

Female Refugees Often Come with Male Baggage – Are They Worth It?

The West grapples with the contradictions of welcoming female refugees from Islamic states, many of whom bring violent men in tow



by Phyllis Chesler

Monday, August 15, marked the one-year anniversary of the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan. It also marked one year of desperate work for myself and a network of feminists and allies from across the globe. My dear friend and colleague, Mandy Sanghera, organized and co-led the rescue of nearly 500 at-risk women from Afghanistan. These refugees have been settled primarily in Europe, although a few have made it to the United States.

Earlier this month, I published an [article](#) in *4W* discussing this harrowing journey, which ultimately culminated in my meeting one of our rescued women, Meena Safi, in New York. I had singled her out for special attention. The article, titled “*Finally Meeting Meena: The Culmination of a Year of Rescuing Afghan Women*”, was translated into [German](#). The comments at the site raise an important point, namely, that Germany has already spent a small fortune (50 billion according to one commenter) in bringing Afghans and other Muslims to Germany. And what has that yielded?

Germans Push Back Against Refugees, Fearing Radical Islam

Commenters on the German translation of our story were quick to push back against inviting more Afghan refugees to Europe, despite the dangers feminists like Meena will face at home:

“The Afghan community in Europe is large and how they deal with women is no longer a secret. Honor killings. Rapes. Afghans can only be helped in Afghanistan—and they have to do it themselves. They should have fought against the Taliban, but they offered no resistance. Everything could have been different, but they didn’t want that.”

However, wave after wave of resisters in Iran have been shot down, arrested, tortured, and murdered by the Mad (and often drug-addicted) Mullahs. The combination of Islamism, corruption, nepotism, illiteracy, poverty, and both Arab and Pakistani-funded religious madrasas have made such resistance almost impossible.

Another comment points out that refugees from communism did not try to turn Western Europe into a parallel, communist society and did not seek to overthrow democracy. He suggests that we start deporting “Salafists and Islamic fundamentalists to their home countries and make room for real refugees.” His concern is not misogyny but radical Jihad.

This commenter also suggests that Europe deport the “Green and Leftist magical thinkers to the Orient where they can pursue their multicultural dreams and realize their social utopias. Judith Butler could teach the Taliban about gender.”

When anyone questions the influx of Muslim immigrants, many of whom have created parallel societies, they are swiftly accused of being xenophobic, racist, nationalist, and Islamophobic. Sometimes, this allegation is accurate, sometimes not.

Is Muslim Misogyny Unique from Other Forms of Global Patriarchy?

From a feminist point of view, we know that girls and women are sexually harassed, raped, and battered by native European men all the time; they are also trafficked and pimped out by such men. Few Caucasian, Christian, and native-born European men are known to have launched crusades against such home-grown criminality. Are Muslims being scapegoated, or is there something unique about Muslim male misogyny that merits their condemnation?

Let’s consider some misogynist behaviors that only Muslim men practice in Europe.

They have committed the majority of [honor killings](#) in Europe. While infidel Western men are known to murder their wives, they rarely murder their teenage daughters, are not encouraged to do so by their female relatives, and the entire family plays no role in such a killing. Intimate family murderers are not considered heroes and do not justify this crime as part of their culture. Sikhs also honor murder but far less rarely; Hindus also do so but only in India.

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In addition, many Muslim male immigrants routinely [batter](#)

[their wives](#) and daughters in order to keep them in line; force their wives and daughters to face veil, and to keep apart from infidels. They often closely monitor their activities, and insist that a male relative accompany them to school, medical appointments, or work. They also insist on their daughters' marrying much older men whom they do not know, as a way of enabling male relatives from their home country to become citizens in a European country.

But there are other unique acts committed mainly by Muslim men.

There are the Pakistani Muslim [grooming gangs](#) in the UK, which for years, tricked and kidnapped mainly but not only British infidel girls from broken homes and from group homes—many as young as eleven or twelve. They gang-raped and addicted them to drugs and forced them to have sex with as many men as possible. Unforgivably, the British police and social workers looked the other way. When some such traffickers were finally [brought to justice](#), their families death-threatened their victims as well as anyone who came to court to support them.

European non-immigrant pimps are just as brutal—but their families do not support them, privately and publicly. Their families do not justify their right to prostitute girls and women because their victims are infidels.

