



# CANADA'S PERIODICAL ON REFUGEES REFUGE

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## UPROOTING AND CONSEQUENCES

### Introduction

Ogenga Otunnu

In the last few years, millions of victims of political violence have been uprooted from their homes. Many of these people perished while seeking asylum. Those who survived, continue to languish without basic human needs and human rights. As this river of human blood, tears and trauma claims more victims, the international community adopts numerous resolutions, passively screams "never again!", tightens refugee deterrence policies and withdraws basic assistance to asylum seekers.

This issue of *Refuge* discusses the plights of those who have been violently uprooted from their homes. The first article, by Professor Asha Hans, chronicles how rape is used as an instrument of war and humiliation against Sri Lankan Tamil women in the ensuing violent crisis in Sri Lanka. The status, identities of crossing borders, trauma and resilience of Sri Lankan Tamil women in India are also examined (see also, "Special Issue on Sri Lanka," *Refuge* 13.3, June 1993). The next article, by Steven Weine and Dolores Vojvoda, discusses the traumatic effects of ethnic cleansing on two

Bosnian refugee women who fled with their families to the United States. The evolving experiences of the refugee women in both the private and public domains are carefully highlighted. Like Asha Hans, the two medical doctors focus on identity and status of the women in the country of asylum. The next article, by Jennifer Hyndman, examines the culture, practices and policies of dominant humanitarian or-

ganizations in providing assistance to refugees. The article, which is based on an extensive field research in Kenya and interviews with UNHCR officials in Geneva, shows some of the contradictions inherent in the ambiguously articulated efforts of "turning" a refugee camp into a community. A rigorous analysis of the implications of the policies and practices on gender relations in the camps is then provided. Once more, the tensions within and

#### CONTENTS:

<b>Introduction</b> <i>Ogenga Otunnu</i> .....	1
<b>Sri Lankan Tamil Refugee Women in India</b> <i>Asha Hans</i> .....	3
<b>Refugee Women Resettling in the United States at Mid-Life after Ethnic Cleansing</b> <i>Stevan M. Weine and Dolores Vojvoda</i> .....	10
<b>Refugee Self-Management and the Question of Governance</b> <i>Jennifer Hyndman</i> .....	16
<b>The Sierra Leone Conflict: The Plight of Refugees and the Displaced</b> <i>Veronica Nmoma</i> .....	23
<b>Persons Needing Protection: A Reflection on Canada's Role</b> <i>Edward Opoku-Dapaah</i> .....	29
<b>Polish Refugees in Canada: Statistical Data</b> <i>Compiled by Edward Opoku-Dapaah</i> .....	32

