

COMBATING VIOLENCE

“Today and every day, women and girls all over the world will face violence simply because they are female. This gender-based violence not only harms the victims and their families, it shreds the fabric that weaves us together as human beings.”

-- Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton, November 2009

The State Department is committed to ending the global pandemic of violence against women and girls. This violence cuts across ethnicity, race, class, religion, education level, and international borders. It has the potential to affect women and girls at every point in their lives, from sex-selective infanticide, to child marriage, trafficking, domestic violence, “honor” killings, the neglect and ostracism of widows, and much more. Around the world, women and girls are the most affected by HIV/AIDS, with rape and relationship violence contributing to the growing infection rate, especially among adolescents.

One in three women worldwide will experience gender-based violence in her lifetime, and violence against women causes more death and disability for women and girls ages 16 to 44, than do ill-health, traffic accidents, and malaria combined. Many countries have achieved forward-looking laws supporting women’s rights but have poor records on implementation and enforcement.

In August, Secretary Clinton traveled to the Democratic Republic of Congo to draw the world’s attention to the use of rape as a tactic of war. The following month, in the United Nations Security Council, she introduced U.S.-sponsored Resolution 1888, to prevent and respond to sexual violence in armed conflict, which passed by unanimous consent. It is critical that we build on these efforts to counter sexual violence.



Violence Against Women and Girls:

Investments to combat violence against women and girls include:

- **Prevention and Response:** Expanding local NGO services to effectively address the needs of women and girls in conflict areas, with priority focus on the DRC, through physical and psychological treatment, legal counsel, and protection measures, including access to safe houses.
- **Community Engagement:** Supporting civil society efforts to engage with men and boys to combat violence against women and girls. It is important to change underlying social attitudes that perpetuate violence through dialogues with religious leaders, politicians, military officials, and students.
- **Capacity Building:** Growing grassroots NGOs to further local judicial and law enforcement education and training, coordination of development efforts, and public advocacy aimed at preventing violence against women and girls.

