

# Manifesto

Women Refugees Safety



vrouwen van nu

Passage  
christelijk-maatschappelijke  
vrouwenbeweging



Zonta Nederland

nvr  
Nederlandse  
Vrouwen Raad

# Women Refugees Safety

## Preamble

The Netherlands ratified the following international treaties, which (also) should be the base of its governmental policy and its responsibility for these matters.

1. The UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1979
2. The Istanbul Convention of the Council of Europe 2016
3. The UN Istanbul Protocol
4. Resolutions of the UN Security Council
5. The UN Treaty on the Reduction of Statelessness (UNTC)
6. The Principle on Non-Refoulement: responsibility within an outside own borders and jurisdiction, to ensure that women and girls not – again – end up in a situation of pursuit and violence

## Statement

When the treaties, mentioned above will be observed, this has the following consequence for both policy and practice with regard to the security of female refugees:

As from 'day 1' (from registration, sheltering and interrogation till decision) the safety of female refugees is at the centre and a gender perspective will be employed.

Starting point is the right to self-determination of female refugees. That is why they should be informed thoroughly about procedures and be granted insight into their files.

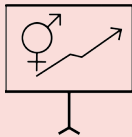
# Manifesto

The safety of refugees in our country is of great value. Although The Netherlands does a lot to guarantee this, it could be improved. The treaties, as mentioned in the preamble, obliges The Netherlands to offer safety to women and girls in the refugee camps. Their situation concerns us all. This caused us to initiate the symposium 'Women Refugees Safety' on October 2nd 2017 in Utrecht, organized by five national women's organizations. Purpose of this day was to obtain together with many experts, a sharper understanding of how the safety of women and girls in the refugee camps can be guaranteed and increased. What is needed for that purpose? This manifesto is based upon bottlenecks, pointed out that day by persons concerned and experts.



# Recommendations

In order to form and give meaning to the starting points, we recommend the following:



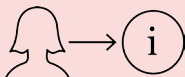
Design and implement training and education, focused on gender and cultural sensitivity, for all professionals and volunteers working with refugees, both in- and outside the shelters



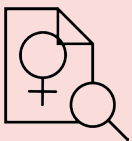
Improve the chain cooperation



Realize an independent residence permit for all female refugees



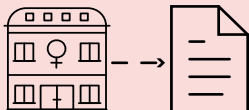
Provide fast and free of charge, easily accessible information and care in order to deal with traumas



Create (financial) space for thorough investigation reports about women and girls in the refugee shelters



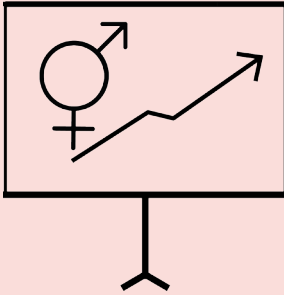
Translate Resolution 1325 and National Action Plan 1325 to local level in cooperation with female refugees



Involve women's organizations at local level with policy and product development regarding the care of female refugees

# Clarification

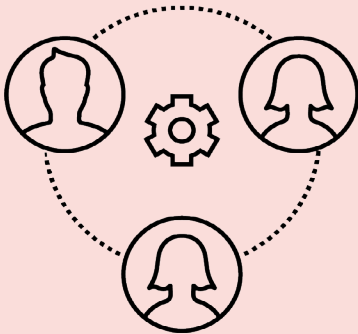
on the recommendations



Professionals and volunteers should have sufficient knowledge of the social environment and perception of female refugees, with their own cultural context, in order to be able to recognize and interpret signals and requests for help. It is important that assistance, guidance and support starts with listening to the wishes and needs of female refugees, and that based upon this, an offer will be made. That goes for (single) minor refugees, too. Professionals and volunteers need to be aware of their personal western vision and assumptions, with regard to the refugee's own culture.

**Recommendation to:**

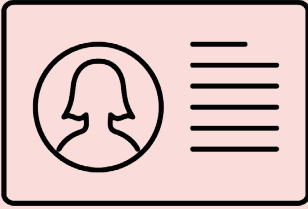
Diaspora organizations, universities (of applied sciences), and other experts in the field of gender.



As from 'day 1' The Netherlands should offer highly qualified counselling in the (refugee) shelters. Herewith cooperation with partners is of great value, at which the needs of the woman and her strength should be at the centre. Currently, it often lacks open communication and carefully handing over, resulting in the client repeatedly needing to tell the same, often painful, story. Do make the refugee file holder and give her a voice within the chain.

