nancy. (1994). *The Uprooted: Refugees and the United States*. Alameda, CA: Hunter House.

Hawthorne, Leslyanne. Ed. (1985). *Refugee: The Vietnamese Experience*. Melbourne, Australia: Oxford University Press.

Kismaric, Carole. (1989). *Forced Out: The Agony of the Refugee in Our Time*. New York: W. H. Norton, Penguin Books, and Random House.

Levy, Barry S. & Susott, Daniel C. eds., (1986/ *Years of Horror, Days of Hope: Responding to the Cambodian Refugee Crisis*. New York: Associated Faculty Press.

Loescher, Gil & Loescher, Ann D. (1982). *The World's Refugees: A Test of Humanity*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Javanovich.

Loescher, Gil & Scanlon, John A. (1986). *Calculated Kindness: Refugees and America's Half-Open Door, 1945-Present*. New York: Free Press/Macmillan.

Lubbers, Ruud. (2005). *Refugee Women*. New York: Lexington.

Mayotte, Judy. (1987). *Disposable People? The Plight of Refugees*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis books.

Moorehead, Caroline. (2000). *Human Cargo: A Journey Among Refugees*. New

York: Henry Holt and Company.

Lubbers, Ruud. (2005). *Refugee Women*. New York: Lexington.

Philipson, Lorrin & Llerena, Rafael. (1980). *Freedom Flights: Cuban Refugees Talk About Life Under Castro and How They Fled His Regime*. New York: Random House.

Pipher, Mary. (2002). *The Middle of Everywhere: The World's Refugees Come To Our Town*. New York: Harcourt.

Rogge, John R. ed. (1987). *Refugees : A Third World Dilemma*. Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield.

Rose, Peter I. (1986). *Working With Refugees*. New York: Center for Migration Studies.

Showler, Peter. (2006). *Refugee Sandwich: Stories of Exile and Asylum*. New York: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Smyser, W.R. (1987). *Refugees: Extended Exile*. New York: Praeger Publishers.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees. (1997). *The State of the World's Refugees: The Challenge of Protection, 1997. A Humanitarian Agenda*. Oxford and New York Oxford University Press.

Whittaker, David J. (2005). *Asylum Seekers and Refugees in the Contemporary World: The Making of Contemporary World*. New York: Routledge

WEBSITES:

Refugee Reports. www.refugees.org

United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNCHR). *From Protecting Refugees: Questions and Answers*, www.unchr.org and www.unchr.ch

Refugees International: www.refinl.org.

Forces Migration Review: www.fmreview.org.

The UN Refugee Agency: www.unhcr.org

Refugee Studies Center: www.rsc.ox.ac.uk

Andrew Forbes Refugee Resource Centre at York University's Center for Refugee Studies: www.yorku.ca/crs/resourcecentre.htm.

U.S. Committee for Refugees: www.refugees.org.

The United States Association for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: www.usaforunhcr.org

VIDEOS:

Alamo Bay. (1985). Directed by Louis Malle.

Beautiful People. (1999). *Directed by Jasmin Dizdar.*

Calling the Ghosts: A Story about Rape, War, and Women. *Available through www.wnm.com.*

Down Came a Blackbird. (1995). *Directed by Jonathan Sanger.*

EINorte. (1984). *Director Gregory Nava.*

From Terror To Healing, Parts I and II. *The Center for Victims of Torture. (2001). Minneapolis, MN: CVT. Available at www.cvt.org.*

Journey of Hope. (1991). *Directed by Xavier Koller.*

The Killing Fields. (1984). *Directed by Roland Joffe.*

Lumumba. (2000). *Directed by Raoul Peck.*

Operation Fine Girl. *Available at www.witness.org.*

Pretty Village, Pretty Flame. (1996). *Directed by Srdjan Dragojevic.*

Refugee Mental Health: Interpreting in Refugee Mental Health Settings. *(Videocassette and Workbook). Benhamida, L., Downing, B., Egli, E. and Yao, Z. (1988). (Contract No. 278-85-0024 CH). Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Mental Health.*

Savior. (1998). *Directed by Predrag Antonijevic.*

Strengthening Lives, Rebuilding Communities: Somali Refugees Recover from War *(10 minutes). Available at CVT.*

Three Kings. (1999). *Directed by David O. Russell.*

Welcome to Sarajevo. (1997). *Directed by Michael Winterbottom.*

II. TORTURE AND WAR TRAUMA

Torture

"Any act inflicted by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity."

