

On February 15, 2019, Ada County Sheriff's Office issued a press release – four Boise teenagers arrested on charges of rape. The teenagers are refugees.

<https://adacounty.id.gov/sheriff/news/four-boise-teenagers-arrested-on-rape-charges/>

Tara Wolfson of the Idaho Office of Refugees (IOR) sent an email to her list saying she was concerned about the arrests made by the Ada County Sheriff's office. Four refugee men raped a woman and Tara was concerned about the press coverage. She contacted Western States Center and they offered to facilitate a conference call. (Email 10)

Kelly Miller of the **Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence | Engaging Voices (CASDV)** sent Tara & list her organization's statement on the story. (Email 17) Kelly offers to be the contact for media response.

"Here is the Idaho Coalition's statement and we are open to any feedback that **shifts focus** to the issues of sexual assault and gender violence:"

Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence | Engaging Voices

We have collectively failed the 18-year-old young woman who reported she had been raped and the thousands of girls and young women in Idaho who have been or will be sexually assaulted this year. We cannot change our culture fast enough to protect you.

No one ever deserves to be raped. Unfortunately, the Idaho Coalition receives calls most every week from young women in our state who have been sexually assaulted or raped. The 2017 Idaho Risk Behavior Survey reports 21 percent of female high school seniors report having been physically forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not want to. We cannot turn away from the unimaginable trauma in our communities - 1 in 5 Idaho high school senior girls reports having been raped.

Sexual assault is a societal problem that affects all communities. Sexual assault is common in our society because of our cultural beliefs and what we consider to be "normal" or "acceptable." In our culture, men are given more value and power than any other gender. This leads to high rates of sexual violence.

Sexual violence does not happen in isolation. It is supported by larger forces or systemic oppression, like patriarchy. Sexual assault often happens because the person committing the violence wants to feel powerful, in control and feel they have a right to get what they want by any means necessary, including sexually assaulting someone else. Often, the people who commit sexual assaults hold positions of power, privilege and dominance in society and receive messages, from the time they are very young, that they have a right to take what they want if it is not given to them. This leads to high rates of sexual violence, mostly perpetrated by cis-gendered, heterosexual white men over the age of 30. When these acts of violence occur in our communities, we are all harmed.

If you are a survivor, you are not alone. Reach out for help to your local sexual violence program or call the National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-4673.

At the bottom of **email 17** in the response thread, is an email from Tara to Julianne Tzul of the International Rescue Committee (IRC)”

Tara (IOR) to Julianne Tzul (IRC)

If you get any calls, you can direct them to Kelly Miller. Kelly will share stats on rape in our state and that it doesn't discriminate and it is not a "refugee" issue but a societal issue. Kelly will proactively call back reporters who leave you messages. Please feel free to forward reporters calls on to Kelly. **My hope is we can steer the narrative on this story, so it doesn't become a national news story.**

Tara

Lindsay Schubiner of the Western States Center reported that the Daily Caller and the Gateway Pundit picked up the story. (**email 21**)

Lindsay Schubiner (WSC) to List

"I wanted to send everyone a heads up that the assault story seems to now be gaining some traction online. The **Daily Caller** and the **Gateway Pundit** have both picked up the story."

We haven't seen anything on this yet from anti-refugee figures like Ann Corcoran or Brigitte Gabriel.

I'll keep you posted as this evolves. **We are refining the messaging points we discussed yesterday** and I'll send those along as soon as possible. Feel free to be in touch in the meantime if we can help in any way.

Daily Caller Story – includes KTVB video on youtube

<https://dailycaller.com/2019/02/16/tanzanian-refugees-charged-idaho-gang-rape/>

Gateway Pundit Story

<https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2019/02/tanzanian-refugees-arrested-for-gang-rape-of-18-year-old-idaho-woman/>

Tara Wolfson (IOR) responds to Lindsay Schubiner (WSC) and includes a draft of her media response— (email 24)

“On the local media front, **the Statesman Story which had an inflammatory headline changed about an hour ago. There was pressure from tweeters and readers.** I think **it would be good to have a few leaders from the African community join our conversation.** I am thinking Buta and will send him an email. The **local comments are very anti-Islam, so representation from the Mosque** would be a good addition as well. Do people have other suggestions? –Tara”

Tara Wolfson’s Draft Statement

“As a woman, a mother, and a leader, I am deeply saddened by each and every case of sexual assault and violence against women—the ones that we hear about and the ones that never get reported. These types of incidents, including the recently alleged rapes in Kuna, have no place in our community. Far too many women and girls experience sexual violence in Idaho and across the U.S. The media, the courts and the public at large must remember that national origin, race, and class are not relevant factors in this recent case or any others. The epidemic of sexual assault impacts all of our communities, across all demographics. **There is no place for bigotry or discrimination in our criminal justice system, nor in the court of public opinion. Every case must be decided on its own merits and not through a racist or xenophobic lens.** We urge our neighbors and friends across the community to work to combat violence against women in every corner of the state and nation.”

