

Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children

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December 1, 1995

Mr. Douglas Pike
University of California - Institute of East Asian
Institute of East Asian Studies
Berkeley, CA 94720

Dear Douglas Pike:

During a delegation to Tanzania in June I spoke to a 13-year-old girl who told me she planned to return to her country but was afraid she would not be able to find her family there. She is one of thousands of unaccompanied minors from Rwanda who are struggling to survive on their own.

At another camp in Tanzania, we met with a staff member from a nongovernmental organization who was working on a sanitation project. He did not realize that refugee women are often assaulted when they have to go to latrines far from their living quarters. When we pointed this out, the decision was made to add more women to his roster of workers and to include a woman as a leader of an outreach team.

For refugee women and children, something as apparently simple as moving the location of latrines or installing lighting can make the difference between safety and danger. **As the only organization in the United States dedicated to speaking out on behalf of refugee women and children, the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children** continues to be in the forefront of organizations making the international community aware of such issues.

That is why I am writing to ask you to **consider joining the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children.**

Thanks to the support of our members, in the last year the **Women's Commission** has been able to undertake a full program of advocacy and public education on behalf of the **women and children who make up 80 percent of the world's 50 million refugees and displaced persons:**

- **Women's Commission delegations visited Tanzania, Mozambique and former Yugoslavia to monitor the implementation of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women. We met with refugee women and field workers, and discovered that there is still a huge gap between policy and reality.**

An independent committee formed with the assistance of the International Rescue Committee for the study of problems affecting refugee women and children.

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Little by little we are working to inform UN, inter-governmental and nongovernmental field staff of the importance of taking into account the special protection needs of refugee women.

- The Women's Commission is coordinating a Reproductive Health for Refugees Consortium, made up of five organizations. The consortium members are committed to promoting comprehensive reproductive health programs in refugee settings.
- We sponsored a delegation of six refugee women to attend the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and the NGO Forum. These representatives, from Ethiopia, Laos, Nepal, Rwanda and Vietnam, spoke out strongly and eloquently on behalf of their sisters and their children around the world.
- Our Schools Project has introduced refugee and human rights issues to more than 500 schools around the country. Now in its second year, the materials have been used by high school teachers in English, history, social studies and other classes. We are participating in in-service trainings for teachers in several cities.

As a **member of the Women's Commission** you will receive our quarterly newsletter, *Women's Commission News*, and our Annual Report, as well as have the opportunity to order delegation reports and other materials. You will also receive invitations to brown-bag lunches in your area.

Enormous challenges lie ahead -- every day we read stories about new and ongoing upheavals causing thousands of people to flee for their lives. We must continue to expand support for programs and policies designed to empower refugee women and children, so the choices made regarding their future will be their own.

We are counting on you to **become a member**. It is our **collective voice** -- that of refugee women and our members -- that has enabled the **Women's Commission** to be an effective advocate. Please fill out the enclosed form. And please be as generous as you can. Together we **can** make a difference.

Warm regards,



Mary Diaz
Director

P.S. We really need your support. Members of a recent **Women's Commission delegation** to former Yugoslavia met with refugee women, desperate to hear from their husbands and sons who had been taken away during ethnic cleansing in the UN "safe havens" of Srebrenica and Zepa. The severely traumatized women were clinging to pieces of paper they had received from their men many weeks earlier, not knowing if they were alive or dead. They feel forgotten by the international community. Help us ensure that they are not forgotten--become a member today. Thank you.

PLEASE BECOME A MEMBER FOR 1996



YES, I want to help the **Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children** in its work on behalf of refugee women and children around the world. Enclosed is my tax-deductible 1996 membership contribution of:

\$35 member \$100 sponsor \$250 patron \$500 benefactor Other \$ _____

Thank you for responding today!

Give the Gift of Membership This Holiday Season

In addition to becoming a member of the **Women's Commission** yourself, you can give a gift membership to a friend or relative. You can give gift memberships to one person or to several people. They will all appreciate that your gift will benefit refugee women and children.

In order to process your gift in time for the holidays, we must receive your order by December 14, 1995. We will send a card in your name to gift membership recipients.

Please list the people to whom you would like to give memberships. Each membership is \$35. Use additional paper if necessary. (Please print clearly.)

Gift #1

Name:
Address:
City/State/Zip:

Gift card should say:

Gift #2

Name:
Address:
City/State/Zip:

Gift card should say:

Total contribution \$ _____
(regular membership plus gift memberships)

(Contributions to the Women's Commission are tax-deductible.)

Please return this form and your membership contribution to the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children in the enclosed envelope. Thank you.