-UN Convention Against Torture, 1984

War trauma

"Severe, repeated, and/or prolonged exposure to violent events of war. "

- The Center for Victims of Torture

BOOKS:

Allen, Beverly. (1996). *Rape Warfare: The Hidden Genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Alston, Philip & Goodman, Ryan & Steiner, Henry J. (2006). *International Human Rights in Context: Law, Politics, Morals*. New York: Oxford Press.

Basoglu, M., et al. (1994). "Psychological Effects of Torture: A Comparison of Tortured with Non-tortured Political Activists in Turkey." *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 76-81. (Can also be found on The American Journal of Psychiatry website: <http://aip.psychiatryonline.Org/cgi/content/abstract/151/1/76>.)

Cheadle, Don & Prendergast, John. (2007). *Not On Our Watch: The Mission to End Genocide in Darfur and Beyond*. New York: Hyperion.

Figley, C. (1985). *Trauma and Its Wake: The Study and Treatment of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder*. New York: Brunner/Mazel.

Herman, Judith. (1992). *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence*. New York: Basic Books.

Janoff-Bulman, R. (1992). *Shattered Assumptions: Toward a New Psychology of Trauma*. New York: Free Press.

Jaranson, James and Popkin, Michael. (1998). *Caring for Victims of Torture*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Press, Inc.

Kardiner, A., and Spiegel, A. (1947). *The Traumatic Neuroses of War*. New York: Hoeber.

Kleber, R., Figley, C., and Gersons, B. (1995). *Beyond Trauma: Cultural and Societal Dynamics*. New York: Plenum Press.

Krippner, Stanley & McIntyre, Teresa M. (2003). *The Psychological Impact of War Trauma on Civilians: An International Perspective*. New York: Praeger.

Northwood, Andrea. (2002). *New Neighbors, Hidden Scars: A Handbook for Working with Refugees Who May Be Torture or War Trauma Survivors*. See also, The Center for Victims of Torture at www.cvt.org for online access.

Robertson, Cheryl. (2001). *Healing the Community After Torture and Repression. Lessons from the Field: Issues and Resources in Refugee Mental Health. The National Alliance for Multicultural Mental Health*. See also www.irs-uscr.org for an online version.

Smith, Clive Stanfford. (2007). *The Eight O'Clock Ferry to the Windward Side: Fighting the Lawless World of Guantanamo Bay*. New York: Nation Books.

Stover, Eric and Nightingale, Elena O., eds. (1985). *The Breaking of Bodies and Minds: Torture, Psychiatric Abuse, and the Health Professions*. New York, NY: W.H. Freeman and Co.

WEBSITES:

Amnesty International: www.amnestyusa.org.

Human Rights Watch: www.hrw.org.

The Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture: www.ccvvt.org.

The Center for Victims of Torture: www.cvt.org.

The National Alliance for Multicultural Mental Health: is part of National Programs for the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants: www.refugees.org

New Internationalist: www.oneworld.org

Survivors International: www.survivorsintl.org.

Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition (TASSC): www.tassc.org

Torture Reporting Handbook: www.essex.ac.uk/torturehandbook/index.htm. United

Nations High Commission for Refugees, www.unhcr.ch

United Nations website on Humanitarian Affairs:

www.un.org

World Wide Web Resources for Social Workers:

www.nyu.edu/socialwork/wwwrsw.

III. ASYLUM

Asylum is the vehicle through which the United States provides protection to refugees who are physically present in this country and who are in danger of persecution if forced to return to the countries from which they fled. The basic idea of asylum is protection, so a grant of asylum allows the persecuted individuals to remain in the United States in safety, regardless of whether she or he has any other legal means for staying in the country.

RESOURCES:

Website: <http://www.wellfoundedfear.org/ss>

Anker, Deborah. (1999). *Law of Asylum in the United States*. 3rd ed. Boston: Refugee Center.

