

# RAND Corporation Strategist Says Afghani Refugees Committing Most Rapes and Crime in Europe

written by GEG | July 28, 2017



Dr. Cheryl Bernard, author of several books on Islamic politics and terrorism, and a former program director for the RAND Corporation, says that Afghan refugees in Europe are responsible for most of the random sexual attacks on girls and women, often committed by gangs or packs of young men. An Afghani court reporter, who has seen hundreds of refugee court cases, says that the motivation for these crimes is a deep hatred for Western civilization. To them, Europeans are the enemy, and their women are legitimate spoils, as are all the other things one can take from them: housing, money, personal property, passports. Afghan refugees believe they are the tip of the spear of Islamic hordes that eventually will overpower Western culture. —GEG

In 2014, when waves of refugees began flooding into western Europe, citizens and officials alike responded with generosity and openness. Exhausted refugees spilled out of trains and buses to be met by crowds bearing gifts of clothing and food, and holding up placards that read “Welcome Refugees.”

This was a honeymoon that could not last. Some of the upcoming difficulties had been anticipated: that the newcomers did not speak the local languages, might be traumatized, would probably take a long time to find their footing, and had brought their ethnic, religious and sectarian conflicts with them, causing them to get into battles with each

other. All of these things happened but—as Angela Merkel promised—were manageable. “Wir schaffen das.”

But there was one development that had not been expected, and was not tolerable: the large and growing incidence of sexual assaults committed by refugees against local women. These were not of the cultural-misunderstanding-date-rape sort, but were vicious, no-preamble attacks on random girls and women, often committed by gangs or packs of young men. At first, the incidents were downplayed or hushed up—no one wanted to provide the right wing with fodder for nationalist agitation, and the hope was that these were isolated instances caused by a small problem group of outliers. As the incidents increased, and because many of them took place in public or because the public became involved either in stopping the attack or in aiding the victim afterwards, and because the courts began issuing sentences as the cases came to trial, the matter could no longer be swept under the carpet of political correctness. And with the official acknowledgment and public reporting, a weird and puzzling footnote emerged. Most of the assaults were being committed by refugees of one particular nationality: by Afghans.

Actually Afghans should not even have been part of the refugee tide, at least not in significant numbers. It was **the Syrians** who were expected. **Afghanistan**, a place of lingering and chronic conflict, is no longer on the official refugee roster—that’s reserved for acute political and military emergencies. Still, European authorities and the public were sympathetic, and could understand why Afghans would want to leave a country rife with suicide bombings and empty of opportunity. Also, Europeans held a baseline positive sentiment towards Afghanistan. Many baby-boomer Europeans had, in their hippie days of yore, traversed that country in the legendary VW buses, and retained fond memories of friendly, hospitable people. Later everyone had mourned the loss of the Bamiyan Buddhas and felt for the poor people suffering under Taliban rule. And after that, NATO had been part of the “coalition of the willing.” Europeans were predisposed to be positive towards Afghan refugees. But it quickly became obvious that something was wrong, very wrong, with these young Afghan men: they were committing sex crimes to a much greater extent than other refugees, even those from countries that were equally or more backward, just as Islamic and conservative, and arguably just as misogynist.

This is not an article that has been fun for me to write. I have worked on issues related to refugees for much of my professional life, from the Pakistani camps during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan to Yemen, Sudan, Thailand, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Lebanon, Bosnia, Nicaragua and Iraq, and have deep sympathy for their plight. But nowhere had I encountered a phenomenon like this one. I had seen refugees trapped in circumstances that made them vulnerable to rape, by camp guards or soldiers. But for refugees to become perpetrators of this crime in the place that had given them asylum? That was something new. Further, my personal and professional life has endowed me with many Afghan and Afghan American friends, and there is nothing collectively psychopathic about them. They are doctors, shopkeepers, owners of Japanese restaurants, airport sedan drivers, entrepreneurs, IT experts, salesladies at Macy’s—they’re like everyone else. The parent generation tends to be a bit stiff, formal and etiquette conscious. It is impossible to imagine any of them engaging in the sort of outlandish, bizarre and primitive sexual aggression their young compatriots are becoming infamous for. Yet here we are.

A few weeks ago, the Austrian city of Tulln declared a full stop to any further refugee admissions. As the mayor made clear, that decision was aimed at Afghans, but for legal and administrative reasons it could only be promulgated in a global way. That had not been the city's intention—to the contrary, it had just completed the construction of an expensive, brand-new facility for incoming asylum seekers, which would now, the mayor declared, be given over to another purpose. His exact words: "We've had it." The tipping point, after a series of disturbing incidents all emanating from Afghans, was the brutal gang rape of a fifteen-year-old girl, snatched from the street on her way home, dragged away and serially abused by Afghan refugees.

