



Stop Violence Against Women Website

The Violence Against Women Monitor

A publication of Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights

November 2004

Expert's Corner: Familiar Tools, Emerging Issues

Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights uses traditional human rights monitoring methods to document human rights abuses, but in this notebook we will learn how the group has also made a practice of adapting this methodology to emerging human rights issues. Minnesota Advocates has identified and developed practical and sustainable strategies for adapting human rights monitoring methods to address domestic violence (in Eastern Europe and the U.S.), child survival (in Mexico, Uganda and the U.S.) and transitional justice (in Peru).

Introduction

With the help of hundreds of volunteers, Minnesota Advocates has monitored human rights conditions and produced more than 50 reports documenting human rights practices in more than 25 countries. Minnesota Advocates uses traditional human rights monitoring methods to document human rights abuses, but has made a practice of adapting the methodology to address cutting-edge human rights issues. The findings on violence against women in Mexico, Nepal, Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States have been published in reports that include an analysis of each country's legislation related to women's rights and the local law enforcement system, as well as recommendations on how to bring laws and practice into conformity with international human rights obligations. We have recently adapted the methodology used overseas to help us investigate and document the difficulties that refugee and immigrant women in our

own community face in obtaining services and protection from domestic violence.



Minnesota Advocates also used traditional human rights monitoring methods to document excessive and preventable child mortality as a human rights violation in three countries, each representing different levels of development: the United States, Mexico and Uganda. We then published a report, *Global Child Survival: A Human Rights Priority*, using these case studies to illustrate that certain groups of children, minority children for example, suffer systematic violations of their rights. Underlying economic and social factors linked to child survival must be addressed in order to effectively combat high rates of preventable child deaths.

Most recently, we have adapted our methodology to monitor transitional justice mechanisms and processes. Countries such as Peru and Sierra Leone are in the process of transitioning from violence and repression to peace, justice and reconciliation; the growing momentum for transitional justice marks a new era in human rights work. More and more frequently, that shift involves confronting past human rights abuses and making institutional reforms in or-

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Honoring our mentors: Participants hung ribbons with the names of the people who had mentored them or encouraged them to work in human rights.

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Electronic Version of the VAW Monitor Available on STOPVAW Website

The VAW Monitor is an electronic newsletter which is delivered on the first of each month. The VAW Monitor provides updates on the STOPVAW website, information from the National VAW Monitor Program, commentary from experts on violence against women, international, regional and national news, as well as updates on new reports and books. This newsletter is free. Please visit www.stopvaw.org/The_VAW_Monitor.html to subscribe to the VAW Monitor or to obtain an archived copy.

About STOPVAW

The Stop Violence Against Women website (www.stopvaw.org) is a forum for information, advocacy and change. Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights developed this website as a tool for the promotion of women's human rights in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Mongolia, and the U.N. Protectorate of Kosovo. STOPVAW was developed with support from and in consultation with the Open Society Institute's Network Women's Program and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). This website addresses violence against women as one of the most pervasive human rights abuses worldwide. STOPVAW provides women's rights advocates with information and advocacy tools focused on ending the most endemic forms of violence against women in the region, including domestic violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment and trafficking in persons.

For more information about STOPVAW, please contact the Website Administrator at stopvaw@mnadvocates.org.

To learn how you can support STOPVAW and its advocacy for women's rights around the world, please email us at stopvaw@mnadvocates.org.

Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights



The mission of Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights (www.mnadvocates.org) is to implement international human rights standards to promote civil society and reinforce the rule of law. Minnesota Advocates was founded in 1983 by a group of Minnesota lawyers who recognized the community's unique spirit of social justice as an opportunity to promote and protect human rights here at home and worldwide. We are a non-profit, volunteer-based organization that investigates and exposes human rights violations; represents immigrants and refugees in our community who are human rights victims; trains and assists groups that protect human rights; and works through education and advocacy in Minnesota to engage the public, policymakers and children about human rights and cultural understanding. Minnesota Advocates holds Special Consultative Status with the United Nations.

The Women's Human Rights Program at Minnesota Advocates works to improve the lives of women by using international human rights standards to advocate for women's rights in the United States and internationally through research, education and advocacy initiatives. The Program's development of the Stop Violence Against Women website represents a continuation of the Women's Program's research, education and advocacy activities over the last ten years.

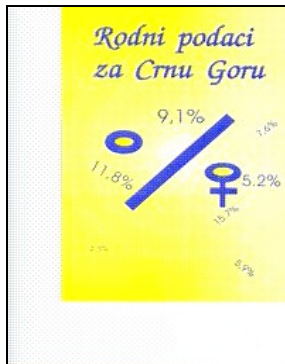
Network Women's Program



The Network Women's Program (NWP) of the Open Society Institute (www.soros.org/women) works to promote the advancement of women's human rights, gender equality, and empowerment as an integral part of the process of democratization. The program operates worldwide as a consultative and operational program, working directly with and providing technical assistance to entities inside the Soros foundations network on gender issues. Among the program's focus areas are gender sensitive education, violence against women, young women's human rights, mass media and gender policy, equal opportunities in the EU accession process, women's oral histories, Romani women's leadership, information initiatives, women's health, and women in conflict zones. NWP has supported the development of the Stop Violence Against Women website and the related National Violence Against Women Monitor Program. For more information about this program, please visit: www.stopvaw.org/national_vaw_monitor_program.

National VAW Monitor Program News

“Gender Data for Montenegro”, a book published by NGO Woman Action



As there does not exist much statistical data regarding the status of Montenegrin women in different spheres of life, the NGO “Woman Action” has gathered data on the participation of women in all areas and on all levels of life and work. The results of the organization’s work were published in

a book entitled “Gender Data for Montenegro.” Please see the text of this book in Serbo-Croatian at www.stopvaw.org.

The book consists of eight areas in which the participation of women is presented statistically and analyzed from a sociological perspective. The following areas were analyzed: *Women and Legislative Power, Women and Executive Power, Women and Judicial Power, Women and Education, Women and the Labour Market, Women and Trade Unions, Women in NGOs and Women in Media.*

Regarding Women and Legislative Power, the following data was obtained: among 75 MPs in the Parliament of Montenegro, 8 are women or 10,66%. From the analysis of the structure of the representatives of parliamentary parties which constitute the legislative power, it can be seen that more than a half of political parties have no women MPs; all of the parties, except for Civic Party, however, had women candidates on their election lists (from 8,5%-21,43%). Of the remaining four political parties who have women MPs in the Parliament of Montenegro, except for Democratic Party of Socialists (5 or 16,3%), three are opposition parties (Liberal Alliance of Montenegro – 1 or 25%, Socialist Peoples Party – 2 or 10,52%, Serbian Peoples Party – 1 or 16,67%). It is interesting to mention that the Social-democratic Party of Montenegro, which had the most women candidates on election lists (21,43%), has no women MPs in the Parliament. Regarding the participation of women in the structures of political parties, it can be seen that trend of the participation of women decreases with the increasing of the decision-making level.

In the analysis of the Women’s participation in executive power, the data are as following. Out of the total number of employees in the ministries, women represent the majority (57,68%) and that is not an encouraging indicator of their real political activism in the executive power.

Women’s participation decreases with the higher levels of managing positions in executive power. The position of president, vice-president and general secretary of the Government is given to males only. The number of women ministers is 2 or 12,5%. Women deputy ministers participate with 30,61% (15 from total 49 deputy ministers) and as general secretaries of the ministry with 23,08% (3 women from total 13 secretaries). The same may be said of the appointment of directors and members of Steering Committees of public enterprises in the competence of the Government of Montenegro: in 12 enterprises of state importance, there is no woman director, and in 7 enterprises the members of Steering Committees, there are only men. We can say that the top positions in the structure of executive power are distinctly “males”.

If we observe globally, women are in a somewhat better position in the judiciary and Supreme Court than in previously analyzed areas. When we speak about the holders of prosecutor’s positions, women are better represented than men (51,35% of women and 48,65% of men). It should be particularly stressed that a woman performs the highest position – State prosecutor of the Republic of Montenegro. In the prosecutor’s field, women are much more present in higher positions than it is the case with managing positions in main prosecutor’s office (16,66 of women and 83,34% of men). However, this positive trend of women’s representation at the highest positions of the prosecutor’s office is not true of the representation of women among judges of the Supreme Court where women are represented with 26,6% and the president is a man.

Regarding the issue of women and education, first of all we should stress data from the census carried out in 1991 that gives cause for concern: girls, i.e. young women, remain illiterate in

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National VAW Monitor Program News

Watchdog Initiative: "Monitoring of Enforcement of the Article 220 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Montenegro"

Analysis of gathered data: Violence, in different forms, is a part of everyday life for women. Laws do not adequately address the problem, and the practice of hiding violence, especially when endangered women hide the violence they have suffered, makes violence prevention and punishment of abusers very difficult. Society does not have an adequate solution for this commonly occurring social problem, and coordination and cooperation between institutions responsible for addressing the problem remain inadequate.