Helsinki Watch. (1989). *Detained, Denied, Deported: Asylum Seekers in the United States*. New York: Human Rights Watch.

Kassindja, Fauzija. (1998). *Do They Hear You When You Cry*. New York: Delacorte Press.

Kuklin, Susan. (1996). *Irrepressible Spirit: Conversations with Human Rights Activists*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

Silove, D. et al. (1997). Anxiety, Depression and PTSD in Asylum Seekers: Associations with Pre-Migration Trauma and Post-Migration Stressors. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 170.3, 351-357.

Schrag, Philip G. (2000). *A Well-Founded Fear: The Congressional Battle to Save Political Asylum in America*. New York: Routledge.

IV. WOMEN AND CHILDREN REFUGEES

"In any refugee population, approximately 50 percent of the uprooted people are women and girls. Stripped of the protection of their homes, their government and often their family structure, females are often particularly vulnerable. They face the rigours of long journeys into exile, official harassment or indifference and frequent sexual abuse even after reaching an apparent place of safety. Women must cope with these threats while being nurse, teacher, breadwinner and physical protector of their families. "

-Courtesy of UNHCR

"There are an estimated 25 million children currently uprooted from their homes around the world."

-United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

BOOKS:

Aron, A., Corne, S., Fursland, A. and Zelwer, B. (1991). "The Gender-Specific Terror of El Salvador and Guatemala: Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Central American Refugee Women." *Women's Studies International Forum*, 14, 37-47.

Ashabranner, Brent and Ashabranner, Melissa. (1987). *Into a Strange Land: Unaccompanied Refugee Youth in America*. New York: Dodd, Mead.

Crew, Linda. (1989). *Children of the River*. New York: Dell. Forbes Martin,

Forbes, Susan. (1992). *Refugee Women*. London: Zed Books.

Hayslip, Le Ly and Hayslip, Jay. (1993). *Child of War, Women of Peace*. New York: Doubleday.

Hayton-Keeva, Sally. (1987). *Valiant Women in War and Exile*. San Francisco: City Lights.

Hunt, Swanee & Clinton, William Jefferson. (2002). *This Was Not Our War: Bosnian Women Reclaiming the Peace*.

London, Charles. (2007). *One Day the Soldiers Came: Voices of Children in War*. New York: Harper Perennial

McDonald, Faith H. & Akallo, Grace. (2007). *Girl Soldier: A Story of Hope for Northern Ugandas Children*. New York: Chosen

Nesaule, Agate. (1995). *A Woman in Amber: Healing the Trauma of War and exile*.

Temmerman, Els De. (1995). *Aboke Girls. Children Abducted in Northern Uganda*. New York: Fountain

Wilder Larson, Wendy and Tran Thi Nga. (1986). *Shallow Graves: Two Women and Vietnam*. New York: Random House.

WEBSITES:

Websites:

Center for Mental Health Services: Child and Adolescent Mental Health:
<http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/child>.

Child Rights Information Network: www.crin.org/.

Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers: www.child-soldiers.org.

Convention on the Rights of the Child: <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>

DiversityRx: information on refugee children, especially on issues relating to health care www.diversityrx.org.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF): www.unicef.org.

United Nations Development Fund for Women: www.unifem.undp.org/.

Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children:
www.womenscommission.org

V. MINNESOTANS FROM AREAS OF CONFLICT

There were an estimated new 11,166 immigrants to Minnesota in 2001, a large portion of them refugees. This number does not include immigrants who moved to Minnesota from other parts of the United States, or immigration numbers from before 2001.

-Immigration and Naturalization Service

Populations of Southeast Asian in Minnesota:

Cambodian - 6533

Hmong — 45,443

Korean-15,255

Loatian-11,516

Vietnamese - 20,570
(Census 2000)

Southeast Asia Community Resources:

