

Human Rights, Torture and Sexual Violence

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The Human Rights, Torture and Sexual Violence session was chaired by Lord Tarsem King of West Bromwich and Margaret Ali, Director of UPF - UK. The chair, Lord Tarsem King opened with a shocking reminder that innocent women form a large proportion of torture victims, with violations mostly being fueled by greed.

Keith Best, CEO of Torture Care said that there has been an “amnesia on Human Rights” - speaking of the Gulag detainees. He went on to say that “some people are taught that they are subhuman” and that torture is often used as a form of intimidation. 32 percent of women who are raped by soldiers are not even believed.



Charlotte Simone of Sexual Violence in Conflict in Eastern DRC (Congo) informed us that babies and elderly women are not only raped but are physically torn apart. Congo’s “wealth of minerals” has fueled violent behaviour where women have suffered horrific and unthinkable torture that cannot be shared in this article due to how extreme these experiences were. Gang rape is common.

Our third speaker was Dr Antonia Stango, UPF’s Global Peace Council Member and SG, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights opened by saying that once you “start to care about Human Rights, you will never finish. “Animals can kill, but only humans can torture”. His statements sent a stark message about the misuse of human creativity being used to find new ways to dehumanise human beings and subject them to unbearable amounts of pain. He urged us to “support human rights committees in state,” we “have to work on [implementation]. We all have a responsibility in multiplying the possibilities for [functioning] mechanisms otherwise they will fade.”

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