

For Girls, Idealism Can Be Deadly.
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President Kennedy urged American youth to consider a stint in the Peace Corps where they could help the world's poor and spread American values. Thousands have heeded this call, and for many, their time abroad was a valuable learning experience. But for many others, mostly young women, there was a big problem that was swept under the carpet until now: rape.

The idea that women and men are equally human and entitled to equal opportunities and dignity is very new. The United States and Europe have pioneered this social revolution, but in some places around the world, this notion is either unknown or vigorously rejected. Sub-Saharan Africa and the Muslim world are the worst offenders.

Women foreign correspondents and soldiers used to keep quiet about rape because when they do complain, they pay a professional price. No longer; no more cover-ups today. Americans want rapists weeded out and punished.

Now we hear that even the Peace Corps had a culture of cover-up. Congressional hearings on rapes and murders in the Peace Corps in May was distressing. More than 1,000 young women have reported rape or attempted rape to their directors over the past decade alone-to be met by either indifference, condemnation, and a code of silence.

Nobody has told Peace Corps volunteers that in the dominant culture in Africa, men rape with no fear of punishment. In South Africa, even president Zuma was elected to office despite the scandal of a rape trial (mysteriously acquitted). Nobody cared.

One young American whistle-blower in Benin, who identified a native schoolteacher as a pedophile, was murdered. Her local Peace Corps director was the pedophile's brother.

This attitude toward women prevails in the Muslim world as well. Women who are not covered up (and even some who are veiled) are fair game for harassment and/or rape. Egypt's dirty little secret is now out since the horrific rape of 60 Minutes correspondent Lara Logan, who was in Freedom Square, covering this demonstration for democracy and freedom. When her near-death experience was reported (reluctantly, out of fear of professional consequences), hundreds of Egyptian women and foreign tourists came out of the woodwork. Even the 2010 movie Cairo Time, a romantic love fest on Cairo's charms, showed the American heroine trying to walk around Cairo in broad daylight amidst young men pawing and whispering obscenities to her.

Recently, young women volunteers to the Palestinian Territories---European, American, and even Israeli supporters of the Palestinians---have experienced rape, forced marriages, and beatings at the hands of the young men they thought were their colleagues. These stories, too, were hushed up until recently reported to the press.

Even a young man, an Italian idealist, who loved the Palestinian cause, had his throat cut in Gaza recently. His love was ill considered.

Parents need to know that some places are unsafe for women because of their poisonous cultures. The best will in the world, the most proper behavior, and even knowledge of martial arts cannot protect girls from harm. Sadly, there is no place to get redress when their mentors and area directors dismiss complaints of rape as \223overblown.\224

What a tribute to America that a humble immigrant African hotel maid could seek justice after alleged rape by a very powerful man, Dominique Strauss-Kahn. Both are accorded the same rule of law, despite gender and political power. She would not have had that justice in Africa.

Immigrant rape patterns are now roiling Scandinavia, which the politically correct don't discuss. Nobody wants to acknowledge that young Muslim immigrants consider European girls (some as young as 12) fair game for gang rape. They see them all as whores asking for it. Rapists in Sweden are then identified as \223Danish, Swedish, of Finnish\224 instead of Somali, Algerian, Iraqi. Hush and pretend.

Some day, the world will recognize the humanity of all people-male or female-but we do not have such a world today. Women are still treated like meat in too many countries. We had better put our idealism on mothballs for some time to come. Tell your daughters.

678 words

Dr. Laina Farhat-Holzman is a historian, lecturer, and author of How Do You Know That? You may contact her at Lfarhat102@aol.com or www.globalthink.net.