

Through the Lens of Forced Displacement: Refugee Women's Rights as Human Rights

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Abstract : While the need for equal access to civil, political as well as economic, social and cultural rights is clear under the international law, the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women in 1979 made this even clearer. Despite this positive progress, the abuse of refugee women's rights is one of the basic underlying root causes of their marginalisation and violence in their countries of asylum. This paper presents a critical review on the development of refugee women's rights at the international levels and national levels. It provides an array of scholarly literature on this issue and examines the measures taken by the international community to curb the problem of violence against women in their various provisions through the instruments set. It is cognizant of the fact that even if conflict affects both refugee women and men, the effects on women refugees are deep-reaching, due to the cultural strongholds they face. An important aspect of this paper is that it is conceptualised against the fact that refugee women face the problem of sexual and gender based first as refugees and second as women, yet, their rights are stumbled upon. Often times they have been rendered "worthless victims" who are only in need of humanitarian assistance than active participants committed to change their plight through their participation in political, economic and social participation in their societies. Scholars have taken notice of the fact that women's rights in refugee settings have been marginalized and call for a need to incorporate their perspectives in the planning and management of refugee settings in which they live. Underpinning this discussion is feminism theory which gives a clear understanding of the root cause of refugee women's problems. Finally, this paper suggests that these policies should be translated into action at local, national international and regional levels to ensure sustainable peace.

Keywords : feminism theory, human rights, refugee women, sexual and gender based violence

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