



## **Women at Risk on the Route from Greece to Northern Europe: Findings from Three Assessments**

March 2016



- The humanitarian response is failing to protect women and girls from violence and exploitation.
- Current policy trends exacerbate barriers to safety, asylum, and legal protection.

More than a million refugees arrived in Europe in 2015, and despite misguided deterrence policies, the migration continues. Currently 55 percent of those en route are women and children, many attempting to reunite with husbands and fathers who went ahead.

Hastily constructed transit, reception, and accommodation centers were not designed to protect refugees and asylum-seekers from gender-based violence (GBV) or provide assistance to survivors. Lack of information leaves women and girls vulnerable to smugglers and other opportunists.

There is no official coordinated women's protection response and the civil society organizations that could help are routinely denied access to the places where they could do the most good.

Women and girls in destination countries receive inadequate psychosocial and legal support to successfully claim asylum for gender-based persecution. For women and girls stranded in their home country or country of first asylum, restrictions to family reunification can leave them in situations of grave danger.

Closing borders and returning refugees to Turkey without the ability to make asylum claims is especially dangerous for women and girls.

Because new routes are certain to be created by those determined to reach safety, there are multiple changes that must be implemented by a coordinated European response that would prevent violence and exploitation against women and provide assistance to survivors:

- **Deploy GBV experts to the field, train frontline workers and provide female interpreters.**
- **Create standard operating procedures to identify and support survivors of GBV.**
- **Establish a coordinated case management system within and across borders in conjunction with civil society organizations.**
- **Strengthen access to asylum for those with claims of gender-based persecution.**
- **Roll back policies that delay family reunification to reduce the number of women and girls left behind who attempt the perilous journey.**

The Women's Refugee Commission is undertaking a series of assessments to understand women's and girls' access to humanitarian and legal protection throughout the European refugee migration.

November 2015: Greece and Macedonia (with UNHCR and UNFPA)

[http://wrc.ms/Prot\\_risks\\_Eur](http://wrc.ms/Prot_risks_Eur)

December 2015: Serbia and Slovenia

[http://wrc.ms/Balkan\\_rpt](http://wrc.ms/Balkan_rpt)

February 2016: Germany and Sweden

<http://wrc.ms/protection-germany-sweden>