In April 2004, the SOS Hotline for Women and Children Victims of Violence Podgorica, along with its partner organizations, SOS hotlines from Bar and Berane, and with the support from USAID/MAP/ORT, started the Watchdog Initiative, "Monitoring of Enforcement of the Article 220 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Montenegro," which defines domestic violence as a criminal act. The data is related to the monitoring of enforcement of this article within Courts and Security Centers in 9 Montenegrin municipalities (Podgorica, Kolasin, Danilovgrad, Bar, Ulcinj, Budva, Berane, Rozaje and Plav) and provide an analysis of the level of client satisfaction/dissatisfaction with services obtained in the institutions mentioned above.

This initiative is directed toward institutions that are of crucial importance in improving and enforcing legislation and procedures which regulate violence against women, which are the Ministry of Interior and Judiciary.

The initiative's goals are: creation of positive legislation, increased level of enforcement of this article in the practice, more effective punishment of abusers, which will lead to improved treatment of endangered persons in institutions. Another important goal of this initiative is to increase citizens' awareness about the work of the institutions.

Within this initiative, we have analyzed data obtained from Security Centers and Courts, interviews with SOS hotlines' clients, as well as statements from representatives of the insti-

tutions mentioned before.

Analyzing data obtained from Security Centers in municipalities mentioned above for the period of the previous six months, we can conclude that there are:

- 141 citizens' total charges for nine Security Centers;
- 31 persons (22.1%) who are imprisoned and charged;
- 61 persons (43.6%) who have received a warning from the public officials;
- 61 processed criminal charges (43.6%);
- 32 charges on the evaluation of the Prosecutor's office (22.9%);
- 114 female victims (81.4%) (Spouses abused by their husbands, mothers abused by their sons, sisters abused by their brothers, daughters abused by their fathers, daughters-in-law abused by their fathers-in law...);
- 23 male victims (16.4%) the majority of which consists of parents whose children are delinquents or users of psychoactive substances (PAS)
- 130 violators who were males (93%) (there were recorded only 3 cases in Montenegro where the abusers were woman: 1 case involving the woman's husband, and 2 involving the women's children);
- 6 children who were victims of violence (4.3%);
- Interesting information indicating that almost 20% out of total number of abusers were using alcohol at the moment of committing violence in the family; information which confirms our belief that alcohol is not the cause of the violence, but may increase already present aggression.

To see each analysis, go to www.stopvaw.org/21Oct2004.html

Submitted by National VAW monitors: Vanja Mikulic, SOS Hotline and Irena Milatovic, Gender Equality Office of the Government of Montenegro.

National VAW Monitor Program News

Press clipping of Montenegrin daily, weekly, and monthly press

"Pressjek" – Press clipping of Montenegrin daily, weekly, and monthly press for the period January, 1st – July 1st, 2004

The Informative-Educative Center for Women ZINEC-Anima from Kotor, within their INDOK program, is conducting daily monitoring and analysis of articles from comments and reactions that we send as a monthly report to media and on NGO's print media in Montenegro. This project has been in place since 2002, and includes all of our analyses and group lists (MANS and CRNVO).

Also, all complete analyses can be found on www.zinecanima.cg.yu/pressclipping.htm. The aims of monitoring the print media are to gather data on ways in which women are presented and to analyze women's position in Montenegro, as well as their (in)visibility within articles and on photos. The analysis is structured so that we regularly monitor activities of Governmental office for gender equality, activities of women NGOs, women on political scene in Montenegro, violence against women, sex trafficking affair, women in the fields of culture and education, successful and/or reworded women, women's unemployment, women's health, etc.

In September 2004, The NGO ANIMA-ZINEC, within their INDOK program, has published **Bulletin "Pressjek,"** presenting their critical view on the articles about women that are published in Montenegrin press. "Pressjek" is a critical word which only a small number of editors and journalist are ready to accept. Focus is given to the topics that are the

Azerbaijan Ratifies the Final Protocol of the Convention for the Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and of the Exploitation of Prostitution of Others

On 12 October 2004, the Parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan ratified the Final Protocol of the Convention for the Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and of the Exploitation of Prostitution of Others, 1949. [The Convention for the Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and of the Exploitation of Prostitution of Others](#), 1949 was ratified by Azerbaijan on August 16, 1996.

Compiled from: Trend News Agency, accessed 12 October 2004.

most important and which require looking at women in a different way while recommending principles of accepting diversity and equality.

The idea for this press clipping was developed to address the fact that women are not presented in an adequate way in Montenegrin press, and in the same time they are not presented enough. Women are "secondary" or "on the way" topic within projected male's media empire. They are a mistake, stimulus, or victim...

The bulletin covers a period of 6 months, from 1. 01. 2004 to 1. 07. 2004. The most important topics for this period of time are as follows (go to www.stopvaw.org/29Oct20045.html and click on a topic below for related headlines):

1. [Violence against women](#)
 2. [Sex trafficking affair](#)
 3. [Strike of female employees from Ready-made clothing Factory in Niksic](#)
 4. [Law on sexual harassment](#)
 5. [Sexual harassment of female pupils](#)
 6. [ZINEC's reactions on published articles](#)
- [Author's articles](#)

Please visit www.stopvaw.org/29Oct20045.html for more press clippings.

Monitoring of Media Coverage of Issues Relating to Violence Against Women/ Regions of Azerbaijan in Need of Anti-Trafficking Education

Mehriban Zeynalova, chairwoman of the NGO "Clean World", held a press conference on 1 October 2004, during which she presented the results of her organization's monitoring of the Azeri press in covering violence against women issues and women's and children's rights abuses. The monitoring was conducted within the framework of the project "Violence against Women in Mass Media", with financial support from Mama Cash and the United States Embassy in Azerbaijan. Journalists were also informed about the results of the program, "Working Out Positive Attitudes among People as a Result of Education on Trafficking in Persons", which was implemented under the guidance of Ms. Zeynalova in Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic and its regions.

Submitted by: National VAW monitor Yulija Gureyeva of National VAW Monitor Azerbaijan Gender Information

National VAW Monitor Program News

(“Gender data” continued from page 3)

greater number than men: 10-19 years old 51,67% and from 20-34 years old 62,24%. Yet, it should be stressed that the percentage of illiterate people is decreasing continuously, but that women make up the majority of illiterate. One of the possible factors that contribute to this phenomenon is that girls, fewer girls participate in primary education than boys. (49,63%).

When we speak about the employment of women in the education field, we can say that at the higher positions women are less prominent. For example the percentage of women directors of primary schools in Montenegro is 13,04% and in secondary schools is 4,25%. In university education, the data shows that women are continuing their education at the faculties and show a high level of interest in progressing in their studies toward greater expertise. The number of women working as assistants at the faculties for the year 2001/02 is 61,3%, while their percentage of associate professors is 30,9% and among full professors, women make up only 7,8%; thus, with higher positions the participation of women declines dramatically.

From the analysis of the participation of women in managing positions in education it is visible that, despite the greater number of highly educated women, not many women are succeeding in reaching adequate status in the total division of social power and wealth, this is illustrated by the indicators on the status of women in the sphere of employment. According to the data from the poll conducted by Federal Statistic Bureau (October 1999) so, 79% women in Montenegro participate in the structure of total work force. Women were mostly employed (28,14%) in the institutions with social property and with significantly less participation in the enterprises with private property. Women are significantly represented in the health and social (73,2%). Beside health institutions, women represent the majority of employed people in financial organizations (58,7%), trade (58,4%), hotel business (56,6%), while they are the least present in forestry management (12,5%), architecture (14,3%), and transport (24%).

85-90% of the country's employees are the members of Trade Union, and women make the 40% of Trade Union membership. Yet, here we can also see the negative trend of the representation of women in managing positions. For example, only 7,7% of women are members of the presidency of Trade Union, 14,5% of women are delegates on the Congress and 12% are members of the Council of Trade Union of Montenegro. It should be especially emphasized that the president of Trade Union is a man.

On numerous seminars/workshops organized by certain women NGOs, the request for the establishment of joint information-center for all women NGOs in Montenegro has been emphasized. The aim of this information-center would be the prerequisite for faster networking of women activities on both local and national level. According to the data obtained by Center for development of NGO sector (CRNVO) and Network for the affirmation of NGO sector (MANS). In Montenegro, 39 NGOs are dealing with women's rights issues.

Regarding the position of women in media the following data was obtained. In 82 media organizations in Montenegro, there are no women in managing positions (director, editor in chief). In the rest of the media organizations (61), women are the most represented at the bottom of the managing pyramid (the position of editor – 40,50%) and in this field the very top of the pyramid is “ruled” by men (editors in chief – 78,94% of men and women 21,06% while in the position of managers – men 84,2% and women only 15,8%). Specifically in 143 different media organizations, there are 421 people employed on managing positions and gender structure shows that out of that number 308 men are managers (or 73,16%) and 113 women are managers (or 26,84%).

As this is the first attempt to gather gender data on the republic level, the book ends with a statement of the importance of gathering data on all relevant indicators related to the status of women and gender equality in Montenegro.

Submitted by National VAW monitors: Vanja Mikulic, SOS Hotline and Irena Milatovic, Gender Equality Office of the Government of Montenegro.