And that was just one in a string of outrage-inducing occurrences, all of them going to the account of Afghans.

A while before, in Vienna, a young female Turkish exchange student had been pursued into a public restroom by three Afghan refugees. They jammed the door shut and proceeded to savagely attack her. Grabbing her by the neck, they struck her head repeatedly against a porcelain toilet bowl to knock her out. When that failed to break her desperate resistance, they took turns holding her down and raping her. The young woman required a hospital stay, after which—too traumatized to resume her studies—she fled home to Turkey, where she continues to be depressed and miserable, unable to process what happened and unable, in a conservative Muslim society, to talk about her experience to anybody except one best friend and confidante.

It took a while for the pattern to be recognized because, until recently, western European media deliberately refrained from identifying an assailant's refugee or asylum status, or his country of origin. Only when the correlation became so dramatic that it was itself newsworthy did this policy change. At that point, it became clear that the authorities had known about, and for political reasons had deliberately covered up, large-scale incidences of sexual assault by migrants. For example, a gang of fifty Afghans who terrorized women in the neighborhood of the Linz train station had been brushed off by a government official with the remark that this was an unfortunate consequence of bad weather, and that once summer came the young men would disperse into the public parks and no longer move in such a large, menacing pack. The public was not amused.

I could write the same report about Sweden, Germany, or any other country of asylum in Europe, but I am focusing on examples from Austria because that's the European country I come from and know best. So let's take a look at the Austrian press. This from *Österreich*, the daily newspaper distributed for free on public transit and thus read, basically, by almost everyone. Front page: Afghan (eighteen) attacks young woman at Danube Festival. "Once again there has been an attempted rape by an Afghan. A twenty-one-year-old Slovak tourist was mobbed and groped by a group of men. She managed to get away, but was pursued by one of them, an Afghan asylum seeker who caught her and dragged her into the bushes. Nearby plainclothes policemen noticed the struggle and intervened to prevent the rape at the last moment." Page ten: "A twenty-five-year-old Afghan attempted to rape a young woman who was sitting in the sun in the park. Four courageous passersby dragged the man off the victim and held him until the police arrived." Page twelve: "Two Afghans have been sentenced for attempting to rape a woman on a train in Graz. The men, who live in an asylum seekers' residence, first insulted the young woman

with obscene verbal remarks before attacking her. When she screamed for help, passengers from other parts of the train rushed to her aid.”

Let’s leave aside the reprehensibility of this conduct for the moment and focus instead on its logic or lack thereof. Can these men possibly expect that their attempts will be successful? Do they actually think they will be able to rape a woman on the main street of a town in the middle of the day? On a train filled with other passengers? In a frequented public park in the early afternoon? Are they incapable of logical thought—or is that not even their aim? Do they merely want to cause momentary female hysteria and touch some forbidden places of a stranger’s body? Is that so gratifying that it’s worth jeopardizing their future and being hauled off to jail by scornful and disgusted Europeans? What is going on here? And why, why, why the Afghans? According to Austrian police statistics, Syrian refugees cause fewer than 10 percent of sexual assault cases. Afghans, whose numbers are comparable, are responsible for a stunning half of all cases.

Type two words into Google—*Afghane* and *Vergewaltigung*—and a cornucopia of appalling incidents unfolds before you. The mentally retarded woman in Linz, kidnapped, dragged to an Afghan refugee’s apartment and raped until she was finally able to escape into his bathroom, lock herself in and, as he battered at the door, crank open the window and scream for help. Incidents like that one point to a cold-blooded predator, with planning and premeditation.

Others are merely baffling. Public swimming pools are confronted with epidemics of young Afghan men who think it a good idea to expose themselves, whipping off their pants and standing there until tackled by the lifeguards and removed from the premises with orders to never return. Let’s be charitable: let’s assume that at some point, one or two of these young men might have heard stories of nudist beaches and thought to join in. But that’s hardly an explanation. Seriously; in a foreign country where your legal standing is tenuous, wouldn’t you cast a quick glance around to ensure that you are not the first and only man thus flaunting his ornamentation, before engaging in conduct that your entire upbringing has taught you to consider unthinkable? Come on!

Plus, within hours or days of their arrival, the Afghan-refugee grapevine educates newcomers as to the ins and outs of navigating the country: what offices to go to and what to say when you get there, where to apply for additional aid, where to find free housing and so on. If they can learn all of that, they can figure out the dress code.