Laura Armstrong of **Glocal Community Partners (GLC)** responds to Lindsay Schubiner (WSC) and Tara Wolfson (IOR) (email 27)

Are the anti-Islamic statements coming from a fact that the boys were Islamic or just a lumping in with “refugee”, “Muslims”, “African”. I do think that if you are going to bring someone in that Taga from the Islamic Center of Boise would be a good person. He is from Africa, is Muslim, lives in Kuna and is part of the Canyon County Juvenile System (can’t remember what he does) and the President of the Islamic Center. I know in the past they haven’t always gotten involved visibly but I think they would be willing to give input. Just my two cents worth!

Continuing to hope it doesn’t spin too much wider!

Tara Wolfson responds to Laura Armstrong (email 33)

The comments are equating the fact they are refugees with Islam.

We have been watching to see if the story gains traction with national media. If it does, **we are prepared to boost our statement on Facebook.** Our current statement is getting attention on the issue of sexual assault and teens.

If the anti-refugee/Islam/xenophobia gets mainstream national traction, here are the strategies we have on hold:

- **We have a platform through the change.org letter we had re the Kavanaugh hearing** with an audience of 120,000 and **contacts with the Washington Post, Teen Vogue, etc. to help shift the focus to teen sexual assault and away from xenophobia.**
- We also have a relationship with **Girls for Gender Equity with Tarana Burke** and can ask the #MeToo organizers **to help shift the attention to sexual assault if needed.**
- **We will explicitly state that this is an issue about sexual assault and men's violence against women, not about any specific racial, cultural, or religious identity or community, and that to make it about anyone's race or national origin is to avert our attention away from sexual violence and wrongly politicize the trauma of an 18 year old young women.**

We are also looking at Idaho Statesman headline's for other rape arrests over the last several years, and if needed, can send in a letter or op-ed about the irresponsible use of refugee and Tanzania in the headline, when race and country of origin is never used for white men who are arrested for sexual assault.

We also heard that some people were organizing a meeting of Congolese young men for training on consent. We strongly recommend against convening a space specifically for any facet of the refugee community as it wrongly infers that this is an issue specific to men who are resettled through the refugee process. We are willing to convene a public workshop for young men overall – again making clear this is an issue across communities, not specific to any particular community of people who have been resettled.

In the email response thread Gina Finley responds to Tara Wolfson ([email 27](#))

Thanks Tara for the update. Your statement is spot on...thank you!

Who is Gina Finley? She is a business strategy project manager at **Hewlett-Packard, Multi-cultural Impact Network**. She is a **member of the Board of the Jannus Group – Global Talent Program**. She is a mentor in the HP Women’s Impact Network and is **an ally to the HP LGBTQ PRIDE Business Impact Network**.

<https://www.jannus.org/board/#Finley>

Radio interview to discuss Global Talent. Gina Finley and Tara Wolfson being interviewed

<https://790kspd.com/global-talent-idaho/>

Gina Finley and Kate Nelson were on Boise Mayor Lauren McLean’s transition team. The transition team prepared a report for the mayor outlining what her priorities should be. Before you look at this report, think about city government and what your expectations for city government are to see if there is any correspondence.

<https://www.cityofboise.org/media/9918/transitionreport-opportunity-final.pdf>

Who is Kate Nelson? Kate is Kathleen Nelson. She was the Director of Jannus’ Economic Opportunity program until she was hired by the City of Boise.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20200608152004/https://www.jannus.org/program/microenterprise-training-and-assistance-meta/>
<https://web.archive.org/web/20200527094845/https://eojannus.org/who-we-are/> make sure to scroll to the end

In September 2021, she was hired by the City of Boise to be the **Director of Community Partnerships** where **she will plan, implement and administer community-focused initiatives that support strategies for the city’s community outreach programs**.