International and Regional News

16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence Campaign

What is the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence Campaign?

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence is an international campaign originating from the first Women's Global Leadership Institute sponsored by the Center for Women's Global Leadership in 1991. Participants chose the dates, November 25, International Day Against Violence Against Women and December 10, International Human Rights Day, in order to symbolically link violence against women and human rights and to emphasize that such violence is a violation of human rights. This 16-day period also highlights other significant dates including December 1, which is World AIDS Day, and December 6, which marks the Anniversary of the Montreal Massacre.



The 16 Days Campaign has been used as an organizing strategy by individuals and groups around the world to call for the elimination of all forms of violence against women by:

- raising awareness about gender-based violence as a human rights issue at the local, national, regional and international levels
- strengthening local work around violence against women
- establishing a clear link between local and international work to end violence against women
- providing a forum in which organizers can develop and share new and effective strategies
- demonstrating the solidarity of women around the world organizing against violence against women
- creating tools to pressure governments to implement promises made to eliminate violence against women

Since 1991, approximately 1,700 organizations in 130 countries have participated in the 16 Days Campaign!

The Annual Theme

Every year, the Global Center composes a Campaign theme in consultation with women's human rights advocates worldwide and then circulates an announcement for the campaign as widely as possible. Over the years, Campaign themes have included: "Violence Against Women Violates Human

Rights" (1991/1992), "Democracy without Women's Human Rights . . . is not Democracy" (1993), "Awareness, Accountability, Action: Violence Against Women Violates Human Rights" (1994), "Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing: Bringing Women's Human Rights Home" (1995), "Demand Women's Human Rights in the Home and in the World" (1997), "Building a Culture of Respect for Human

Rights" (1998), "Fulfilling the Promise of Freedom from Violence" (1999), "Celebrating the Tenth Anniversary of the Campaign" (2000), "Racism and Sexism: No More Violence" (2001), "Creating a Culture That Says 'No' to Violence Against Women" (2002), "Violence Against Women Violates Human Rights: Maintaining the Momentum Ten Years After Vienna (1993-2003)" (2003), and (2004):

"For the Health of Women, For the Health of the World: No More Violence"

If you have suggestions for a future 16 Days Campaign theme or would like to receive future announcements, please contact the Global Center.

How can I become involved in the 16 Days Campaign?

There are a number of ways to become involved in the 16 Days Campaign. If you are interested in participating as an individual, you can join an already existing student, community, national or international organization and help them coordinate activities for 16 Days -- or take action on your own! If you are part of an organization or institution, introduce the Campaign to your partners and encourage their participation and support. You can participate by,

- Educating your community about violence against women using circulars, posters, banners, speak outs, interviews, editorials, or articles to get information out!
- Organizing a tribunal, rally, panel, film festival, workshop, etc. with a focus on violence against women.
- Exchanging messages of support and solidarity with individuals and organizations coordinating activities for 16 Days!

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International and Regional News

NGOs Call for Strengthening of the Draft European Convention Against Trafficking

One hundred twenty non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including Amnesty International and Anti-Slavery International, from Europe and elsewhere are calling on the 45 member states of the Council of Europe to strengthen the protection of the human rights of trafficked persons. The Ad Hoc Committee on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings ("CAHTEH") began its penultimate meeting in Strasbourg, France on September 28 to draft a European Convention against Trafficking in Human Beings. The last decade has seen a dramatic increase in the number of people affected by human trafficking, and very often these people are misidentified and treated as criminals by authorities.

The NGOs are calling for the strengthening of certain provisions of the draft treaty in order to ensure that the treaty designs a "comprehensive framework for the protection and assistance of trafficked persons and witnesses." The NGOs want to ensure that the European Convention against Trafficking recognizes trafficking as a human rights violation and requires states to meet several requirements. Among the desired requirements are: prompt and accurate identification of trafficked persons by trained individuals; no prosecution of victims for illegal entry or residence in a country, or for illegal activities resulting from their situation as a trafficked person; access to assistance and protection services; a process of granting victims permission to legally remain in the country during a 3-month Reflection and Recovery Period; a further 6-month renewable and permanent residence permit for trafficked persons; and the assurance that they will not be returned to any country where their life or safety is at risk.

For the complete text of Amnesty International's and Anti-Slavery International's recommendations, go to www.amnestyusa.org/women.

Compiled from: "120 NGOs Stress that the Draft European Convention against Trafficking must be strengthened," Balkan Human Rights Digest, Press Release 28 September 2004.

Despite Promises Violence Against Women Continues Unabated

News Release Issued by the International Secretariat of Amnesty International

(AI Index: ACT

77/078/2004 28 October 2004)



Amnesty International welcomes today's open debate in the UN Security Council to assess implementation of Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. The organization urges all governments, the Security Council and the UN system as a whole to take concrete steps to make real the promises of Resolution 1325 for all women living in conflict affected situations.

Adopted in 2000, Resolution 1325 calls for increased protection of women during armed conflict, for an end to impunity for gender-based abuses during and after conflict, and the participation of women at all levels of decision-making related to prevention, management and resolution of conflict. Yet, notwithstanding modest progress in mainstreaming gender considerations in peace-keeping initiatives, violence against women and girls in conflict affected situations continues unabated and most acts of violence are never investigated nor are the perpetrators brought to justice.

The Security Council has before it the first Secretary-General's report on the state of implementation of Resolution 1325. Amnesty International welcomes this report and in particular its emphasis on preventing and responding to gender-based violence in armed conflict. Amnesty International shares the Secretary-General's concern that "thus far, the international community has not been able to prevent acts of violence against women from occurring during armed conflict".

Earlier this year, Amnesty International launched a global Stop Violence Against Women campaign, which aims to highlight the responsibility of the state, community and individual to take action to stop violence against women and girls and end impunity for perpetrators of such violence. Our research to date shows no reduction in this phenomenon. Rather, we are currently witnessing horrific levels of gender-based violence committed

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International and Regional News

Bush Refuses to Reaffirm Support for UN Women's Rights Agenda

The United States has refused to join 85 other governments (including Mexico, Canada, China, Japan, all member countries of the European Union, among many others) in reaffirming the plan of action created in 1994 at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo.

The Cairo plan was designed to grant women the right to make their own decisions regarding reproduction without discrimination, coercion or violence, in the interest of promoting sustainable development. Among the many principles of the Cairo plan are: recognition of the family as the basic unit of society, and a call to strengthen and protect it as such; a call to give the highest priority to children, and to provide children with a standard of living that is adequate for their well-being; and a call for states to take appropriate measures to ensure universal access to health care on a basis of gender equality, including services relating to reproductive health care.

Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Issues Recommendation on Combating Domestic Violence

The Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly has issued [Recommendation 1681](#), expressing its concern about the rising level of domestic violence against women in Europe, and outlining a plan for a pan-European campaign against domestic violence in 2006. The goals of such a campaign would be three-fold: prevention, victim assistance and increased public information. The recommendation urges Member States to prioritize the issue of domestic violence and suggests ways for government, parliament and civil society to work together on the issue.

Compiled from: [Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly](#) website (www.assembly.coe.int), last accessed 21 October 2004.

For more information, see the [Domestic Violence: Law and Policy: Council of Europe](#) page of www.stopvaw.org.

The Bush administration has refused to endorse the plan because of its mention of "sexual rights" (a term the international community has not defined as a consensus), and because it fears the plan could be used to promote abortion. Many countries have assured the Administration that promoting abortion is not the intent of the plan, and that the plan does not promote abortion as a method of family planning.

Despite the disappointing refusal to reaffirm support for the UN Women's Rights Agenda, the U.S. ambassador to the UN Economic and Social Council, Sichan Siv, said that the United States is committed 'to advancing the well-being of women and their families,' and that the U.S. is working towards the Cairo plan's goals in various ways. However, alleging that the UN aided China in programs that involved forced abortions (a charge the UN denies), Bush has blocked \$34 million in funding approved by the U.S. Congress to assist the UN Population Fund (the principal UN agency implementing the Cairo plan), and has threatened to withhold contributions to organizations that maintain ties with the UN Population Fund, including the World Health Organization and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF).

In response to the lack of U.S. funding, the European Union will contribute \$75 million to the UN Population Fund this year. The former EU commissioner, Hans Van Den Broek, who is a special EU envoy to the commemoration of the Cairo Plan, is calling for 'less ideology, more reality...' in order to achieve the plan's goals by 2015.

Compiled from: "[U.S. Tells U.N. it Backs Population Agenda](#)," Edith M. Lederer, [Guardian Unlimited](#), 15 October 2004.

"[Eighty-Five World Leaders Support Cairo Plan, Bush Refuses](#)," [Feminist Daily News Wire](#), 15 October 2004.

"[Cairo Plan of Action--Principles](#)," from [Global Issues Population at the Millennium Electronic Journal](#).