Asian Women United of Minnesota: 612-724-4538

Address: P.O. Box 6623 Minneapolis, MN 55406

Website: www.awum.org

Association for the Advancement of Hmong Women In Minnesota: 651-255-0799

Address: 1101 N. Snelling, St.Paul, MN 55108

Website: www.aahwm.org

Hmong American Partnership: 651-495-9160

Address: 1075 Arcade St. St.Paul, MN 55106

Website: www.hmong.org

Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota: 612-374-4967

Address: 503 Irving Ave. N. Ste. 100A, Minneapolis, MN 55405

Website: www.laocenter.org

Lao Family Community: 651-221-0069

Address: 320 University Ave. W., St.Paul, MN 55103

Website: www.laofamily.org

Lao PTA: 612-302-9048

Address: 2648 W. Broadway Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55411

Southeast Asian Ministry: 651-293-1261

Address: 105 W. University Ave., St.Paul, MN 55103

Website: www.seam-stpaul.org

State Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans: 651-296-0538

Address: 658 Cedar St. Ste. 160, St.Paul, MN 55155

Website: www.capm.state.mn.us

United Cambodian Association of Minnesota: 651-222-3299

Address: 529 Jackson Street Suite 300B, St. Paul, Mn 55101

Vietnamese Minnesotans Association: 651-290-4791

Address: 1030 University Avenue, Suite 140, St. Paul, MN 55104

Website: www.vmna.org

Vietnamese Social Services of Minnesota: 651-290-4789

Address: 1159 Universtiy Ave. Sutie # S-100 St. Paul, Mn 55104

Website: www.vssmn.org

Women's Association of Hmong and Lao Inc.: 651-772-4788
Address: 506 Kenny Road St. Paul MN 55101

East Africa Community Resources:

Population of East Africans in Minnesota:

Ethiopian -5,413

Somali-11,164

(Census 2000)

Confederation of Somali community in Minnesota: 612-338-5282
Address: 420 15th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55404.
Website: www.cscmn.org

Ethiopians in Minnesota: 651-645-4633
Address: 1821 University Ave. Suite 321 South, St. Paul, MN 55104
E-Mail: bezassefa@aol.com

Oromo Community Center: 612-340-0282
Address: 402 15th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55454
Website: www.oromocommunity.mn.com

Somali Community of Minnesota: 612-871-6786
Address: 1014 East Franklin Ave. Suite #1, Minneapolis, MN 55404
E-Mail: messa@somalicmn.org

Somalian Women's Association: 612-870-7001
Address: 2101 Hennepin Avenue Suite 113, MN 55405

South Sudan Development and Relief Agency: 651-489-7999
Address: 670 West Wheelock Parkway, St. Paul MN 55117

West Africa Community Resources:

Population of West Africans in Minnesota:

Liberian - 3148

Nigerian - 3073

(Census 2000)

Liberian Community of Minnesota Corporation:763-549-8706

Address: 7040 Lakeland Avenue North Suite 210,Brooklyn Park, MN 55428

PEACE Africans Center: 612-339-7418

Address: 3015 East Franklin, Minneapolis, MN 55406

VI. SOMALIA

"The Somali conflict has centered around the appropriation of resources such as land, relief items, as well as control over the livestock trade. At the height of fighting in 1992, up to 2 million people were displaced and up to half a million had died. "

-Global IDP project on internally displaced people

This section contains online information about Somalia. Somalis make up a large percentage of Minnesota's refugee population, with an estimated 15,000 immigrants moving to Minnesota between 1998 and 2003.

WEBSITES:

Somalia Page- links to other websites:

http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Country_Specific/Somalia.html

Somali News <http://www.Somalinews.com>

The Country and People of Somalia

<http://www.heileh.com/countries/somalia.html>

Civil War in Somalia:

<http://www.boogionline.com/revolution/multi/war/somalia.html>

Somalia Electronic Journal-weekly news <http://www.angelfire.com/ms/sej>

EthnoMed- cultural, medical, health and illness

<http://ethnomed.org/ethnomed/cultures/somali/somali.pdf>

Hiraan Online- news and music in Somali and English:

<http://www.hiraan.com>

Himilo Newspaper: <http://himilo.com>

Somali Six- news, radio links and articles <http://www.somalisix.com>

VII. PERSONAL NARRATIVES

"Mama, what am I to say now? Perhaps the only pain we have is that pain of distance from family, far away from our homeland- the pain of your son who is still alive after that long war. The roughness of her skin, dry with wrinkles showed the hardship she had to suffer, as she paid the duty of a daughter-in-law, the duty of a wife, and the duty of a mother. How can I describe that life in words? "

- from *South Wind Changing*, by JNQ Huynh

WEBSITES:

UNHCR Refugee Stories: www.usaforunhcr.org/education/stories/.

