



# Violence Against Women Around the World

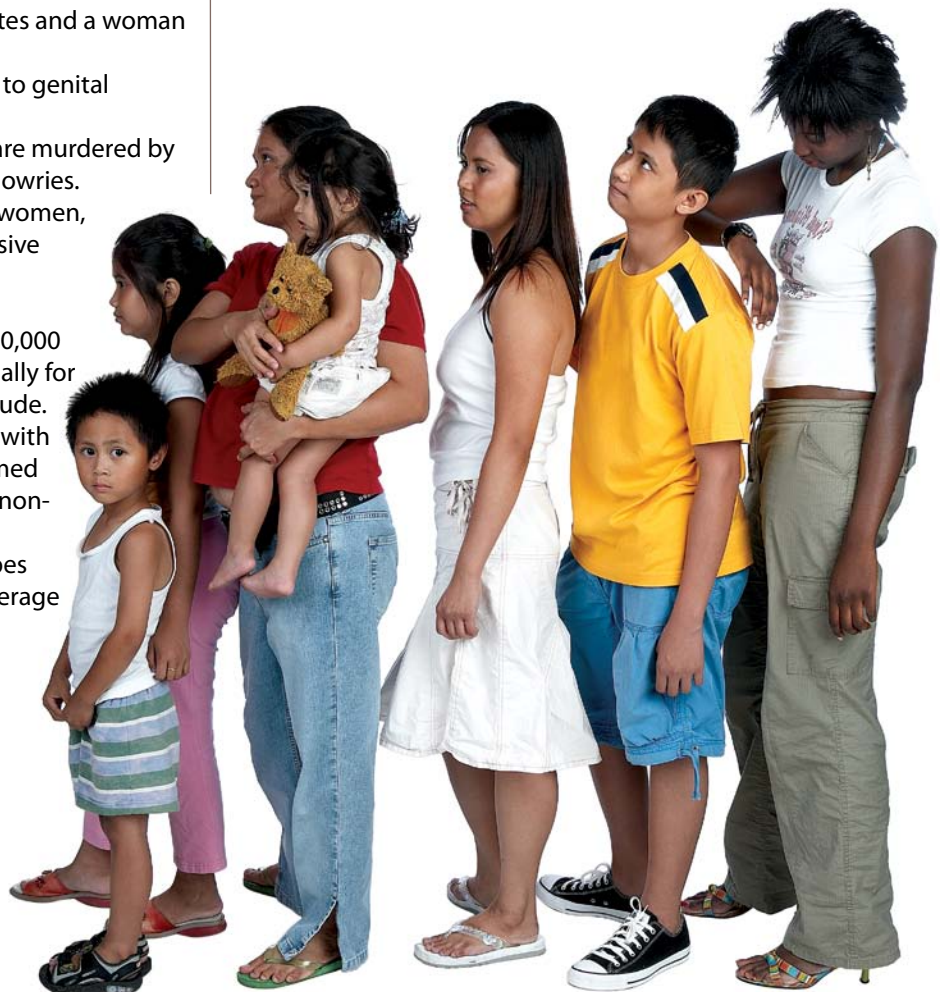
In a global environment which often holds women as second class citizens, or non-citizens, women are frequently the victims of the most shocking violence imaginable, including murder, trafficking, sexual violence and harassment, female genital mutilation/cutting, underage and forced marriages, honour killings, dowry deaths, acid/ burn violence, and female infanticide. This violence rarely results in punishment for the perpetrators. Violence against women is a global crisis with little evidence of a political will to hold anyone accountable for these crimes.

## For Example

- According to the UN, up to 70% of women experience physical or sexual violence from men in their lifetime—the majority by husbands, intimate partners, or someone they know.
  - A World Health Organization study shows rates of physical violence ranging from 13% in Japan to 61% in provincial Peru.
  - The UN estimates that worldwide, one in five women will become a victim of rape or attempted rape in her lifetime. In the USA, a woman is raped every 6 minutes and a woman is battered every 15 seconds.
  - In North Africa, 6000 women are subjected to genital mutilation/cutting every day.
  - In India, more than 7,000 women per year are murdered by their families and in-laws in disputes over dowries.
  - In 2010, 153 people in Bangladesh, mostly women, were victims of violent attacks where corrosive acid was thrown at them, often by intimate partners or rejected suitors.
  - Women and girls account for 80% of the 500,000 to 2 million people who are trafficked annually for prostitution, forced labour, slavery or servitude.
  - Rape has long been used as a tactic of war, with violence against women during or after armed conflicts reported in every international or non-international war-zone. In the Democratic Republic of Congo approximately 1,100 rapes are being reported each month, with an average of 36 women and girls raped every day.
- More than 60 million girls under the age of 18 are married, many to men twice their age or older.
  - The Mexican border town of Ciudad Juárez, is experiencing a pervasive pattern of sexualized murders of women. From 1993-2007, over 430 women have been murdered in Juárez. This number does not include those who are missing and the true count is most probably significantly higher.
  - It is estimated that more than 60 million women are demographically “missing” from the world as a result of sex-selective abortions and female infanticide in China, South Asia and North Africa.

## International Solutions

- There are a number of United Nations initiatives that address the global epidemic of violence against women. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the 1994 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, the UN Secretary-General's



UNiTE Campaign to End Violence Against Women, and the UN Virtual Knowledge Centre on Sheltering (developed by the Canadian Network of Women's Shelters and Transition Houses) indicate a growing international acknowledgment of the unacceptability of the conditions under which many women live.

- International movements and human rights groups such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International take an active role in monitoring the situation of women worldwide and attempt to hold governments accountable for the discrimination and abuse of women which occurs in their country.

### Sheltering Around the World

In developed countries where the sheltering movement began in the 1970s, most women can access a safe shelter, although in rural and isolated communities accessibility can still be challenging. In developing countries, the women's shelter movement began in the 1990s. Currently, some countries have only one shelter which serves a population of several million women. The need for safe and supportive residential services for women is now being recognized by governments in all regions of the world. Women activists are speaking out everywhere about the violence experienced by their sisters. The movement to end the abuse of women has become a global one that is voicing the need for government to take action to protect women and to do everything possible to end the violence that they endure.

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