

PREGNANCY FOLLOWING RAPE & SEXUAL ABUSE

MAY 2015

What if it was your daughter? The 10-year-old girl in Paraguay is not alone

"My question exactly, since it resembles the case of the 11-year-old Romanian girl, 22 weeks pregnant as a result of rape, who was denied an abortion in Romania, they said because of the gestational age limit. But she managed to get an abortion in the UK at Marie Stopes International, thanks to a Romanian lady who paid for the travel. After a lot of public discussion and Orthodox church involvement + mother-blaming, of course."

from Daniela Draghici, Romania, 5 May 2015

KENYA

Unsafe abortions continue to plague Kenya

2 May 2015

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201505020270.html>

She is just 14, but J avoids eye contact with others, preferring to look down at the ground and nodding her head if someone tries to engage her in conversation. J was once a sociable and playful child, but that was before she was sexually abused by her stepfather and giving birth to a baby who is now four months old. Her days marked by trauma and depression, Janida is just one of many girl children in Kenya who have been abused and robbed of their childhood, leaving them emotionally scarred.

"[J] underwent both physical and mental torture," Teresa Omondi, Deputy Executive Director and Head of Programmes at the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Kenya, told IPS. *"Her best option was to terminate the pregnancy rather than suffer the mental and physical torture, but she could not afford the cost of a safe abortion."*

In September 2010, Kenya's Ministry of Health released national guidelines on the medical management of rape or sexual violence - guidelines that allow for termination of pregnancy as an option in the case of conception, but require psychiatric evaluation and recommendation. Then, in September 2012, the Health Ministry released standards and guidelines on the prevention and management of unsafe abortions to the extent allowed by Kenyan law, only to withdraw them three months later under unclear circumstances. The Health Ministry is responsible for doctors and nurses not being permitted to be trained on providing safe abortion, said Omondi, so *"it is ridiculous that while Kenya's Ministry of Health accepts that post-abortion care is a public health issue regarding numbers, practitioners have their hands tied."*

For victims of wartime rape, abortion out of reach

In March, JNM, a citizen of Kenya, was scheduled to participate at a panel in the USA on the role of donor governments in responding to conflict-related rape. Due to a visa problem, however, she was denied entrance to the United States and could not make the panel, where she was going to give a personal account of being victimized by rape during a period of violent conflict. Determined to make others understand why she so desperately wanted an abortion when she became pregnant, she told *Women's eNews* her story.

She had been working in Nairobi as a community developer... and also consulted on HIV prevention and treatment until she was raped in January 2008, during a spate of violence following a disputed election. She had just given birth to her fourth child less than a year before. Her body wasn't ready to go through another pregnancy. She was widowed; things were hard financially. *"I was sliding into depression, was easily agitated and would sometimes become hyper and go into fits and tantrums. It was an emotional rollercoaster and I couldn't take it anymore. That's when I decided to have an abortion."*...

Kenya's abortion laws are restrictive (even after the 2010 constitution relaxed them slightly), and the government had begun cracking down on abortion providers. On the appointed day, Mutere found her clinic closed. She could not afford an abortion at the hospital, the only other safe provider of which she was aware. So she decided to carry the baby to term and give it up for adoption. Ultimately, she decided to keep her baby, but she became very ill with an infection and was in hospital *for three months. When she finally came out, she went for counselling, and met other survivors. "They were really, really defeated and had no options in life whatsoever. Some talked about how they hated their babies and even abused them. They were depressed and expressed a lot of aggression."*

Her experiences inspired her to form a community-based group that helps rape victims heal and supports other groups in the community working to counter gender-based violence. From there, she started working with women with mental and/or physical disabilities. *"All had been raped as a consequence of being disabled, either because they couldn't comprehend what was going on when the perpetrator approached them, or because they couldn't run away as fast as their peers."*

Rape is wielded as a weapon of war in 21 countries, according to a 2014 UN report. As reported by U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon's Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict, sexual violence against girls continued to be a prominent trend in 2013 and included incidents of rape, harassment, sexual slavery and forced marriage. For victims, research has shown that access to comprehensive post-rape care is crucial to any hope of recovering physical, mental and emotional health.

FULL REPORT: <http://womensenews.org/story/international-policyunited-nations/150427/victims-wartime-rape-abortion-out-reach>

SEE ALSO: http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2014_693.pdf and http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=s/2014/181



LIBERIA: A rape victim on her way to a session with a caregiver at a safe house in Monrovia.
Credit: UN Photo/Staton Winter

NIGERIA

Boko Haram: 214 girls and women rescued from Sambisa forest 'visibly pregnant'

4 May 2015

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/nigeria-boko-haram-214-girls-women-rescued-sambisa-forest-visibly-pregnant-1499580>



A soldier from the Nigerian Army talks with hostage women and children who were freed from Boko Haram, in Yola. Handout/Reuters

Around 214 girls rescued by the Nigerian army from terror group Boko Haram (now Iswap) were "visibly pregnant", spreading fears they had been raped by the militants. The news came after reports emerged that women and girls kidnapped by the insurgents were routinely raped and forced to marry their abductors. As a result of the sexual violence, some of them were pregnant. They were part of 234 women and children rescued in the Sambisa forest following an offensive by Nigerian soldiers aided by troops from neighbouring countries. A similar operation resulted in the rescue of some 300 people a few days earlier.