International and Regional News

WIDE Annual Conference - Globalising Women's Rights: Confronting Unequal Development Between the UN Rights Framework and the WTO Trade Agreements

For this year's Annual Conference WIDE returned to Bonn, where 157 participants from 33 countries gathered to exchange ideas, experiences and strategies. As in 2003, the participants were an ebullient mix of first-time attendees and familiar faces. With some self-styled 'WIDE dinosaurs' and many young women from so many countries and cultures, the conference bubbled with energy and wisdom, intellectual riches and a keen sense of commitment, struggle and anger in the face of hegemonic capitalism, militarism and fundamentalisms.

In its work on the intersections and interactions between development and trade policies, WIDE stated a growing lack of coherence between two different global governance and rights regimes which impact national policies, the chances for gender justice, women's rights and livelihoods.

This is on the one hand the human rights framework adopted by the UN and elaborated in various conventions, plans of action and development programmes, on the other hand the com-

mercial and corporate rights codified in free trade agreements, be it multilateral, regional or bilateral agreements.

Although women's economic, social, and political rights have been spelled out in CEDAW, the BPfA and other UN-documents, they are under attack, and it gets increasingly difficult to implement them in the context of neoliberal globalisation, an unequal development between and within countries, and the WTO-regime which expands its mandate.

The conference was preceded by an informative and empowering capacity-building day, which consisted of four seminars turning women's eyes on the WTO; poverty eradication and the roles of poverty reduction strategy processes (PRSPs) and the MDGs; the trade and development policies of the EU; and the key UN instruments for gender equality, CEDAW and the BPfA.

To read a summary of the conference, go to www.eurosur.org.

To order a copy of the conference report (8 Euro plus postage and packing), please contact Nerea Craviotto at info@wide-network.org. The URL for this record is: www.eurosur.org/wide/home.htm

Defense Department Drafts Anti-Prostitution Rule for U.S. Forces

In response to the growing number of women and girls forced into prostitution by military services members, government contractors, and international peace keepers in places such as Eastern Europe and South Korea, defense officials have drafted an amendment to the manual on courts-martial that would make the use of services of prostitutes an offense for service members.

The amendment is a part of a larger initiative to ensure that American service members do not continue to contribute to the problem of human trafficking. Currently, new arrivals to duty receive instruction against participating in prostitution and human trafficking and the military is collaborating with South Korean law enforcement agencies. In addition, officials are in the process of developing a training program for service mem-

bers that will explain trafficking, the Department's policy on it and the possible legal repercussions for violation of the policy. Further, the military has examined the ways in which it might restrict servicemen from frequenting businesses where prostitution and like activities take place. Finally, the military is making efforts to make on-base military life more tolerable by providing more evening and weekend education programs, band concerts, sports leagues and chaplain services.

Compiled from: "Anti-Prostitution Rule Drafted for U. S. Forces," Pauline Jelinek, The Washington Post, 22 September 2004.

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International and Regional News

No Country Has Reached Full Equality Under CEDAW

In a statement marking the 25th anniversary of the [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women](#) (CEDAW), the UN Committee overseeing the Convention recently noted that no country in the world has achieved full equality for women.

While certain countries have made great progress since the adoption of the Convention in 1979, many states party to the Convention continue to uphold discriminatory national laws, for example. Even in those countries, which have implemented laws to promote equality, informal discrimination persists.

The Committee also voiced concern about the increasing problem of trafficking of women and girls and the escalation of violence against women. Although violence against women is now considered a public concern, the practice continues in all countries, particularly in those faced with economic and political upheaval.

Further, the Committee expressed its disapproval of the under-representation and in some cases, absence, of women in political and civic life in countries that are party to the Convention.

Despite such examples of ongoing discrimination towards women, Deputy-Secretary General of the Committee, Louise Frechette, told a roundtable at UN Headquarters: "The Convention remains the most solid global tool in the network for true gender equality in the home, the community and society;

and for freedom from discrimination, whether perpetrated by the State or by any person, organization or enterprise."

The Committee pointed to positive steps taken by states to promote equality and eliminate discrimination against women including: Bangladesh's Constitutional Amendment to increase the number of seats reserved for women in the national parliament; legal reform prohibiting employment discrimination against women in Latvia; a new national ministry dedicated to the promotion and development of women in Angola; the opening of university-level gender studies centres in Kyrgyzstan; the development of educational scholarship programs for women in Ethiopia; and the appointment of two women judges to Argentina's Supreme Court of Justice.

While many states have maintained reservations to key provisions of the Convention, limiting the Convention's positive impact in those places, a number of states have withdrawn either all or part of their reservations. France, Ireland, Lesotho and Mauritius are examples of such countries leading the way toward a stronger, more meaningful CEDAW.

Compiled from:

"[UN committee for women's rights treaty says no country has reached full equality](#)," UN News Service, www.un.org, 13 October 2004.

"[On Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of Women's Rights Convention, Committee Notes: Progress but Full Equality Still to be Achieved](#)," Press Release, News, www.un.org, 14 October 2004.

John Smith Fellowship Programme 2005

The John Smith Fellowship Scheme is an intensive, 6-week programme on good governance, democracy and social justice. It is available to promising young leaders from Russia, the Ukraine, Armenia, Moldova, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan. We are currently seeking applications from potential candidates for our 2005 Fellowship Programme, to take place in June/July next year.

Normally, successful candidates are aged between 25 and 35 and in employment at the time of application. Preference is given to applicants working in:

- the political process,
- legal services, especially in the field of human rights;

- journalism/broadcasting;
 - government service (including local government);
 - NGOs with explicit involvement in furthering democracy, equal rights and social justice, or promoting democratic access, participation and accountability in government.
- A high standard of competence in the English language is essential.

Further information on our recruitment criteria, application details and deadlines can be obtained from the British Council website: www.britishcouncil.org/jsmithpublic/index.htm. Country links from this page will give details of the application process in each of our seven Fellowship countries. For further information about the John Smith Memorial Trust, please visit www.johnsmithmemorialtrust.org.

International and Regional News

(*"Violence against women" continued from page 8*)

with impunity against women and girls in many conflict-affected countries, which the UN Secretary-General said "has reached almost epidemic proportions".

Amnesty International believes that the Security Council and UN system as a whole must do more to integrate the provisions of Resolution 1325 in their work. Since the adoption of Resolution 1325 in October 2000, less than 20 percent of Security Council resolutions include language on women or gender. Together with other NGOs, Amnesty International is urging the Security Council not only to call on the Secretary-General to establish a comprehensive UN-wide action plan, but also to establish a focal point and expert working group in the Security Council to ensure further integration of Resolution 1325 in all relevant areas of its work.

Amnesty International also welcomes the Secretary-General's recommendations on gender-based violence, and urges the Security Council, member states, and United Nations entities to take all necessary measures implement his recommendations:

- to apply increased pressure to parties to armed conflict to cease all violations of the human rights of women and girls,
- to end impunity for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, including sexual and gender-based violations, and
- to conduct gender-sensitive investigations and report findings systematically to the Council.

Sign up to the Campaign "Stop Violence Against Women" at amnesty-news.c.topica.com/maacNM4abbdfWbdTh3Ob/

Take action!

Colombia: Women's bodies used as a battleground, amnesty-news.c.topica.com/maacNM4abbdfXbdTh3Ob/
Timor-Leste: Five years on, Indonesia still denies justice to victims of sexual violence, amnesty-news.c.topica.com/maacNM4abbdfYbdTh3Ob/

Past and current Amnesty news services can be found at www.amnesty.org/news. Visit www.amnesty.org for information about Amnesty International and for other AI publications. Contact amnestyis@amnesty.org if you need to get in touch with the International Secretariat of Amnesty International.

Privacy policy: web.amnesty.org/pages/aboutai-privacy-eng

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(*"16 Days" continued from page 7*)

The Center for Women's Global Leadership makes a number of resources available for those who would like to plan a 16 Days Activity in their community. These include:

- an annual Campaign Announcement which includes suggestions for action based on the current theme
- a Take Action Kit which contains information on the Campaign, including a list of suggested activities
- an on-line posting of all previous International Calendars of Campaign Activities which describe activities coordinated by organizations in the past.

All of these resources can be obtained by contacting the Center with your request (see contact information below) or by visiting us on-line at <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu>.

How do I connect with all of the other activities being organized throughout the world?

Contact the Center for Women's Global Leadership and we will send you the names, fax numbers and e-mails of other individuals and organizations coordinating 16 Days activities. This will enable you and other participants in the campaign to exchange letters of solidarity and support and where possible work together in the future.

If you organize an activity for 16 Days, send a brief description with dates of your planned activities, your name and your contact information to the Global Center so that we can post the information to the International Calendar of Campaign Activities. Once the calendar has been compiled, we will send copies to participating organizations. The calendar will highlight your efforts as part of a broader movement for women's human rights and provide you with examples of activities and strategies used by other individuals and organizations during the Campaign.

For more information about the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence, please contact: Center for Women's Global Leadership, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 160 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8555 USA; ph: (1-732) 932-8782; fax: (1-732) 932-1180; e-mail: cwgl@igc.org, website: www.cwgl.rutgers.edu.

