

Bengali Wives Raped in War Are Said to Face Ostracism

GENEVA, Jan. 17 (AP) — A church relief official reported today that about 200,000 Bengali wives who were raped by Pakistani soldiers during the war in East Pakistan last month were now ostracized by the Moslem communities and had virtually no place to turn to.

The Rev. Kentaro Buma, Asian relief secretary of the World Council of Churches, said at a new conference that by tradition no Moslem husband will take back a wife touched by another man, even if she was subdued by force.

"The new authorities of Bangladesh are trying their best to break that tradition," said Mr. Buma, who recently returned from a visit to East Pakistan. "They tell the husbands the women were victims and must be considered national heroines. Some men have taken their spouses back home, but these are very, very few."

Mr. Buma said that the World Council's commission on inter-church aid would meet here next week to try to work out some long-term project to help the women.

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