<https://www.cityofboise.org/news/mayor/2021/september/city-of-boise-welcomes-new-director-of-community-partnerships/>

Julianna D. Tzul, International Rescue Committee sends her thoughts to Gina Finley + list on a strategy to spin the rape story. ([Email 40](#))

Thought:

Pitch the story of **how the far right distorts facts, back to our more supportive & reflective press**. I'm thinking Idaho press Tribune & npr. Sharing some of data caught in far right monitoring work of western states center. Thoughts?

Julianne

Karan Tucker (Jannus) to Tara Wolfson (IOR) and list. (email 44)

Tara, your words sounds like a perfect op-ed to get in the Statesman, at a minimum. **Kelly, a physician, mental health provider, even the Mayor or maybe Chief Bones may be where the submission should come from so it isn't from the Idaho Office on Refugees.** Kelly, your talking points and other ways to be engaging groups is powerful.

Grateful for partnerships and community

Lindsay Wolfson (IOR) to list (email 45). Western States information sheet – (in a separate pdf)

These are some great ideas that folks have been sharing on this list.

I also want to send out some information on personal and organizational safety in case it's helpful. I've attached some basic suggestions and would be happy to chat more with anyone about specific concerns that arise.

Best,
Lindsay

Lindsay Schubiner (WSC) to Karan Tucker (Jannus) and list (email 46)

Hi all,

I've pasted below some suggested talking points that you may want to consider or adapt as needed if the story grows. Thanks again to Kelly for sharing your framing, which has informed this as well!

I'm now seeing the story on a couple additional far-right sites, such as the overtly white nationalist VDARE, where a post from last night is framed around the question of the race of the 18-year-old who was assaulted.

Best,
Lindsay

VDARE article:

<https://vdare.org/posts/four-tanzanian-refugees-commit-gang-rape-in-small-town-idaho-what-color-was-their-victim>

PRELIMINARY MESSAGING FRAME

Values to tap: 1) Justice 2) Fairness 3) Education

Messengers: 1) Boise Progressive Leaders

Targets: Boise Residents; Community Leaders/Elected Officials; Media

Barriers to overcome: Perception that refugee communities are violent or dangerous

1. The reports of an alleged rape of an 18-year-old in Kuna by four teenagers is distressing. Like you, we are angry and sad. Our hearts go out to the survivor and to all victims of violent crime and sexual assault.
2. It is the job of law enforcement and our judicial system to investigate the perpetrators of this heinous act and hold them accountable. We have faith that the legal system will ensure that justice is served.
3. Sexual violence is a serious epidemic in this country, regardless of who the perpetrators are. Much more needs to be done to educate young people on consent, and on understanding and preventing sexual and gender-based violence.
4. Despite our anger and sadness, we must not use this as an excuse to discriminate against an entire ethnic or religious group. Attributing the acts of a few individuals to an entire group of people doesn't help reduce violence.

Potential talking points depending on the direction of news stories:

5. All people want to protect their families from violence and abuse. This is an opportunity to engage in education across all communities, especially among young people, to better understand consent and how to prevent sexual assault.
6. We must encourage our elected officials to support policies that make our communities safer for girls and women and discourage them from using this situation for political gain.

Laura Armstrong (GLC) to Lindsay Schubiner (WSC) and list. (email 49)

Thank you Lindsay. Nick and I are doing a Glocal Training tonight so I am thankful to have these talking points in case it comes up in a discussion.

Hoping that it doesn't but we never know. **It was disappointing to see the Idaho Statesman have this as their cover story on Sunday and then to see the story about Court appointed Interpreters and the cost to the state.**

Tara Wolfson (IOR) to Lindsay Schubiner (WSC) suggests they hold a strategy meeting (email 50)

Thanks again for the talking points Lindsay and WSC. They are great.

Group, I chatted with Buta and Tecele and added them to our email.

Do people think it would help to have a conversation about the talking points and our strategy tomorrow? We are still hopeful that this specific story will fade away. We continue to ask partners to refrain from being proactive in attracting media attention around this story. With that said if reporters start calling around it might be good for the group to have a strategy on when and who responds. It is a fine line to get our message in a story that is already going to print verse helping journalist create a story that might not have print value without us.

Thoughts?

Tara

Tara Wolfson (IOR) to List, Meeting Notes from Strategy session. (email 53)

I apologize for the delay in getting **strategy session notes** below out to the group . . . I know a few things have changed since last Thursday and therefore some working group strategies have changed. We welcome working group updates to the entire team.