UNHCR General Educational Information: www.usaforunhcr.org/education

BOOKS:

Ali, Ayaan Hirsi. (2007). *Infidel*. New York: Free Press

Anwar, Raja. (1988). *The Tragedy of Afghanistan: A Firsthand Account*. New York: Verso.

Barnes, Virginia Lee & Boddy, Janice. (1995). *Aman: The Story of a Somali Girl*. New York: Vintage Books.

Beah, Ishmael. (2007). *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*. New York: Farrar, Starus and Giroux.

Criddle, Joan and Teeda Butt Mam. (1987,). *To Destroy You Is No Loss: The Odyssey of a Cambodian Family*. New York: Anchor.

Dirie, Waris & Miller, Cathleen. (1999). *Desert Flower: The Extraordinary Journey of a Desert Nomad*. New York: Harper Collins.

Faderman, Lillian. (1998). *I Begin My Life All Over: The Hmong and the American Immigrant Experience*. New York: Beacon Press.

Fadiman, Anne. (1998). *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors and the Collision of Two Cultures*. New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux.

Flipovic, Zlata. (1994). *Zlata 's Diary: A Child's Life in Sarajevo*. New York: Viking.

Hayslip, Le Ly with Wurts, Jay. (1989). *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places: A Vietnamese Woman 's Journey from War to Peace*. New York: Doubleday.

Hosseini, Khaled. (2004). *The Kite Runner*. New York: Riverhead Trade.

Hosseini, Khaled. (2007). *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. New York: Riverhead Trade.

Hussein, Ikram. (1995). *Teenage Refugees from Somalia Speak Out: In Their Own Voices*. New York: Rosen Publishing.

Huynh, Jade Ngoc Quang. (1994). *South Wind Changing*. St. Paul: Graywolf Press.

Kawashima Watkins, Yoko. (1986). *So Far From the Bamboo Grove*. New York: Puffin Books.

Keenan, Deborah and Lloyd, Roseann. (1990). *Looking for Home: Women Writing about Exile*. Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions.

Korn, Fadumo, Eichhorst, Sabine & Levin, Tobe. (2006). *Born in the Big Rains: A Memoir of Somalia and Survival*. New York: Feminist Press

Maathai, Wangari. (2006). *Unbowed*. New York: Anchor.

McCormick, Patricia. (2006). *Sold*. New York: Hyperion

Moua, Mai Neng. (2002). *Bamboo Among the Oaks: Contemporary Writing by Hmong Americans*. Minneapolis: Minnesota Historical Society Press.

Nazer, Mende & Lewis, Damien (2003). *Slave*. New York: Ramerus.

Ngor, Haing. *A Cambodian Odyssey*. (1952). New York: Warner Books.

Szymusiak, Molyda. (1986). *The Stones Cry Out: A Cambodian Childhood, 1975-1980*. New York: Linda Coverdale, trans. Hill and Wang.

Videos:

Darfur Now. (2007) *Directed by Tim Braun*

Bosnia Children of War: Part 1 & 2. (2007) *ABC News Nightline*.

Ghosts of Rwanda. (2004) PBS.

God Grew Tired of Us. (2005) Directed by Christopher Quinn.

Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars Documentary Film at
<http://www.sierraleonesrefugeeallstars.com/>.

Soldier Child. (2005) Directed by Abramson Neil.

Sometimes in April. (2005) Directed by Peck Raoul.

The Devil Came on Horseback. (2007) Directed by Annie Sundberg.

The Lost Boys of Sudan. (2003). Directed by Jon Shenk.

The Secret Life of Words. (2007) Directed by Isabel Coixet.

War/Dance. (2007) Directed by Shaun Fine & Andrea Nix.

VIII. WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

1. Support organizations that assist survivors of torture and war trauma:

- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF): www.unicef.org.
- United States Fund for UNICEF- donations:
commerce.realimpact.net/usf/supportform us.htm.
- Amnesty International USA:
www.amnesty.org/actnow/donate/index.html.
- The Center for Victims of Torture: www.cvt.org

2. Join the Amnesty International Stop Torture Campaign:

www.stoptorture.org/home.html. Further Information:

www.stoptorture.org/info.html.