National News

Our Bodies - Their Battle Ground: Gender-based Violence in Conflict Zones



TAJIKISTAN: Civil war has left one in three women victims of domestic violence.

(Reprinted from UN IRIN)

Fatima and Zuhra Sultanovas are twins. Local legend has it that twins have similar destinies. The sisters' history suggests that the legend may come true. They married - on the same day - twin brothers named Hasan and Hussein. Six years have passed and they have both given birth to two children.

But domestic violence forced Zuhra to return to her father's home, while her sister Fatima was harassed by a neighbour. Later, Zuhra's husband made her have an abortion in her fifth month of pregnancy.

"I was in shock for several weeks," Fatima told IRIN in the northern Tajik city of Khujand. "I could not get away from the idea of committing suicide. I was looking for an easy way of death: I thought of plunging into the river or hanging myself - anything not to live in this world. But my parents stopped me and I am very grateful to them for their moral support."

The twin sisters dared to go against the generally accepted view that only death can wash away disgrace. Fatima and Zuhra made up their minds to fight for their human rights and to get justice. They saw an advert in a newspaper for the Gulrukhsor Crisis Centre, called the hotline and were advised what to do. Then they applied to a court.

An official of the city's prosecuting authorities, Said Babev, had this advice for female victims of violence: "Immediately apply to a court for a medical examination and do not lose your torn clothes. This will all serve as material evidence. Unfortunately, our society and even our investigative bodies gossip about such things... I advise women that, regardless of these prejudices, they should trust in the law and apply to law enforcement bodies."

Many abused women driven to suicide

Unfortunately, many desperate women still choose the ultimate protest - suicide.

But now there are several crisis centres set up by NGOs where women victims of violence can apply for help, either through hotline numbers or directly.

According to data from the crisis centre run by the Women of Science of Tajikistan Association, in 2002-03, 47 per cent of all registered incidents of violence against women related to sexual violence by their husbands or others, while 51 per cent were cases of psychological cruelty, according to the director of the association, Muhiba Yakubova.

Experts say that two-thirds of women are exposed to domestic violence. In 2002-03, about 90 women committed suicide. In the period 2001-04, 344 women took their own lives and 433 were murdered by their partners.

Along with poverty, some observers link growing violence against women in Tajikistan with the aftermath of the civil war of the 1990s, that led to the death of at least 50,000 people while 1.2 million became refugees or were internally displaced. Women, as ever, suffered disproportionately during and after the conflict.

"Apart from a general deterioration in the position of women, which one should expect during a civil war, women were specifically targeted by the Islamists in the Tajik conflict factions on 'moral grounds'. Islamic behaviour and dress code were brutally enforced, thus degrading and dehumanising women. Moreover, forced marriages and human trafficking - mainly of young girls - became more acceptable during the war," Sergei Andreyev, a research fellow at the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London, told IRIN.

Another consequence of the civil war, albeit indirect, is the increasing participation of Tajik women in drug trafficking: they are used as "mules" since they are least likely to attract scrutiny by law-enforcement bodies.

But some traditional religious scholars, like Mirzomuhiddin Homidzoda, blame women daring to venture from the home for an upsurge in violence against them "If the woman is a true housewife and is busy with raising her children... she will

(Continued on page 16)

National News

Czech Parliament to make crucial changes to the Criminal Code

(Reprinted from Radio Prague)

Czech Parliament is discussing an amendment to the country's Criminal Code, now more than 40 years old. The main purpose of the amendment is above all to hit perpetrators of violent crimes like murder or robbery with more serious sentences. While now the limit for imprisonment was 25 years, apart from exceptional life sentences, in the future it could be raised by five years. There are also quite a few entirely new crimes defined like terrorist attacks or prostitution endangering moral development of children, in other words, prostitution in school localities.

I am now joined in the studio by my colleague Martin Mikule who's been following the story. He'll tell us about other changes in store, and indeed whether or not the amendment has a good chance of being passed.

"First, concerning the chance of the amendment being passed it is still difficult to say: at the moment the bill has proceeded to second reading but there is still a lot of heated debate going on, particularly because there are so many new additions to the Criminal Code. Apart from those you mentioned, there is for example euthanasia, the cloning of human beings or child pornography distribution. But, what I think is really revolutionary is the stress on stronger sentences for brutally violent crimes. I think in this point our legislators are pretty united because they want to stress that the protection of a human life is crucial and has priority even above the protection of property."

You mentioned Euthanasia. If the Criminal Code did not account for Euthanasia as crime, how was the act punished till now?

"Until now any kind of intentional killing of a human being - even requested - was considered murder, but the new amendment introduces a new legal paragraph called "Putting to death on demand". According to the bill the crime would be treated more lightly than murder. For such an act one would get a maximum of 6 years."

It will probably be no surprise that a lot of the



fuss will be precisely over euthanasia, won't it?

"Exactly. Particularly the conservative Christian Democrats disagree with euthanasia being treated more lightly, as they are afraid it could be abused. Their opponents, however, say that it is important to distinguish between, say, aiding a terminally-ill senior end their life as compared to vicious or pre-meditated killing for profit."

A widely discussed issue recently was the criminal liability of children, seen as too lax by some. Does the amendment bring any changes there?

"Till now the age of liability started at 15 and surprisingly, there is no mention about any changes regarding it in the current legislation. However, many MP's would like to see it added and Justice Minister Pavel Nemeč himself has said that he would push for lowering the age of accountability to 14 years of age. In cases of very serious crimes even to 12. As I said, it's still a matter of debate and given the bill had trouble making it to a second reading you can be sure there will still be a lot of deliberation ahead before any amendment is approved."

Published in: Mikule, Martin, "Parliament to make crucial changes to the Criminal Code," Radio Prague, 15 October 2004.

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To learn how you can support STOPVAW and its advocacy for women's rights around the world, go to www.stopvaw.org and click on "Make a Donation". With your help, we can continue to support women's advocates in the effort to eliminate violence against women. Thank you very much.

National News

Prostitution Bill Will Require Czech Republic to Repeal Commitment to 1958 Treaty

(Reprinted from Radio Prague)

A new bill on prostitution currently under preparation in the Czech Republic will require the country to back out of an international agreement signed in 1958, aimed at fighting trafficking of women.

By signing the International Convention Against Trafficking in Women then-Czechoslovakia agreed not to pass future legislation supervising prostitutes, something the new bill has proposed in order to regulate legal age of prostitutes and their frequency of medical checks.

The government, which gave the go-ahead for the bill in April, is set to discuss the Czech Republic's repealing its commitment to the international treaty on Wednesday.

Cited from: "Prostitution bill will require Czech Republic to Repeal Commitment to 1958 Treaty," Jan Vellinger, Radio Prague, News, 4 October, 2004.

No Justice for Rwandan Rape Survivors

Human Rights Watch recently released the report: *Struggling to Survive: Barriers to Justice for Rape Victims in Rwanda* (hrw.org/reports/2004/rwanda0904/).

The report documents that tens of thousands of Rwandan women raped during and after the genocide have yet to find justice, as the country has successfully prosecuted only a few perpetrators of sexual violence and women and girls have not received compensation or other assistance for the trauma they experienced in 1994.

The report makes a number of recommendations to the Rwandan government. It recommends that the government enact legislation to allow monetary compensation for victims, improve training for doctors and other medical personnel to facilitate the collection of medico-legal evidence of rape and educate prosecutors and judges on how to adjudicate sexual violence cases.

Compiled from: "Rwanda: Rape Survivors Find No Justice," Human Rights Watch, News, Women, 30 September 2004.

Take Action to Protect the Rights of Women and Girls Trafficked in Kosovo

Take action to help Amnesty International USA protect an increasing number of women and girls trafficked into Kosovo who are experiencing rape, beatings and abduction.

In a recent report Amnesty International established that trafficking in Kosovo has increased since the July 1999 deployment of the international peacekeeping force led by NATO (KFOR) and the establishment of the United Nations civilian administration (UNMIK).

Please see Amnesty's website (www.amnestyusa.org) to learn more about the issue and take steps toward remedying this grave problem in Kosovo.

Compiled from: "Take Action: Protect the Rights of Women and Girls Trafficked in Kosovo," Women's Human Rights Online Bulletin, Amnesty International USA, 6 October 2004.

Slovenia Ratifies the Optional Protocol to CEDAW

On 23 September 2004, Slovenia ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (OP-CEDAW). Slovenia succeeded to CEDAW on 6 July 1992.

For more information, go to www1.umn.edu/humanrts/index.html

NGOs Encouraged to Submit Shadow Reports to Croatia and Turkey's State Reports to CEDAW

State reports from Croatia and Turkey will be examined at the CEDAW 32nd Session in January/February 2005 in New York. NGOs that wish to prepare shadow reports to submit to CEDAW may do so. Guidelines for shadow reports are to be found at: iwwrap-ap.org/using_cedaw/writing_shadow.htm

National News

(“Gender-based violence” continued from page 13)

bring up worthy and well mannered members of society. But alas, these days women are more independent than men. Women are trading in the market, working as labour migrants and business-women... In my opinion, all this leads to violence.”

