

# **The Impact of Violent Extremism on the Human Rights of Women & Girls**

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# What is violent extremism?

- Violent extremism in today's globalized and technology-driven world is not confined by borders.
- The dynamics around groups such as ISIS, Boko Haram, al-Shabab and the Taliban are interrelated and certainly influenced by geo-politics, the reasons these groups emerged and the reasons individuals join their campaigns are complex, distinct, and locally unique.
- The majority (80%) of those who die from terrorist attacks are in 3 regions of the world: Iraq/Syria, Afghanistan/Pakistan, and Nigeria.
- Violent extremism is caused in large part by grievances tied to social marginalization, political exclusion, lack of access to justice or resources, and repression or abuse by state and security services in these counties.



**Thousands of Yazidi children and women were being forced into sexual slavery in Iraq and Syria at the hands of ISIS and available for purchase at sex-slave markets.**



# Commonalities of Violent Extremism

- Justify the use of violence over persuasion;
- Prefer uniformity over diversity;
- Have collective goals over individual freedom; and
- Give orders instead of using dialogue.



# Groups like al-Shabaab find ways to engage women better and give them a voice





# The Disproportionate Effect on Women & Children

- Cultures of gender-based violence can be exacerbated during conflict, and violent extremist groups tend to be operating in environments characterized by conflict
- Violent extremists with conservative or reactionary gender agendas are likely to victimize women, and there are multiple examples of violent extremist groups targeting women and girls for acts of violence
- Sexual violence and rape are a form of terrorism and used as a tool by violent extremists, notably towards women and girls
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# Children used as human shields



A woman was accused of adultery and executed by the Taliban in front of a crowd in Jawzjan province. The woman was forced to kneel before being shot point blank by a Talib.





# Mass disasters and extremism

- Humanitarian assistance often empowers extremists and increase deleterious effects on women and children.
- Example: Haiti following earthquake and hurricane.
- Rape camps – Sex trade for food & water.
- Orphans are trafficked.
- Women and children are at the bottom of the totem pole when it comes to violent extremism. Interventions must remediate the pecking order that is disproportionately affected.

# Tent cities with a million people



Humanitarian assistance had good intentions at its origins.





# What went wrong?





# How we can help

- Understand and communicate that local context is the key to effective solutions.
- Accountable and just law enforcement and security responses are crucial.
- Efforts to prevent violent extremism must move beyond a security response to focus on empowering and enabling civil society/communities.
- Travel bans and walls won't work.
- Respond to VAW in the context of violent extremism by holding those criminally accountable.
- Sexual violence against Jewish women and children never mentioned during the Nuremberg war crime hearings.
- The babies that resulted from rapes during Rwandan Tutsi genocide/violence are in the tens of thousands. War crimes of rape were not addressed.