A quick update from the Capital group- we are working on a letter from Justice Jones encouraging Legislators not to attend Haiden's event on 2/27. We plan to deliver letters to Legislators mailboxes on Monday.

I also want to thank the group and WSC for being part of the crisis response team. Even though we are all still holding our breath, it feels good to have a plan!

Last, shout out to Kara for taking the notes below.

Warm Regards,
Tara

** Note: Former Idaho Supreme Court Justice, Jim Jones was a member of the Jannus Board in 2019
<https://web.archive.org/web/20180619020008/http://www.jannus.org/board/#Jones>

Strategy Session Notes

Bryan Lyda, Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence | Engaging Voices

Lana Graybeal, City of Boise

Zeze Rwasama, Director, College of Southern Idaho Refugee Center

Kate Nelson, Program Director of Economic Opportunity, Jannus

Slobodanka Hodzic, Program Director for Agency for New Americans, Jannus

Julianne D. Tzul, International Rescue Committee

Kara Fink, Idaho Office for Refugees, Jannus

Megan Schwab, International Rescue Committee

Jessica Perkins, Boise Police Department, Refugee Liaison Officer

Nick Armstrong, Glocal Community Partners

Laura Armstrong, Glocal Community Partners

Brainstorm List:

- Try to take up airwave space with a positive thing that doesn't make a direct line/connection to Haidan
- Twin Falls strategy (what Zeze and team did) – organizing another meeting, pro-refugee, welcoming, not naming him, give people the choice
- Media – Lana, Megan, Bryan, Kara
 - Educate media on hate groups
 - Come up with fact sheet, talk to friendly reporters for advice
 - Invite media to interview refugees and community members
 - Op-ed piece, pro-diversity and Islam
 - Media

- Pitch pro-refugee stories same day
- Focus on faith vs refugee status?
 - What is our messaging and media strategy?
- We spit up media networks, everyone owns one or two pitches
- Who will coordinate: Lana
- Danger: Connecting dots between Hadian and refugees where it wasn't drawn before
 - Maybe it shouldn't come from refugee agencies
 - Coalition event?
- Stronger Shines the Light Inside
- **Mayor of Boise make public message about city being welcoming for all**
 - **City of Meridian making a proclamation? Joint statement with Boise?**
 - **February anniversary of Welcoming City Proclamation**
 - **Twin Falls renew theirs also?**
- Marwan – Champion Award
- Radio – Megan and Refugee Speakers Bureau

Veterans – Slobodanka

- Organize veterans for diversity (Megan – Veterans for American Ideals, provide information about why Hadian is against our American Ideals, call and tell them he shouldn't be speaking in this area)

Church – Armstrongs, Bryan

- Infiltrate with World Relief or others
- Ask church not to host? Armstrongs
- Forum between Islamic Center of Boise leaders and Boise Church
- Proclamation of faith leaders from TV expressing welcome of Muslims
- Cole Community Church “love your Muslim neighbor” event
- Bryan will bring flyers by Cathedral

Capitol – Tara, Megan, Kara, Julianne, Idaho Voice for Children?

- **Dear Colleague from Justice Jones to legislators asking them not to attend**
- Signs we love our Muslim neighbors
- Team of friendly legislators to use our messaging with colleagues
- Tara and Megan – decide who to ask
- Diana – someone reach out
- Legislative Breakdown – ask them not to highlight Hadian's event for reasons A,, B, C, offer replacement material if desired
- Event Info...

Other:

- Branding – Boise is welcoming
- Social Media
 - FB campaign
- Lana will talk to Mayor about photo campaign (IRC idea)
- Vigil at City Hall (needs to be highly attended)
- Community Dinner
- Event
 - Strategy counter-event
 - Event on same day
- Rescue Text organized? Megan

Schedule of Hadian.

Please join us for this timely presentation on Tuesday, February 26th to hear a powerful testimony from a former Muslim, (now Christian) who was imprisoned, persecuted and tortured by the Islamic Taliban in Afghanistan. In the midst of his captivity and torture at the hands of the Taliban, he miraculously accepted Christ.

You will also hear from another former Muslim from Iran about what the Holy Spirit is doing around the world to reach Muslims for Christ. Lastly, Shahram Hadian will be sharing the latest update on the ongoing Christian persecution and genocide that is happening around the world and here in the U.S.

You don't want to miss this opportunity!