There are other misogynist behaviors that might be unique to Muslim men. For example, in 2016, a thousand young [Muslim men assaulted](#) every girl and woman they could grope, rape, lick, undress, and terrorize in Cologne, Germany, and in other German cities, such as Hamburg.

From a radical Islamist point of view, every unveiled, unaccompanied woman with tight-fitting or Western clothing is seen as fair game.

This kind of large male lynch-like assault on women also takes

place in the Muslim world, for example, the 2011 Egyptian Revolution in [Tahrir Square](#), Cairo, during the presumed Spring Uprising—and in Algeria, in a case that I [closely followed](#). After mosque one Friday, hundreds of men sexually and physically assaulted a group of poor, civilian women, ostensibly for the crime of cleaning the offices of foreign companies.

Such cruelty and violence is not justified anywhere on earth.

I could list many instances of Afghan male rapes of boys in [Germany](#) and [France](#), and gang-rapes of underage girls in [Austria](#) and [Belgium](#). Native Europeans are also pedophiles but they do not justify their normalized prison-style rapes as “normal in their culture.”

The creation of parallel societies also known as “no-go” zones are ruled by criminal gangs and religious fundamentalists. They are lawless—and known to harbor terrorists.

That’s one reality. But there is another.

Feminist Refugees Do Not Exist in a Vacuum

Ever since the Taliban took down Afghanistan a year ago, various countries and volunteer teams have worked frantically to help women get out. Quickly, inevitably, we learned that even the most accomplished of feminists, women who were also judges, lawyers, physicians, business owners, government officials, etc. would not leave without their sons, husbands, fathers, and brothers. Many women, especially from more collectivist cultures, see themselves first and foremost as daughters, sisters, wives, and mothers—not individuals in their own right the way so many Westerners do (perhaps to our detriment).

I in no way regret participating in a team that rescued Afghan

women and their families. That work continues on. In fact, based on the promises of a woman in Spain, we persuaded about ten to fifteen women to flee Afghanistan for Pakistan, Iran, or to any other country outside of Afghanistan. (One must be outside of Afghanistan in order to apply for asylum). We were promised that they would be interviewed for asylum in Spain. That has not yet happened. And these women are in desperate straits. While they wait, they need food and medicine drops, rent money—and asylum in a Western country. Based on our previous experiences, we are not sure we can safely fundraise for food and medicine drops. However, we are also in touch with a European network for refugee women that has actually begun to get women out of Afghanistan and Pakistan and hope to work with them.

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On the one-year anniversary of the Taliban take-over of Afghanistan, the women with whom we are still in touch and who are trapped behind Taliban lines, began sending us messages of despair. They have been living in isolation, in hiding for a year; they are being hunted by the Taliban; can only go out wearing a burqa and/or accompanied by a male relative. If a woman fails to follow these rules, her husband or a family member will be punished. Women cannot work. Girls can only attend school until the sixth grade. One woman writes:

“We lost everything last year and we are still faced with an unknown destiny. Women are banned from any activities in society. I raised my voice but was reduced to silence when my family members were threatened. The international community is responsible to force the current government to allow girls to attend school and women to work.”

Another woman writes: “We should call August 15th, the BLACKEST DAY EVER.”

A third woman says:

"I love to study. I have big dreams. Since the Taliban took over, I haven't gone to any classes. Women have hearts, they can feel pain. (Referring to the burqa, she asks) How can we wear a large woolen sack? How can we breathe in it? Why such cruelty? Islam doesn't say a Muslimah woman should wear a burqa. The face isn't part of one's private parts. Women are also human beings, they have the right to live. I hate the Taliban and I hate their rules."

A fourth woman writes: "We are suffering but have been forgotten by the world."

They are right—but not completely so. Our world is exhausted both by the pandemic, the climate crisis, economic downturns, political chaos, Putin's war—and by the huge influx of refugees from Ukraine. Also, while Afghan women may collaborate in breaking their daughters' spirits, they rarely pose a threat of Jihad violence in the West.

Afghan women's suffering is profound. Can we afford to bring them and their *male* relatives to the West? Can we afford to abandon the women, the male dissidents, and gays to their tragic fates? Were Western boots on the ground, which ensured women's educational and professional development, an entirely misguided colonial or imperial undertaking? I welcome your answers.

Here's one of mine: Since the world is as we know it to be, every act of kindness, every life saved matters.

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