

## NEWS

# Hakeem Passes Black History Bill in House

NASHVILLE—Representative Yusuf Hakeem of Chattanooga passed a substantial bill in the State House of Representatives Thursday that will establish a Black History curriculum in Tennessee schools. House Bill 2106 requires the State Board of Education to study and implement a course of instruction for students in grades five through eight that will include curricula designed to educate students in Black history and Black culture and to include multicultural diversity in curricula for students in kindergarten through the 12th grade. Rep. Hakeem said the course of study could include Black History figures like Samson Keeble, the first African-American legislator in Tennessee and Judge Bernice Donald, the first female African-American judge in the state. Judge Donald was also the first female African-American bankruptcy judge in the nation. Hakeem said he has worked for the past two years to



build consensus across the aisle: “HB 2106 shows what can happen when we look beyond politics and embrace what is in the best interests of the children. We as a Legislative body demonstrated that working together works.” The bill passed overwhelmingly with bipartisan support and now goes on to the State Senate.

# File Your Federal Taxes By April 18

Have you filed your 2021 tax return? If not, be sure to file by the April 18, 2022 deadline. Here are some end of the tax season tips to help:

Individuals who need more time can request a filing extension with Form 4868 through IRS Free File.

For answers to your questions, visit [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) for information online first. IRS is experiencing a high volume of calls right now.

Review USAGov’s six tips for the 2021 tax season. Get guidance about things like necessary forms and credits you may qualify for.



# End of Federal Waivers May Put More Rural TN Kids at Hunger Risk

By Nadia Ramlagan

Federal waivers put in place at the height of the pandemic allowed federal child nutrition programs more flexibility in delivering meals to households, because kids weren’t at school.

Those waivers are set to expire in a few months - and in Tennessee, groups that work to fight hunger warn that more children, especially in rural areas, will be at risk.

Director of U.S. Food Security & Nutrition for Save the Children - Tamara Sandberg - said the waivers allowed parents to pick up multiple meals for their kids at a time, and in one convenient location.

“The waivers allowed schools and other community partners to deliver meals right to their home,” said Sandberg. “Many, many more meals were distributed as a result. So, we’re very concerned with the impact that that is going to have on the rates of children receiving meals this summer.”

One in six Tennessee children faces hunger, and more than 41% of households with children rely on SNAP benefits.

Sandberg noted leaders from across the country will gather at the Rural Child Hunger Summit on April 28 to brainstorm ways to ensure rural kids don’t go hungry as

the nation shifts out of pandemic-era policies.

Tennessee Deputy Director for Save the Children - Chapple Osborne-Arnold - said amid high gas and energy prices, demand for food assistance is already skyrocketing in rural Tennessee.

“It’s way worse than it was before,” said Osborne-Arnold. “We’re seeing lots of lines, we’re seeing long lines of cars and people coming here and saying that, you know, they either can’t find food based on availability, or that they don’t have the money.”

Osborne-Arnold said Save the Children’s focus this summer will be

on flexible and even unconventional access to meals for kids, so families don’t have to travel long distances to food pantries.

“We’re going to partner with several community-based organizations in different counties,” said Osborne-Arnold. “And they’re going to do some pop-up pantries at, like, the local community pools, where the parents just drop off their kids, or the kids walk there, in the summer.”

She added throughout the pandemic, Save the Children has provided nearly 45 million meals to rural kids and their families nationwide - about four million in Tennessee.

# Rape by Russian Soldiers in Ukraine is the Latest Example of a Despicable Wartime Crime that Spans the Globe

By Mia Bloom

Professor and International Security Fellow at New America, Georgia State University

Shocking images from Bucha and elsewhere in Ukraine revealed what many suspected, that Russian soldiers were apparently committing war crimes. An image of dead naked women under a blanket on the road photographed by Mikhail Palinchak 12½ miles (20 kilometers) outside of Kyiv was tweeted by the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine on April 2. A Human Rights Watch report released the next day and a Guardian story by Bethan McKernan the day after that asserted that Russian soldiers used rape as a deliberate tactic of war.

Such tactics have been called “gendercide” by scholars who study gender and war.

As an expert on rape during ethnic conflict, I know that - like so many other conflicts - wartime gender-based violence has a variety of motivations. They include punishment, torture, extraction of information and the intent to destroy the morale of the other side.

Atrocities appear to be more prevalent in wars when the goal is to terrorize the population and demobilize people so that they will flee in great numbers. In the type of conflict known as an ethnic war, the goal of acquiring and securing territory leads to the most barbarous tactics being used, aimed at reducing the other side’s willingness to fight by using excessive cruelty, torture, terror, displacement and even genocide. Wartime rape functions as part of this strategy.