Cruelty against women may be on the increase

Anecdotal evidence suggests that cruelty against women has recently become worse, with mothers-in-law treating their daughters-in-law as servants with no human rights.

“I’ve been married for three years and feel that I have been sold as a slave,” said Malika, barely holding back the tears. Although she works every day from early in the morning until late at night she is constantly accused of being lazy.

“I am sure that neither the prosecutor’s office, the police nor my relatives can help me. Family quarrels never get punished by the law. And I cannot apply to a court because my relatives would judge me. My husband and mother-in-law would laugh at me. Sometimes I feel that I have no human rights at all and that the only option is suicide. In such a case, society would blame me for everything, saying that my husband was good, my family was friendly, everything was all right for me,” Malika said.

The executive director of the Gulrukhsor Crisis Centre in Khujand says: “The more society becomes civilised, the more the methods of violence will become contrived. Domestic violence exists and one can say that accusations by husbands and mothers-in-law have become more caustic. That is why domestic violence drives women to suicide.”

The victims of violence apply very rarely to the legal system. This is for cultural reasons and because they do not believe that their rights can be defended in such a manner. Most think that the only way out is to commit suicide.

Little help from the legal system

The state judicial system has been ineffective in aiding the victims of violence. Human rights organs do not respond to cases of violence and related suicides. The Gulrukhsor Crisis Centre has decided to help such women. The case of the Sultanovas sisters prompted them to organize the training of lawyers to defend victims of violence.

Recently, suicide cases have become even more tragic. Victims kill not only themselves but also their children. In September 2003, the inhabitants of Kulob city were shocked by a tragic case in which the victim burned herself together with her two children. Although her elder daughter managed to escape, they could not rescue the mother and her younger daughter. The reason for the suicide appeared to be the financial plight of the family, with the children hungry most of the time. Their father had gone to Russia and not sent anything back for two years.

In another case, in April of this year, a 22-year-old woman living in Khujand town plunged into the Syrdar’ya River from the dam at Kayrakkum power station together with her six-month-old daughter.

But the Sultanovas sisters got to court. Zuhra won her case and her husband was imprisoned for two years.

“In the near future we are going to set up temporary refuges at the crisis centre for those women who have undergone violence and have nowhere to go,” Muhiba Yakubova of the Women of Science of Tajikistan Association says. Such refuge centres are already active in neighbouring Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia and other CIS countries.

Published in: Our Bodies - Their Battle Ground: Gender-based Violence in Conflict Zones: TAJIKISTAN: Civil war has left one in three women victims of domestic violence, United Nations Integrated Regional Information Network, 15 October 2004.



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Tell us how you are using the STOPVAW website and what resources or topics you believe should be discussed on the website. Go to www.stopvaw.org_Feedback.html to fill out the form. All contact information will remain confidential. Thank you for your interest!

New Research and Reports

Priorities Across Borders: For Many Women Violence Shuts out Hope



This article is reprinted from and with permission from the UN Wire / UN Foundation.

By *New York Times* U.N. Bureau Chief Barbara Crossette: In Brazil, a video is

making the rounds starring some well known comic actors with a message that's no laughing matter. Their faces also appear on posters. Their pitch: "Violence against women isn't funny." Family planning is fine. Good health care for women is fine. But these services can mean nothing to women who may be abused for trying to use them and who live in fear of violence from not only an intimate partner – a husband or boyfriend – but also a pimp or a male relative.

As the crucial importance to national development of birth control and good reproductive healthcare for women sink into the thinking of governments and societies around the world, attention is turning in many places to the men who buck the trend. They may be individuals prone to domination and violence in any culture, or they may be boys and men who grow up in milieus casually demeaning of women. Call them macho or misogynist or just uneducated about the place of women in the contemporary world and in all major religions, where beliefs may have been warped by militants. Whatever the source, the behavior is being tackled in the developing world with new organizations and some redirection in older institutions such as churches, mosques, the schools, parliaments and the courts.

The national campaign to stop violence being launched this year in Brazil is a joint effort by men's organizations and feminist groups – not always friendly partners in the past – backed by Ecos, a research organization in gender and sexuality.

"We're actually talking about a movement, not a campaign," said Bendito Medrado of the Program in Support of the Father, or Papai in Portuguese, which means "Dad." Papai is based in the north-eastern Brazilian city of Recife, one of two areas where women say a machismo culture still defines a male image. The other region is in the south, where a cowboy tradition and conservative social mentality come together to the detriment of women. Medrado was among a group gathered one Satur-

day in May at in the small boardroom at Ecos headquarters in Sao Paulo, Brazil's largest city, to strategize the next moves in the anti-violence drive. He and others were pleased that Brazil seemed ready for this movement and was already ahead of most of Latin America in serious work on other women's issues.

With a considerable amount of equality written into Brazil's 1988 constitution and new family laws that give women broad rights, Brazilians were focused reducing on domestic violence by the early 1990s, said Jacqueline Pitanguí, a former president of Brazil's National Council on Women's Rights and a leader on gender issues for several decades. "Brazil got domestic violence included as a human rights issue at the Vienna conference on human rights in 1993," she said. Within the country, the government has created centers for women who are victims of sexual violence, she said.

In Sao Paulo, Sandra Unbehaum, the director of Ecos, said that the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing the following year produced "a real comprehension of what women's issues mean." In Brazil, the results of these conferences only underscored what strong local feminist organizations had already been demanding, with considerable success. "Those international conferences were turning points," Unbehaum said. Brazil's 1997 family planning law, which opened the way for a range of previously forbidden procedures, including sterilization, was a direct outcome of Cairo, Pitanguí told me.

"Brazil seized the Cairo and Beijing agendas right away," Medrado said. "Men should support women." Papai has extended that mandate to a sustained effort to stop violence against women, a fundamental and crippling violation of their rights. Medrado, a social psychologist, and others are also researching and writing about men and masculinity to better understand the roots of their behavior and the cultural factors (including the role of media) that may reinforce it.

In Ghana, Fred Sai, a former adviser to the World Bank on public health and a founder of the Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana, says that the

(Continued on page 23)

New Research and Reports

Public Information Still Hard to Get, Five Country Survey Finds

(Reprinted from Freedom of Information Advocates Network)

New York, September 28, 2004—Access to public information is increasing worldwide, but many countries are lagging far behind, said a new study.

The pilot survey monitoring freedom of information was released by the Open Society Justice Initiative on September 28, designated "Right to Know Day" by global FOI groups.

Conducted in Armenia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Peru and South Africa, the survey marks one of the most comprehensive efforts yet to test the limits of government transparency. It involved the submission of 100 information requests to 18 different public institutions by a range of actors in each country. On average only 35 percent of requests for information were fulfilled. Many requests not explicitly rejected were simply ignored—in total, 36 percent of requests submitted resulted in tacit or "mute" refusals.

"New access to information laws in many countries provide a strong foundation for transparency of public bodies, but still fall short of what can fairly be termed open government," said James Goldston, Executive Director of the Justice Initiative. "In just over a decade, more than 40 countries worldwide have adopted freedom of information laws. This study shows that, even once a law is adopted, effective implementation remains a major challenge."

Interviews with government officials revealed a number of common obstacles in enforcing FOI laws. These include a lack of political will at senior levels to encourage transparency, inadequate information management, insufficient training of public officials, and an excess of bureaucratic obstacles to timely information release.

In some countries it proved near impossible to submit requests for information orally or without filling out an official form. Persons belonging to vulnerable or excluded groups, such as disabled individuals or ethnic minorities, were less likely to receive positive reactions than journalists or NGOs submitting the same requests.

A surprise result was that short timeframes for official responses, far from posing an obstacle to information release as some feared, appear to improve the chances of positive reactions. Peru, the country with the highest rating of the five, also permits the least time to officials to respond: seven working days.

The initial results and recommendations can be accessed by clicking the icon next to this press release.

Right to Know Day is marked by freedom of information advocates across the world as part of a wider campaign to promote knowledge about and use of the public's right to access information held by government. This is the second year that the date, chosen because the global Freedom of Information Advocates Network was founded on this day in 2002, is celebrated by non-governmental organizations worldwide. The range of activities in 2004 includes awards for "most open government body" (and booby prizes for closed institutions), TV advertisements and media campaigns, new reports on the state of access to information in a number of countries, and the holding of training workshops and seminars.

More information can be found at

www.foiadvocates.net

Contact Helen Darbishire:
helend@justiceinitiative.org

Accountability in Women's Human Rights

New research has emerged regarding accountability in women's human rights. In her article, "The Principle of Accountability," Donna J. Sullivan of Women's Human Rights Net (WHRnet) covers the nature and functions of accountability for women's human rights and traces the core features and forms of accountability.

Compiled from: "The Principle of Accountability," Donna J. Sullivan, Women's Human Rights Net, September 2004.

New Research and Reports

Coalitions at Work: Building on Cultural Strengths

21 October 2004

This article is reprinted from and with permission from the UN Wire / UN Foundation.

