

# *Pain with a female face*

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**Shabia Mantoo, UNHCR spokeswoman**

By Guillermo Alvarado

In a world where powerful countries spend unimaginable amounts of money with unprecedented enthusiasm to exterminate each other or those they consider inferior, there are very few resources to save the victims of this tragedy, especially women and girls.

According to the UN, by 2024 there will be at least 120 million refugees and displaced people worldwide as a result of armed conflict, climate change, violence, insecurity and political persecution.

At least half of them, or 60 million, are surviving in a more precarious situation than the rest and are the living embodiment of the popular saying that things are never so bad that they can't get a little worse - I'm talking about women and children.

This is according to a report by the UN refugee agency, UNHCR, which states that reports of conflict-related sexual violence increased by 50 per cent in 2023, with women and girls accounting for 95 out of every 100 cases - a truly chilling statistic.

Moreover, this shocking figure is only a small fraction of the reality, as in many remote parts of the world there is no humanitarian access or almost no resources, let alone access to justice.

UNHCR spokeswoman Shabia Mantoo said: 'Every day there are reports of survivors who have suffered brutal violence, torture or sexual abuse, which in many cases are weapons of war or signs of domination.'

This is not really new. In a society afflicted by collective amnesia, it is good to remember that in the 70s and 80s of the last century, during the internal armed conflict in Guatemala, women and girls became a weapon of domination and humiliation for the army.

The extermination plans, drawn up under the direction of the Zionist State of Israel, included the complete disappearance of villages and their inhabitants. Men were forced to watch as their wives and daughters were raped en masse and then executed.

They were allowed to live for days or weeks to continue their abuse and then eliminated as well. Any resemblance to the atrocities of last year in the Middle East is no coincidence, the Zionist symbol is behind it.

Sudan or Afghanistan, among others, are clear examples of a sick system of domination that must be replaced while there is still time to save our species from its worst enemy, itself.

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