When wartime rape is a deliberate strategy, as it was in Bosnia, Kosovo or Bangladesh, even the most horrifying acts and atrocities committed during war were supported at the highest levels of decision-making. As U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on April 5, 2022, “What we’ve seen in Bucha is not the random act of a rogue unit, this is a deliberate campaign to kill, to torture, to rape, to commit atrocities.”

Wartime rape does not only target women and girls. It might also target boys and men - something the victims are extremely hesitant to report because of societal norms.

However, not every war features the deliberate use of wartime sexual violence. The mere existence of variation means that what can be unleashed by the dogs of war can also be controlled

or prohibited.

Not random violence

The variation in whether or not rape occurs in war means that these acts are not random. They don’t happen because men are individually unable to control their urges.

Descriptions are beginning to emerge about what happened in Ukraine. McKernan’s story in The Guardian reported that in the wake of Russian troop withdrawal from areas surrounding Kyiv, “women and girls have come forward to tell the police, media and human rights organizations of atrocities they have suffered at the hands of Russian soldiers.” “Gang-rapes, assaults taking place at gunpoint, and rapes committed in front of children are among the grim testimonies collected by investigators,” McKernan wrote.

I have studied the subject of rape during ethnic conflict for over 20 years. Rape as a strategy of war has the effect of undermining the cohesiveness of a community by attacking its very foundation - the women. This is because in many societies rape victims are re-victimized by their own communities, where they are blamed for having been raped.

I believe that the Ukraine conflict is an ethnic war. One of the primary goals of ethnic war is the destruction or deconstruction of culture, and not necessarily just the military defeat of the enemy’s army. The deconstruction of culture is achieved through injuring and destroying human beings. For feminist scholars Elaine Scarry and Ruth Seifert, women are the standard bearers of the society who perpetuate the culture and, therefore, are among war’s first targets.

Historically wartime rape was misconceived as an unintended and unavoidable consequence of war, following from the fact that soldiers were violent, and women - perceived as chattel and property for centuries - were part of the rewards of victory.

Even during the Rwandan genocide, rape was perceived as an unintentional consequence of war: “Rape has long been characterized and dismissed by the military and political leaders as a private crime or the unfortunate behavior of a renegade soldier,” according to a 1996 Human Rights Watch report.

Delay in acknowledging rape’s role

With the prevailing attitude that



Rapes, torture and killings have all been reported from Bucha, Ukraine, where soldiers and investigators look at charred bodies lying on the ground. AP Photo/Rodrigo Abd

rape is a natural part of war, it’s not surprising that the Genocide Convention of 1948, which criminalized certain violations after World War II, failed to include rape as a war crime, even though both the Nuremberg and Tokyo war crimes tribunals referred to it.

It wasn’t until 2008 that the U.N. Security Council passed Resolution 1820, stating that rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity, or one of the contributing factors when determining whether genocide has been committed.

Part of what led to such a long delay in acknowledging rape’s role in war was the “mischaracterization of rape as a crime against honor, and not as a crime against the physical integrity of the victim,” as Human Rights Watch staffers Dorothy Q. Thomas and Regan E. Ralph have written.

The use of rape during war might [reconfigure identities], changing how people and communities see themselves and especially whether they reject the children born of rape or embrace them as members of their community.

‘I’m not a beauty for you’

As a tactic to subdue and control a population in Ukraine, rape may be less likely to achieve the intended re-

sults and have Ukrainians flee and never return.

There are several explanations for why this is the case. First, Ukrainians have been able to fend off Russian military advances, and the war has not lasted for months or years - so far. Second, women have been crucial to the Ukrainian resistance and play key roles in Ukrainian military and government. And third, because of the evolution of international law to designate rape as a potential war crime, there is now precedent in the prosecutions of Ratko Mladic, Slobodan Milosevic, Jean-Pierre Bemba and Jean-Paul Akayesu for war crimes and rape that may serve as a deterrent.

Putin described Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in sexual terms, quoting a Soviet-era punk group’s lyrics about rape and necrophilia: “You sleep my beauty, you’re going to have to put up with it anyway.”

The answer to that shocking statement, The Economist reports, has shown up in Lviv, Ukraine. That’s where you can “see posters of a woman in Ukrainian folk costumes pushing a gun into Putin’s mouth.”

“I’m not a beauty for you,” the woman says. (Source: The CONVERSATION)