Take action against torture:

www.amnesty.org/actnow/index.html.

3. Lobby your government to support actions against torture:

This link is specifically connected to the Amnesty website that supports governmental action to ratify the Convention against Torture:

web.arnnestv.org/web/content.nsf/pages/gbr_tortureconvention.

4. Thank your Congressional representatives for their support of the Torture victims' Rehabilitation Act:

Refer to the CVT homepage to find out whether there are current issues to bring to their attention.

Norm Coleman- (R-MN)
United States Senate
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
(202)224-5641
<http://coleman.senate.gov/>

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510
<http://klobucharsenate.gov/>

5. Volunteer for a local organization assisting torture and war trauma survivors:

The Center for Victims of Torture: www.cvt.org.

The National Consortium of Torture Treatment Programs:
<http://ncttp.westside.com/default.view>.

6. Support local, national, and international organizations supporting human rights. Resources for organizations can be found at the following websites:

Action Without Borders: www.idealists.org.

Africa News: www.africanews.org.

American Council for Voluntary International Action: www.interaction.org.

Brookings Institution Project on Internally Displaced Persons:
www.brookings.edu/fp/projects/idp/idp.html.

Care USA: www.care.org.

Institute for War and Peace Reporting: www.iwpr.net/home_index_jiew.html.

One World Online: www.oneworld.org.

Relief Web: www.reliefweb.int.

Doctors Without Borders USA: www.dwb.org.

Doctors Without Borders International: www.msf.org.

Southeast Asia Resource Action Center: <http://www.searac.org>.

The Center for Victims of Torture: www.cvt.org.

IX. LEARNING ACTIVITIES

There is a list of various learning activities that will provide the researcher with further awareness of what refugees in the United States may have experienced. These exercises can also be used to engage the researcher within discussion groups.

1. Watch and compare several of the videos listed in previous sections.

Consider the challenges, attitudes, and conflicts involved in portraying refugee stories. In what ways do the films adequately or inadequately portray refugee stories?

2. P.O.V. (Point of View) Interactive:

<http://www.pbs.org/pov/pov1999/wffyteachers.html>. As an accompaniment to the program *Well-Founded Fear*, PBS has created various activities for teachers that concentrate on understanding refugees and the search for asylum.

3. The next two pages include an activity called "Packing Your Suitcase" and a quiz to test students' knowledge.

They can be done as a class or photocopied and handed out. Both activities are intended to be catalysts for discussion.

"Packing Your Suitcase"

Read the following story:

You are a teacher in the country of L. Your partner 'disappears,' probably because of his attempts to form a trade union. During the next months you receive several threatening phone calls, and your name appears in a newspaper article listing suspected subversives. When you arrive home from school tonight, you find an anonymous letter threatening your life. You decide you must flee at once and seek political asylum elsewhere.

Instruct the class:

You have 5 minutes to pack your bags. You may only take what is in your house at the moment and what you can carry with you. You may choose eight categories of things. On a piece of paper list your eight categories.

Discuss:

Ask each individual to read their list aloud.

At the end of reading the lists, declare either "Asylum denied" or "Asylum granted," based on what they've chosen to pack.

Ask participants how they think those judgments were made.

Read:

Read the definition of a refugee from the 1951 Refugee Convention or write it on a piece of paper to post in the room. Explain that according to this definition, only those who included either the newspaper clipping or the letter would be likely to prove the "well-founded fear of persecution" required to obtain refugee status.

Source: *Local Action Global Change: Learning About Human Rights of Women and Girls*, by Julie Mertus, Nancy Flowers, and Mllika Dutt. Published by UNIFEM and the Center for Women's Global Leadership, 1999. Exercise found on page 126.

