

# International Violence Against Women

## WHY IT MATTERS

Violence against women and girls is a global epidemic that affects the health and economic stability of women, their families, and their communities.<sup>1</sup> Women who are victims are often unable or afraid to seek health care, and the violence in their lives can prevent them from participating in the social and economic life of their communities. While domestic violence is a problem across the globe, women in developing nations face particular challenges.<sup>2</sup> Violence against women and girls affects societies across the world, taking many forms including domestic violence, rape, so-called honor killings, acid burning, dowry death, female genital cutting and other harmful traditional practices.<sup>3</sup>

## DID YOU KNOW?

- The United Nations Development Fund for Women estimates that one in three women around the world will be beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in their lifetime. Most often, the abuser is a member of her own family.<sup>2</sup>
- In 48 population-based surveys from around the world, up to 69% of women reported being physically assaulted by an intimate male partner at some point in their life.<sup>5</sup>
- Intimate partners commit 40-70 percent of homicides of women worldwide.<sup>6</sup>
- The prevalence of women in developing countries who experience violence during pregnancy is up to 20 percent.<sup>8</sup>
- Women who are abused run twice the risk of miscarriage and four times the risk of having a baby that is below average weight.<sup>1</sup>
- Emerging studies show a strong relationship between domestic violence and the spread of HIV/AIDS in the developing world.
  - Women who have experienced violence may be three times more likely to acquire HIV than those who have not.<sup>5</sup>
  - The combination of violence and poverty forces many women to remain in violent and dangerous relationships when they are often subject to rape and HIV infection by their HIV positive partners.<sup>4</sup>

## AROUND THE WORLD

- Violence against women, an immense problem all over the world, is exacerbated by underreporting, inadequate support systems for victims, discriminatory practices within justice sector institutions, and the lack of adequate sanctions for perpetrators.<sup>7</sup>
- Surveys from six different countries support the thesis that women and men are socialized to accept gender-based violence as a normal part of life, which results in men and women believing that husbands abusing their wives for reasons varying from burning food to refusing sexual intercourse.<sup>5</sup>
- Research consistently show that intimate partner violence against women has serious consequences for maternal mortality and child survival.<sup>2</sup>
- A large study in India found that 44 percent of women reported that they were psychologically abused by their partners and 40 percent reported that they were physically abused. 50 percent of women who were physically abused reported violence during pregnancy.<sup>9</sup>
- A recent study in India showed that intimate partner violence was the cause of 16 percent of maternal deaths during pregnancy.<sup>2</sup>
- In Nicaragua, research has shown that children of women who were abused by their partners were six times more likely to die before the age of five than other children.<sup>2</sup>

## Violence Against Women is a Global Issue

*"The time for action is now. Domestic violence and violence against women are more than social issues: they fundamentally undermine the health of women around the globe, as well as their children, families and communities. This is truly a global issue. The United States needs to expand its leadership on this issue, working in close partnership with other governments and civil society."*<sup>3</sup>

~Nils Daulaire, President and CEO, The Global Health Council

*"Violence against women remains pervasive worldwide. It is the most atrocious manifestation of the discrimination and inequality women continue to face, in law and in their everyday lives, around the world. It occurs in every region, country, and culture, regardless of income, class, race or ethnicity."*<sup>9</sup>

~Kofi Annan, Former Secretary-General, The United Nations

## International Violence Against Women Act<sup>2</sup>

The International Violence Against Women Act (I-VAWA), S.2279, would turn U.S. diplomatic policy attention towards violence against women and girls. It requires that the U.S. government systematically integrate efforts to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls into U.S. foreign assistance programs, including health, education, economic growth, legal reform, humanitarian assistance, and foreign security force training activities. It also expands U.S. financial support for overseas non-governmental organizations (NGO's) working to end violence against women and girls.

