

# WOMEN IN DISPLACEMENT



Refugee Rights Europe has documented the situation for many women in displacement, raising concerns about the striking lack of safeguarding measures and adequate camp design, coupled with a lack of access to sexual and reproductive healthcare, including during pregnancy and following rape, which not only allows high levels of sexual and gender-based violence to unfold but also exacerbates the consequences of such violence.

## VENTIMIGLIA, ITALY

Research conducted in August 2017:

- The striking absence of women making their way through the Ventimiglia transit point could possibly be attributed to the extent of sex trafficking in southern Italy and North Africa.
- Facing extreme overcrowding and lack of safety, many women chose to resort to destitution in order to avoid sexual abuse and violence at the hands of other refugees.
- Aid organisations working on the ground told our research team that gender-specific toilets and washroom facilities are unprotected and unsupervised, where any resident can enter women's shelters at any time.

## CHIOS, GREECE

Research conducted in May 2017:

- 82.4% of women said they 'never feel safe', with 42.9% of female respondents having experienced some form of violence inside camps, and generally didn't feel safe when using showers and other similar situations.
- A whole 94.3% of women reported having experienced health issues in Chios, less than a third had been able to access medical care. 31% described their health problems as related to mental health as opposed to physical ailments.
- The conditions in Chios are particularly unsuitable for women going through different stages of motherhood.

## Policy recommendations:

**In accordance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol, and in compliance with the EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020, European states must take necessary measures to end violence against women in displacement on European soil and ensure access to support for survivors of violence.**

**In accordance with Article 21 of the 2013/33/EU Directive, all European governments, through their local authorities, must take into account the specific situation of vulnerable persons such as pregnant women, single parents with minor children, victims of human trafficking, and women who have been subjected to rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence. To this end, reception facilities and asylum processes must be resourced by States in a way that enables them to respond to gender-related needs, including the provision of safeguarding mechanisms for women and girls.**

**As a matter of priority, the European Commission, through the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) should contribute meaningfully towards ensuring that sexual and reproductive healthcare (SRH) services are delivered across all camps, hotspot reception centres and ad hoc transit points, in line with the Minimum Initial Service Package for Reproductive Health.**