UNFPA executive director Professor Babatunde Osotimehin said the women and girls rescued in Sambisa were in urgent need of assistance so they could reintegrate in society. *"What we found is that some of the women and girls that have come back actually have much more in terms of the stress they have faced, so the counselling has to be more intense and working with them one on one,"* he said. *"I'm glad the communities are not excommunicating them and are taking them back. That is an important therapy too. We anticipate this is going to escalate because the military intervention is continuing, we find that more people are now needing our services and we will continue. Women and girls have specific needs that nobody else looks after; it is only UNFPA that is doing this. We are giving psychosocial counselling."*

But, as several Campaign members have asked, are safe abortions also being provided for those who do not wish to remain pregnant?

URUGUAY

Rape of Uruguayan girl, 11, sparks abortion debate

8 May 2015

<http://www.nation.co.ke/lifestyle/family/Rape-of-Uruguayan-girl-sparks-abortion-debate/-/1954198/2709818/-/32ryqr/-/index.html>



Photo | File | Nation Media Group

AFP: A learning-disabled 11-year-old Uruguayan girl who was raped and impregnated wants to give birth to her child, in echoes of a case in Paraguay that is similarly stirring fierce debate. The girl, who has not been named, is 16 weeks pregnant and described by doctors and sources close to her family as suffering slight mental retardation and learning disabilities. She was reportedly raped by the 41-year-old grandfather of her half-sister, who visited her family's home in Montevideo frequently, sources close to the family told AFP on Thursday, when details of her case emerged.

The man has been detained and will be prosecuted for rape, officials said. In 2013, Uruguay legalized abortion for up to 12 weeks of gestation and 14 weeks in the case of rape.

No capacity to understand consequences

Medical reports – cited in the local press – concluded the girl does not have the capacity to understand the consequences of pregnancy and motherhood.

"Although the legal deadline for abortion has been exceeded, if we determine that the pregnancy endangers her health, judicial authorization could be granted," Marisa Lindner, director of Uruguay's Child and Adolescent Institute (INAU), told a press conference. However, Monica Silva, director of INAU's health division, told *La Diaria* newspaper that *"there is no risk of life for the girl or baby, so we cannot make her have an abortion."* The hospital has said the girl is in good health and under medical supervision.

PERU

40 civil society groups call upon the Congress to hold an open and impartial debate on a bill to decriminalize abortion following rape



Peruvian civil society groups are calling upon Congress to hold an open and impartial debate on a citizen's initiative that would provide access to abortion following rape. In Peru, 34 out of every 100 girls, between 10 and 19 years old, become pregnant due to rape. The collection of more than 60,000 signatures from all over the country and the submission of the citizen's initiative have fuelled an intense public debate around women's rights in Peru. The *Déjala Decidir* campaign, led by over 40 local non-governmental organizations, has gained public support of diverse voices, including some of the most influential figures in Peru, such as Nobel Prize in Literature winner [Mario Vargas Llosa](#), and [Peruvian TV celebrities](#). The debate on the right of women to decide about the continuation of a pregnancy resulting from rape has even reached TV gossip shows, and has been a recent "trending topic" in social media. The debate on the right of women to decide about the continuation of a pregnancy resulting from rape has even reached TV gossip shows, and has been a recent "trending topic" in social media. The debate on the bill to decriminalize abortion in cases of rape was expected to continue on May 12th, at the Congressional Human Rights and Justice Commission.

SEE: <http://www.facebook.com/dejaladecidir>

Twitter: @DejalaDecidir

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=69sB0IsZFfy>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ZDazhAbhTw>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCI-Myhaelmy6ds8LE9oRNtQ>

PHILIPPINES

A Filipino woman or girl is raped every 72 minutes

14 May 2015

<http://opinion.inquirer.net/84880/a-filipino-woman-or-girl-is-raped-every-72-minutes>

Many Filipinos condemn Filipino women and girls who induce abortion, not knowing that some of these women and girls are actually victims of rape or incest.

A Filipino woman or girl is raped every 72 minutes. In 2014 police records, 7,409 women reported that they had been raped. This is alarming, yet it may just be the tip of the iceberg as the numbers only refer to the rape victims who reported to the police.

According to the Women's Crisis Center research titled *Feminist Action Research on Reproductive Health Needs and Concerns of VAW Survivors*, 83% of its women rape survivors have induced unsafe abortion.

For many people, rape seems a very remote occurrence, something they only hear or read about in the news. But for us who assist rape victims on a daily basis, it is very much a reality. Lawyers, social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists and police officers who assist rape victims witness the pain that these women suffer. The Philippines cannot deny rape survivors their right to terminate unwanted pregnancies resulting from rape. Our laws must provide rape survivors the right to decide what is good for their health and lives. These women and girls suffered an extremely traumatic human rights violation. It is our duty as a state, regardless of religious beliefs, to provide access to safe and legal abortion to rape survivors.