It was evident in 1994 at the International Conference on Population and Development that while a majority of delegations agreed to a profound shift in population policies away from counting people to empowering women, most also understood that there had to be room to accommodate distinct national priorities and cultural differences. Since those momentous days in Cairo a decade ago, what is also emerging is a global patchwork of coalitions and alliances no two really the same that are proving to be the best and most appropriate way to get things done.

People in diverse cultures all over the world, and the international agencies and nongovernmental organizations helping them tackle reproductive health challenges, have been devising a fascinating array of partnerships to fit their own political, religious and cultural environments.

The message seems to be: If it works, go for it. There is a growing confidence in local solutions, with outsiders playing valuable but limited supportive roles. These partnerships seem to hold the promise of real sustainable progress. Some of the ad hoc coalitions are not new. Indeed, in countries that were already making significant changes in women's rights and women's health before Cairo, these forces were already in play a generation or more ago. Often, Cairo gave them the muscle and the action plan they needed to prod governments and overcome reticence about speaking out publicly on sensitive or embarrassing topics.

In Brazil, for example, a strong urbanized women's movement they have no hesitation in calling themselves feminists took advantage of political turmoil and the end of military rule in the 1980s to lobby successfully for changes in laws governing family life and for broad guarantees of equality in a new constitution. Now Brazilian feminists work with a range of other groups and institutions.

They have begun cooperating with recently created men's organizations trying to reduce domestic violence through changes in behavior and atti-

tudes toward women, an area in which Brazilians feel confident that they have taken a lead in Latin America. Brazilians are proud to say that they raised the issue of domestic violence as a violation of women's rights in 1993 in Vienna at the international human rights conference. Within the country, ending family violence is constitutionally a duty of the state, which recognizes women and men as equal partners in a marriage.

Feminists work with local authorities, too. In Rio one example is Cepia, a women's rights NGO that trains police officers and health workers in the handling of sexual abuse victims. It also focuses on teens, where birthrate are soaring, said Cepias founder, Jacqueline Pintagui.

For many teenagers who have nothing, she said in a conversation in Rio, it is something to be pregnant. Later in the town of Pirai, a young woman who had recently given birth to twins told me that she got pregnant just because she wanted to try motherhood.

The hierarchy of the Catholic Church has not been an ally of women's rights groups, Pitanguí said, adding that in Rio the Catholic leadership opposes not only abortion but also emergency contraception the morning after pill and condom distribution. But women are confident that if the church can impede some developments, it can no longer stop the movement for a more liberalized reproductive health system, Pitanguí said.

In Ghana, reproductive health and safe sex programs have not met organized resistance from major religious organizations, Christian or Muslim. Campaigns to abolish traditional customs harmful to girls have also not been blocked. In fact, in Ghana religious leaders have become an important part of the solution, not the problem, say health and population experts.

It is not against any religion to create happiness in this world and in the hereafter, said Hafiz Ahmad J. Saeed, who directs reproductive health programs for the Ahmadiya Muslim Mission in Accra. He said his work has been helped substantially by the shift of emphasis from birth control to family planning. "For a religious person, talking of

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New Research and Reports

Online Discussion Regarding Beijing Platform for Action

(Reprinted from: *United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS)*)
The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will undertake a Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) and of the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000) during its forty-ninth session from 28 February to 11 March 2005.

From 11 October 2004 to January 2005, WomenWatch, the website of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE), is hosting a series of online discussions on the critical areas of concern on the Platform for Action and other important issues to provide input into the review and appraisal. The discussions will be facilitated and moderated by UN entities that are members of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. The discussions can be accessed at: www.un.org/womenwatch/forums/review/.

A summary of the discussions will be available at the CSW in February 2005 and posted on WomenWatch.

For more information, please visit the International Law: Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action section of www.stopvaw.org.

New Tactics in Human Rights Project Notebooks Now Available

Twenty-nine new notebooks from the New Tactics in Human Rights Project, a project of the Center for Victims of Torture, are now available online. These notebooks are written and shared by experts who have used innovative tactics to respond to an urgent human rights situation and are available in PDF. Additional notebooks will soon be added in Spanish and in Turkish.

For more information, please visit www.newtactics.org

Amnesty International Releases Report on Mass Rape in DRC

Amnesty International has produced a report describing the systematic rape and torture of women, children and men in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) where over twenty groups have been fighting for control over the land and its resources. The report documents that survivors of such violence lack effective access to adequate medical care and calls on the Government of the DRC and the international community to prioritize the rehabilitation of the health care system in the country.

View the full report at web.amnesty.org/library.

Compiled from: "Democratic Republic of Congo: Mass rape leaves a public health crisis." News Release Issued by the International Secretariat of Amnesty International, AI Index: AFR 62/02/2004, 26 October 2004.

New Website Available on Gender Equality



A new website, Siyanda, has been launched, which focuses on the goal of mainstreaming gender equality. An online database providing gender and development materials, Siyanda also has an interactive section allowing gender practitioners to share resources, ideas, and experiences.

For more information, please visit the Research Gateway section of www.stopvaw.org.

(*"Expert's Corner" continued from page 1*)

der to protect human rights. Human rights monitoring is one way to help ensure that transitional justice processes move forward.

Using this tactic of monitoring and reporting, we feel that we have been able to make some significant long-term improvements in human rights. This notebook will discuss how Minnesota Advocates identifies and develops practical and sustainable strategies for adapting human rights monitoring methods to emerging human rights issues. By documenting the tactic in this notebook, we hope to spark some creative applications of common human rights monitoring methods in order to improve human rights in different contexts.

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("Coalitions at Work" continued from page 19)

birth control is not acceptable," he said. "You don't control birth, you plan it."

"There is no verse in the Holy Koran which is against planning a family," he said. "We don't have a problem at all talking about family planning issues. There are no inhibitions. There is no taboo."

The moderate Ahmadiya Muslims of the Accra region have been holding large rallies to take messages about reproductive health and AIDS prevention to people outside the capital. Ahmadiya leaders say they have attracted as many as 50,000 people to outdoor meetings, where the messages are direct: genital mutilation is not Islamic, AIDS victims deserve our compassion and "Don't shift the blame on God."

Mission leaders say that one of their biggest challenges, especially in remote areas of the north bordering Burkina Faso, is to persuade Muslims to abandon the philosophy that any setback – including AIDS – is the will of God. The mission is working with UNFPA to organize workshops on modern medicine in an Islamic context. It also cooperates in programs devised by the Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana, part of the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

Dr. Mubarak Osei Kwasi, an epidemiologist with the Ahmadiya mission, says that he is often called upon to clarify teachings and dispel rumors about modern medicine, including vaccines. As in nearby Nigeria, some grassroots Islamic leaders in Ghana had been preaching that polio vaccine was a Western plot to sterilize Africans. Mubarak says that people will believe the vaccine is safe "if the message comes from us."

At Young & Wise, an offshoot of the Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana that is devoted to taking messages of abstinence and safe sex to boys and girls as young as 10, Delah Banuelo, the project officer, said that his organization is invited to a variety of churches and mosques to talk about reproductive health. Religious leaders are a valuable part of the mix in changing attitudes and behavior in Ghana, he said.

So, perhaps surprisingly, is the army. After basic military training, young Ghanaians are encour-

aged to opt for a period of national service in social institutions. Young & Wise has such a volunteer, Peter Dakurah. The Center for Pregnant Teens is Kumasi is also helped by volunteer servicemen.

In Egypt, an African nation with a Middle Eastern culture, pioneers have been drawn traditionally from a more secular elite that in many ways poses a threat, not an opportunity for partnership, for Islamic conservatives on whose turf women's rights activists work among the poor. As in Brazil, strong women, acting as individuals or in informal groups, have led movements for an end to genital mutilation, for fewer restrictions on abortion and for more women-friendly health services in general.

In Egypt a unique "old girl" network has played a role. Among the women who have succeeded in bringing changes in law and practice are a core of graduates of the American College for Girls in Cairo (now Ramses College) where Thoraya Obaid, the executive director of UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, was also a student.

"It was not only the knowledge the college gave us," said Mona Zulficar, an American College graduate who is now one of Egypt's most prominent and successful international corporate attorneys. "It was also the building of character. It made us independent-minded and able to think for ourselves."

As a lawyer, Zulficar has been active and influential in challenging Islamic conservatives who would limit women's rights by citing shariah law. An expert on family and citizenship laws, she took on a male-dominated establishment on its own turf, using Islamic law itself to find justification for a woman's right to initiate divorce, for example. Like women in Brazil, Egyptian feminists have used the courts effectively and made inroads into government, particularly the ministry of health. They have found allies among officials and in Suzanne Mubarak, the wife of the President.

"Shariah and politics were once only a man's world," Zulficar said. "No more."

Laos, in a landlocked backwater of Southeast

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(*"Coalitions at Work"* continued from page 21)

Asia, is still a nominally communist country just beginning to break the habit of leaving everything to central planning. There are no local NGOs in Laos yet, so there outsiders such as the UNFPA or regional partners of the International Planned Parenthood Federation have been working with the Lao Women's Union, a government-appointed body. Slow but steady progress in women's reproductive health in Laos shows signs of invigorating the women's union and strengthening the position of the most innovative of its officers.