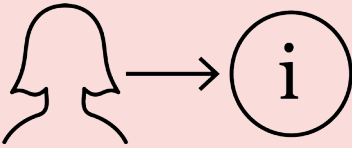
**Recommendation to:**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Royal Netherlands Marechaussee, National Police, Immigration and Naturalisation Service, Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers, Nidos, Custodial Institutions Agency, Associations of Dutch Municipalities, legal assistance.



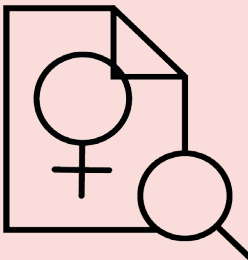
The legal and practical implications of an independent residence permit need to be investigated. We opt for an independent residence permit for all women and removal of barriers to realize this. In the procedures, next to sufficient capacity, legal uniformity is necessary.

**Recommendation to:**  
Ministry of Justice and Security.



An effective approach of dealing with caused traumas is highly important and has been acknowledged by many professionals, working with refugees. The sooner, during the intake and the period thereafter the trauma will be acknowledged, the faster women and girls will be able to find their own place within the Dutch society. In practice, quick assistance is often at odds with the guarantee of the privacy of clients. How to handle this differently, is an important focal point.

**Recommendation to:**  
Ministry of Justice and Security, Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS), Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers, Nidos, Government of the Netherlands, the House of Representatives of the Netherlands.

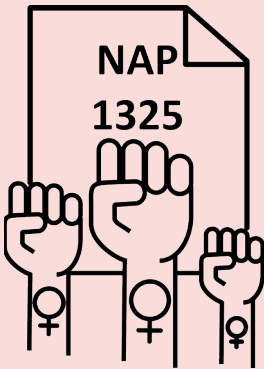


Not all parties involved have a clear view of the nature and size of the problems of women and girls in the refugee shelters. The lack of a clear picture is due to various reasons. Subjects like insecurity and abuse are in the taboo and shelter institutions are obliged to respect the privacy of its residents. Lack of information is an undesirable situation. Of almost all vulnerable groups in the Dutch society data are available, based upon anonymous scientific research, thus enabling optimal care and protection for these groups. Hereupon women and girls in refugee shelters may form no exception. In annual reports, currently substantive knowledge and research reports must be made available in a broader way. The appointment of a National Refugees Reporter who, among others reports at an annual base about the safety

of female refugees, guarantees subsequently the monitoring and continuity of the attention for these issues.

**Recommendation to:**

Minister for Migration, the House of Representatives of the Netherlands.

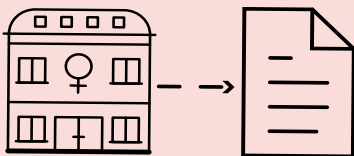


---

In 2000 the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325. In the meantime The Netherlands are working at the result of this resolution in the 3rd National Action Plan. So far there is hardly any attention for the resolution and translation to local level has not taken place (yet). As municipalities play an important role in the sheltering of refugees, the VNG (union of municipalities in The Netherlands) should stimulate municipalities to set up a local Action Plan providing propositions and financing of tailor-made (self-help) programs in the field of prevention, protection and participation. Being experience experts themselves, well-informed female refugees could play a mayor role in this. Starting point for this local plan is the strength of female refugees, the right of women to safety and self-determination.

**Recommendation to:**

All signatories of National Action Plan 1325, Associations of Dutch Municipalities (VNG), diaspora organizations.



---

In communities women's organizations play an important social role. They function as a social network. It is highly desirable that they will be actively involved in the development of policy and products, aimed at the safety of women and girls in both refugee and asylum centers and thereafter with their social integration. Women's organizations should act more pro-active regarding thinking with and taking part in deciding about policy and product development.

**Recommendation to:**

Associations of Dutch Municipalities, women's organizations at local level.



“Be it resolved that ACWW and its member organizations urge their governments to take action to stop the increasing worldwide sexual abuse of women and children in the refugee camps and shelters.”

This resolution has been carried unanimously at the 2016 Associated Country Women of the World Triennial World Conference, and was put into effect by organizing the symposium Women Refugees Safety on 2-10-2017.

**This Manifesto has been drawn up by:**



2018. All rights reserved.

For more information: [www.nvvh.nl](http://www.nvvh.nl), [www.vrouwenvannu.nl](http://www.vrouwenvannu.nl), [www.passagevrouwen.nl](http://www.passagevrouwen.nl), [www.zontanederland.nl](http://www.zontanederland.nl) and [www.nederlandsevrouwenraad.nl](http://www.nederlandsevrouwenraad.nl)