TORTURED for the CAUSE of CHRIST:

War on Christians & Vanishing Religious Freedoms

Tuesday, February 26th - 7:00pm

Meridian Veterans Memorial Hall - Upstairs Meeting Room

SHAHRAM HADIAN is a former Muslim who fled Iran weeks before the Iranian revolution of 1979. He legally migrated to the U.S. to escape the oppressive incoming Islamic regime, became a Christian in 1999 and now travels around the nation speaking. He has seen brutal Islamic oppression first hand and he is committed to fighting for our nation and our freedoms. Shahram's background includes experience as a pastor, police officer, teacher, coach, and candidate for WA State governor.

MARK LORI-AMINI grew up as a devout Muslim in Iran who was being trained to become an Imam in his local mosque. While in Mecca on his once in a lifetime pilgrimage, he had an unbelievable eye-opening experience that caused him to abandon Islam. After leaving Islam, he was disowned by his family, and had a tragic car accident in Iran that left him paralyzed on one side of his body. In 1993, he became a Christian and God miraculously healed him. Pastor Mark began a worldwide ministry reaching Farsi speaking Muslims with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His broadcast of the Gospel reaches over 40 million Muslims weekly.

ASHEGH MASIH was born in prison in Afghanistan after his family was jailed for defying a village Mullah leader. His mother died during his labor and his father was tortured to death. In the mid-1980s the Islamic Taliban found a bible in his home and accused him of being an "infidel." Ashegh was beaten, brutally and inhumanely tortured, had his left eye gouged out, his ear partially cut off, and his body dipped in corrosive lye, causing severe burns and disfigurement. Ashegh surrendered his life to Jesus Christ and became a Christian during his horrific time of torture. When the Taliban were ousted in 2002, Ashegh was found alive by the US Army Rangers and Special Forces who were clearing the caves of Tora Bora.

No charge to attend; A free will offering will be taken for The TIL Project Ministry For questions, please email: info@tilproject.com www.tilproject.com

TORTURED for the CAUSE of CHRIST:

War on Christians & Vanishing Religious Freedoms. Please join us for this timely presentation on Wednesday, February 27th at the Idaho State Capitol to hear a powerful testimony from a former Muslim, (now Christian) who was imprisoned, persecuted and tortured by the Islamic Taliban in Afghanistan. In the midst of his captivity and torture at the hands of the Taliban, he miraculously accepted Christ.

You don't want to miss this opportunity!

Wednesday, February 27th - 4:00-5:00pm

Idaho State Capitol, Room EW42 - Refreshments served

TORTURED for the CAUSE of CHRIST:

Please join us for this timely presentation on Thursday, February 28th to hear a powerful testimony from a former Muslim, (now Christian) who was imprisoned, persecuted and tortured by the Islamic Taliban in Afghanistan. In the midst of his captivity and torture at the hands of the Taliban, he miraculously accepted Christ.

You will also hear from another former Muslim from Iran about what the Holy Spirit is doing around the world to reach Muslims for Christ. Lastly, Shahram Hadian will be sharing the latest update on the ongoing Christian persecution and genocide that is happening around the world and here in the U.S.

You don't want to miss this opportunity!

Thursday, February 28th - 6:30pm

Boise Church of Christ

SHAHRAM HADIAN is a former Muslim who fled Iran weeks before the Iranian revolution of 1979. He legally migrated to the U.S. to escape the oppressive incoming Islamic regime, became a Christian in 1999 and now travels around the nation speaking. He has seen brutal Islamic oppression first hand and he is committed to fighting for our nation and our freedoms. Shahram's background includes experience as a pastor, police officer, teacher, coach, and candidate for WA State governor.

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Tara Wolfson (IOR) to Lindsay Schubiner (WSC) (email 55)

Sharing a column written by Jim Jones, published in multiple Idaho newspapers – link to Post Register article:

https://www.postregister.com/opinion/columns/we-don-t-need-shahram-hadian-sinflammatory-anti-muslim/article_974e33f2-4110-58f2-a99c-dee72f002387.html

We also dropped letters assembled by IRC volunteers from Jim to members of the legislator with the same message encouraging lawmakers not to attend Hadian event tomorrow at the Capitol.

Is anyone planning to attend any of Hadian's events this week? I think it would be good to know what his message is and who is in attendance. Please let the group know if you plan to be there?

Also, we welcome other updates?

Cheers,
Tara