The absence of local NGOs is a limiting factor in the development of grassroots women. There is only so much government agencies, however decentralized in recent years, can do on limited budgets. Self-help is not yet encouraged.

This situation cannot last, least of all because Laos knows that it could face a growing AIDS crisis because of the high incidence of the disease in neighboring Vietnam and Thailand, both exporters (and now importers) of prostitution and because large construction projects and more road traffic in Laos bring in migrants looking for sex locally, putting young Lao women at risk.

Officials on the National Committee for the Control of AIDS, which works across relevant government departments, say that they are very concerned about the growing mobile population. The government-run national radio has introduced a weekly call-in show to talk about these issues, and is introducing HIV-AIDS awareness programs in schools. A storefront youth center has opened in the Laotian capital, Vientiane, to provide information, counseling and some contraceptive supplies.

The African experience has shown that nongovernmental organizations are often critical to the success of reaching truck drivers and other itinerant laborers. Independent groups are a multiplier factor when resources are scarce. If the fear of AIDS has made plain talk about sex possible for the first time, as officials say, it may also lower barriers to the formation of private groups with expertise to offer. Many Lao men and women are learning to work with such groups from outside the country – Planned Parenthood Australia and Population Services International, based in

Washington, D.C., are two.

John Deidrick is PSI's representative in Laos, and he is hopeful. He has plenty of condoms to sell at low cost or give to the government to distribute free. He still gets help from the United States Agency for International Development because the organization has not run afoul of the "global gag rule" that bars American assistance to organizations that are thought to be in any way involved with abortions.

Laos, he said in a conversation in Vientiane, has no red light districts, gargantuan massage parlors or gay bars, so the sex industry is not large in any organized sense as in Thailand. The problem of AIDS is still manageable. While there are no local NGOs in the field yet, there are enough international ones willing to help.

"We have a great opportunity here," Diedrick said. "This is one country where the NGOs and the government can make an intervention before it's too late."

In Ghana, Richard Turkson, executive director of the National Population Council, links the importance of decentralized government – something to which Laos has also committed itself – to the indispensability of local partnerships. Quoting the scholar Ali Masrui, he says that "Whereas the Western world is looking for a path to the moon and beyond, we in Africa are still looking for a path to the village."

Although many African NGOs "exist only in a briefcase" and need strengthening, Turkson said, they should be encouraged to build bridges to government programs, as religious leaders and some private businesses are beginning to do.

"The ICPD dwells on partnerships as a key to sustainability," he said. "Donor funding won't be there forever. Partnerships with NGOs are very important simply because NGOs are able to reach populations. They can be innovative. They don't shy away from controversial topics. They are not afraid of the soap box. We need them."

Cited from: Coalitions At Work, Barbara Crossette, Media Center, UN Foundation, 2004.

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("Violence Shuts Out Hope" continued from page 17)

unequal position of women that makes them vulnerable to abuse may start with early marriage, which weakens a girl's health and denies her education and a chance of employment early in life. According to UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, projections for the 2000-2005 period, Ghana has a fertility rate of 78.2 per thousand for women between the ages of 15 and 20. That is more than double the rate in Egypt and higher than Brazil. For comparison, the figure is about 17 per thousand in the Czech Republic "The threat of violence ensures that women will defer to and comply with men's decisions about sexual behavior and contraceptive use," Sai wrote in *Adam and Eve and the Serpent*, a book based on a series of lectures he gave at the University of Ghana in 1994. This may be reinforced, he said, by a legal requirement that a woman have spousal consent for family planning.

"And sadly, violence by only a few men may be sufficient to keep many women in fear," he said. "If one woman in a village is beaten by her husband for using contraception, many other women may become reluctant to raise the subject in their own homes."

Sai is also concerned that the *trokosi* system, under which a pre-pubescent girl is given to a local deity to atone for a sin committed by someone in her family, institutionalizes abuse of women because the girl is often forced to serve as a sexual slave to the priest in charge of the deity's shrine.

In 1998, *trokosi* was outlawed, but still persists in some areas. Ghana's National Population Council, which has made a survey of the places where it exists, is demanding that the government enforce the law, monitor shrines and seek a culturally effective way to replace the system -- with, for example, the offer of an animal or other gift -- and not a girl -- to a deity.

In every country where AIDS is a threat, there is concern that the rapid spread among women of the virus that causes it can be linked in numerous cases to the women's inability to protect herself because of the possibility of abuse.

A study in South Africa found in 2004 that women who were beaten by male partners are significantly more likely to become infected with the virus that

causes AIDS than women who do not report violence. The study, whose findings were published by the British medical journal *The Lancet*, concluded that women who face violence were 48 percent more likely to be infected. If the women were also financially dependent or dominated emotionally by a partner, the figure rose as high as 52 percent.

The assumption drawn from the study was that men who abused women also imposed risky sexual practices on their partners or forbade women from introducing protective measures, such as the regular use of condoms. The abuse of women and girls is a reality in both developing and industrialized countries. Sex trafficking, for example, often brings girls still in their teens from poor countries to richer ones, where young virgins fetch a premium price in the sex trade. In several countries on several continents I have listened as health officials described treating little girls as young as three who had been sexually violated, often within their extended families. Young boys are also victims of the international sex trade or of abuses closer to home.

In Ghana, Richard Turkson, the executive director of the National Population Council, said that in stopping the spread of AIDS by men through casual sex, which brings the infection home to monogamous wives, "The problem that we are facing now is behavior change." He said that the council has hired a consultant to look for new strategies. "Behavior change is incredibly slow," Turkson said. "We are wondering whether the message and the material that we have are appropriate."

Internationally, violence against women has become a debilitating part of refugee life and the fallout of vicious civil wars that kill many more civilians than combatants. Several United Nations agencies, including the UNFPA, Unicef, the World Health Organization and the office of the High Commissioner for Refugees have waged a difficult battle to make women's reproductive health, including the provision of emergency contraceptives (the "morning after" pill) for rape victims an integral part of relief work.

The United Nations peacekeeping department has also been forced by anti-trafficking advocates to face the ugly reality that its peacekeeping missions become magnets for prostitution and sometimes

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Calendar

► Human Rights Committee to Meet for 82nd Session

10/18/2004 - 11/5/2004

The Human Rights Committee will consider the State reports of five countries, including Poland and Albania.

► Trafficking in Persons: Towards a Common Legal Framework in the EU?

10/21/2004 - 10/22/2004

ERA Congress Centre, Trier, Germany

This seminar will address the progress made by Member States towards the effective combating of trafficking in persons, with special reference to the implementation of Council Framework Decision of 19 July 2002 on combating trafficking in human beings. The seminar is intended for police, prosecutors, judges, lawyers or NGOs representing victims, state officials.

For complete conference information, see the ERA (Academy of European Law) conference website at www.era.int.

Cited from: EWL Newsflash No. 9, September 2004

► International Conference "Stop Child Trafficking"

11/2/2004 - 11/4/2004

Osnabrueck, Germany

The conference rounds off the activities of the international terre des hommes Campaign against Child Trafficking. On the basis of experience gained till date, representatives from politics, au-

thorities, institutions, media and project work will discuss the present status of the problem, and will collectively draft restrictive measures to further curtail commercial exploitation of children. Workshops, lectures and discussions that are also open to the public at large will highlight the background and methods used in child trafficking. Legal and political issues in the fight against this crime, which knows no geographical boundary; are also on the agenda of the conference. The goal is an action-oriented dialog between national and international specialists. This will also serve as a forum for knowledge exchange and further development in the existing activities. The conference should close with a common final document that includes precise recommendations for an effective fight against child trafficking. Ahead of this conference, a cultural program to be organized in co-operation with the city of Osnabrück will aim to publicize the theme of child trafficking to a wider audience using film, theater, literature and music.

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Websites for further information: www.stopchildtrafficking.org or www.tdh.de (German).

► Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to Meet for 33rd Session

11/8/2004 - 11/26/2004

The Committee will examine five countries, including Azerbaijan.

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centers of trafficking. In Liberia, for example, young women from Morocco and eastern Europe have been found in brothels and clubs around troop bases. In East Timor, there were Thai prostitutes.

Secretary General Kofi Annan and the Security Council – prodded by advocates for women's rights inside and outside the organization – have ordered peacekeeping officials to stop these practices and to incorporate experts in human rights and women's issues among mission staffs. Reports from the field say progress has not been very good in most places. This sets a tragic example in devastated countries hoping to rebuild.

When the new International Criminal Court was

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established by a conference attended by a majority of U.N. member nations, it was able to enshrine sex abuse as a war crime, building on groundbreaking work done in ad hoc war tribunals set up in the 1990s for the Balkans and Rwanda, which convicted men for crimes against women. It may take a long time to completely erase the notion that "boys will be boys." But those who harbor such ideas can longer act on them with impunity without the possibility – even if still remote in too many cases – that they will some day pay the price with a criminal conviction.

Cited from: Priorities Across Borders, For many women, violence shuts out hope, Barbara Crossette, Media Center, UN Foundation, 2004.