Quiz for Discussion

- 1. T or F A refugee is a person who voluntarily leaves his or her home country to seek happiness in a new country.**
- 2. T or F The majority of the 23 million refugees around the world today are women and girls.**
- 3. T or F Women are almost never victims of torture. Men are more often tortured because they are more active politically.**
- 4. T or F Torture techniques are the same for women and for men.**
- 5. T or F Torture is used primarily to scare information out of individuals.**
- 6. T or F When a family member is a victim of torture, the heaviest burden often falls on the woman.**
- 7. T or F Most children are quite resilient and post-traumatic stress is rare for them.**
- 8. T or F About 10, 000 women were raped in Bosnia-Herzegovina until 1992.**
- 9. Becoming a refugee creates these additional challenges for women: (Check all that apply)**
 - a. Changes in family roles. Women must take complete responsibility for children and other family members**
 - b. Family conflicts. Women must face increased complications in their relationships with their husbands, children, and community,**
 - c. Complications in caring for children. Lack of a stable home causes challenges in sanitation and increase of illness in young children, as well as more basic problems like the need for diapers and inability to breastfeed,**
 - d. Loneliness/lack of support. Women often play an emotional support role
for all family members,**
 - e. New freedoms with regard to employment, marriage and divorce.**

10. Some of the characteristics of torture are:

- a. **__ At least two people are involved.**
- b. **__ Torture is a random, usually poorly planned activity.**
- c. **__ One of the two people is in complete control.**
- d. **__ Pain and suffering are always involved.**

Answer Key

1. **False.** The UNHCR's founding mandate defines refugees as persons who are outside their country and cannot return owing to a well-founded fear of persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group.
2. **True.** The majority of refugees around the world today are women and girls, a forgotten majority who constitute more than three-quarters of the world's refugee population. Of these a large number will have experienced torture, or will have family and friends who have been tortured or killed.
3. **False.** Women are often tortured in order to "get at" the men. They suffer inhumane treatment by authorities because violence against women can humiliate men who have been brought up to see their role as that of protecting women in the family. Rape has been used as a weapon of war to humiliate women, obtain information, and demoralize men for failure to "protect their women". The burden of the shame of rape will be felt by the entire family. Some communities will see a pregnant woman without a man as "easy" or "evil".
4. **False.** Women who are politically active often suffer special degradations. Rape is used on adults of both sexes as well as children, but it is more commonly used on women. Gender-specific violence can take form of abduction, sexual and physical abuse, prostitution, slavery, and genital mutilation. Outcomes can include physical injury, psychological harm, HIV infection and other diseases, suicide, and pregnancy.
5. **False.** Torture is a deliberate and directed effort to dismantle a person's identity and humanity. It is an attempt to destroy one's will to live, one's ability to trust in anyone or anything. It is meant to break community bonds, disable resistance, and take away any support.
6. **True.** Many children have witnessed the torture, rape, and murder of family members. The burden of their emotional support falls on the women. Men also need their wives for support in dealing with their memories of torture and trauma. Many women who have suffered rape also have to carry the burden of shame felt by their husbands since their ordeals.
7. **False.** Symptoms of primary or secondary trauma in children include mood fluctuations, emotional instability, nightmares, numbness, sleep difficulties,

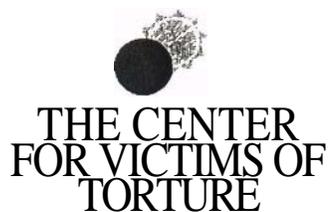
intense fear, suspiciousness, passivity, bedwetting, fighting, aggression and psychological regression.

8. **False.** Rape has long been part of war and of the violence that continues after war. An estimated 20,000-50,000 Muslim women from Bosnia and Croatia were raped in the last part of 1992. The mass rape of women is not unique to this war. During WWII rape was widespread in Europe and Asia. In the past decade, rape has been a part of wars in El Salvador, Guatemala, Liberia, Kuwait, and the former Yugoslavia. Following the appalling 1994 genocide in Rwanda, "virtually every adult woman or girl past puberty who was spared from massacre by the militias had been raped" (Refugees, Sept. 1995, p 4)

9. Check a, b, c, and d.

10. Check a, c, and d.

This handbook was created by the Minnesota Mainstream Training Project with the help of CVT volunteers Suzanne Ross, Maria Lie Morland, and Hillary Richardson. It was updated in 2008 by Alicia Newman.



Restoring the Dignity of the Human Spirit

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