So again: what’s going on? Why is this happening? And why the Afghans? A few competing theories are in circulation.

First: “They get drunk.” One of my interlocutors, a diaspora Afghan who has lived in Vienna for decades and works as a certified court translator and advisor, and thus is intimately familiar with these cases and the persons involved, dismisses this explanation out of hand. Rather, he says, word has gotten out that claiming to have been mentally incapacitated during the commission of a crime—including from alcohol or drugs—counts as an extenuating circumstance. Often, he relates, the defendants will have been inadequately briefed and will put this excuse forward ineptly. For example, they will say that they drank two beers and from these blacked out, remembering nothing of their subsequent actions. This theory also does not explain why Afghans should be more prone to alcohol-induced sexual aggression than other young refugee men from comparable

backgrounds.

A second theory hypothesizes confusion caused by a clash in cultural values. These young men, the theory holds, come from a country where women are mere dark silhouettes completely hidden under pleated burqas. Confronted with girls in tank tops and short shorts, they lose their grip on sanity and their hormones run away with them. This theory, in addition to being borderline blame-the-victim offensive, does not hold water. Again, the same reaction should then also be shown by other young men from strict Islamic societies where gender segregation is the norm; why would only the Afghans react this way? And how does it explain cases such as that of the seventy-two-year-old pensioner, out walking her dog when attacked, beaten and raped by a young Afghan? Or the schoolboy, kidnapped and gang-raped in Sweden by a group of Afghans?

Indeed, if we review the pattern of the attacks, we can soon dismiss this theory. Typically, the preferred targets are not what stereotype might imagine, provocatively dressed young women that a confused Muslim from the ultraconservative hinterland misinterprets as promiscuous. No; often, the victims are mothers with small children. I am guessing that to a predator, they appear to be easier targets, because it is assumed they will be handicapped in their ability to fight back, but there may also be some more Freudian dimension that I am missing.

In one recent case that raised a huge public outcry, a woman was out for a walk in a park on an elevation above the Danube. With her she had her two children, a toddler plus her infant in a baby carriage. Out of the blue, an Afghan refugee leapt at her, threw her down, bit her, strangled her and attempted to rape her. In the struggle, the baby carriage went careening towards the embankment and the infant almost plunged into the river below. With her second child looking on aghast, the woman valiantly fought off her assailant, ripping the hood off his jacket, which later made it possible for an Austrian police dog to track him down.

In another incident, two young women were on a midday stroll in the pedestrian zone of a small Austrian town, pushing their babies in prams before them, when they were abruptly attacked by several Afghan refugees, who lunged at them and ripped off their clothing but were apprehended before they could do further damage. It's clear that such events antagonize the general public. It's also clear that we can dismiss the "they were drunk and didn't know what they were doing" theory, as well as "they thought the women were asking for it."

This brings us to a third, more compelling and quite disturbing theory—the one that my Afghan friend, the court translator, puts forward. On the basis of his hundreds of interactions with these young men in his professional capacity over the past several years, he believes to have discovered that they are motivated by a deep and abiding contempt for Western civilization. To them, Europeans are the enemy, and their women are legitimate spoils, as are all the other things one can take from them: housing, money, passports. Their laws don't matter, their culture is uninteresting and, ultimately, their civilization is going to fall anyway to the horde of which one is the spearhead. No need to assimilate, or work hard, or try to build a decent life here for yourself—these Europeans are too soft to seriously punish you for a transgression, and their days are numbered.

And it's not just the sex crimes, my friend notes. Those may agitate public sentiment the most, but the deliberate, insidious abuse of the welfare system is just as consequential. Afghan refugees, he says, have a particular proclivity to play the system: to lie about their age, to lie about their circumstances, to pretend to be younger, to be handicapped, to belong to an ethnic minority when even the tired eye of an Austrian judge can distinguish the delicate features of a Hazara from those of a Pashtun.

I see his point. In the course of my research, I encountered thirty-year-olds with family in Austria who were passing themselves off as "unaccompanied minors." I met people misrepresenting an old traffic injury as proof that they had been tortured. I learned of an Afghan family that had emigrated to Hungary two decades ago. The children were born there and attended Hungarian schools. When the refugee crisis erupted, enticed by news of all the associated benefits, this family decided to take on a new identity and make their way to Sweden on the pretense of being brand-new refugees. Claiming to have lost their papers during their "flight," they registered under new assumed names and reduced the ages of their children; the mother declared herself a widow. Now ensconced in comfortable free housing along with their hale, hearty and very much alive father—whom they pass off as an uncle—with a monthly welfare check, they are smug parasites leeching off the gullibility of Sweden's taxpayers.

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