Specifically, I-VAWA does the following:

- Increases legal and judicial protection to address violence against women and girls.
- Increases health sector capacity to respond to violence against women and girls.
- Increases women's economic opportunity and education.
- Changes public attitudes to end violence against women and girls.
- Addresses violence against women and girls in overseas natural disaster and conflict related humanitarian situations.
- Increases U.S. training of overseas foreign security forces on violence against women and girls.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Please consider supporting efforts to end violence against women and girls worldwide.**

Sign the I-VAWA Petition at [http://salsa.democracynaction.org/o/840/t/4142/petition.jsp?petition\\_KEY=617](http://salsa.democracynaction.org/o/840/t/4142/petition.jsp?petition_KEY=617)

For more information on the campaign to pass I-VAWA, please visit our website at <http://www.ncadv.org> or contact:

### **Amnesty International USA**

[www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org); (202) 544-0200

### **Family Violence Prevention Fund**

[www.endabuse.org](http://www.endabuse.org); (202) 682-1212

### **Women's Edge Coalition**

[www.womensedge.org](http://www.womensedge.org); (202) 884-8396

## IF YOU NEED HELP

If you or someone you know is the victim of abuse and would like more information, please call the

**National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE**  
**National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-HOPE**

## SOURCES

<sup>1</sup>World Bank. (2003). *World Development Report: Investing in Health*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press. Retrieved on November 30, 2007, from <http://www.google.com/search?q=World+Development+Report%3A+Investing+in+Health.&rls=com.microsoft:en-us&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&startindex=&startPage=1>.

<sup>2</sup>Heise, L. Ellsberg, M., Gottemoeller, M. (1999). "Ending Violence Against Women." *Population Reports*. Series L, NO. 11 Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health, Population Information Program. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press.

<sup>3</sup>Family Violence Prevention Fund. (November 1, 2007). *Human Rights, Women's and Anti-Violence Groups Praise Legislation to Combat Global Violence Against Women*. Washington, DC: Family Violence Prevention Fund. Retrieved on November 8, 2007, from <http://www.endabuse.org/press/releases.php3?Search=Article&ID=215>.

<sup>4</sup>Women's Edge Coalition. (May 2007). *Key Statistics on Violence Against Women*. Retrieved on November 8, 2007, from <http://www.womensedge.org/images/microsoft%20word%20-%20key%20stats%20of%20violence%20against%20women10.12.07.pdf>

<sup>5</sup>Krug, E., Dalhberg, L., Mercy, J. et al. (2002). *World Report on Violence and Health*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization. Retrieved on November 30, 2007, from [http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/world\\_report/en/](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/world_report/en/)

<sup>6</sup>World Health Organization, Regional Office for South-East Asia. *Intimate Partner Violence*. Retrieved on July 23, 2007, from <http://w3.hosea.org/dpr/pdf/violence-prevent/partner.pdf>

<sup>7</sup>World Bank. (2006). *World Development Report: Equity and Development*. Retrieved on November 30, 2007, from [http://econ.worldbank.org/external/default/main?pagePK=64165259&theSitePK=469372&piPK=64165421&menuPK=64166093&entityID=000112742\\_20050920110826](http://econ.worldbank.org/external/default/main?pagePK=64165259&theSitePK=469372&piPK=64165421&menuPK=64166093&entityID=000112742_20050920110826)

<sup>8</sup>Nasir, Khurram and Adnan Hyder. (2003). "Violence Against Women in Developing Countries: Review of Evidence." *European Journal of Public Health*. 13(2): 105-107.

<sup>9</sup>International Center for Research on Women. (2003). *Domestic Violence in India: A summary Report of a Multi-Site Household Survey*. Retrieved on November 30, 2007, from <http://www.icrw.org/docs/DomesticViolence3.pdf>

<sup>10</sup>United Nations News Center. (November 2005). *UN Calls for Strong Action to Eliminate Violence Against Women*. United Nations Development Fund for Women. Retrieved on November 29, 2007, from <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=16674&Cr=&Cr1>

## NATIONAL COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



The Public Policy Office of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) is a national leader in the effort to create and influence Federal legislation that positively affects the lives of domestic violence victims and children. We work closely with advocates at the local, state and national level to identify the issues facing domestic violence victims, their children and the people who serve them and to develop a legislative agenda to address these issues. NCADV welcomes you to join us in our effort to end domestic violence.