



Family Violence Prevention Fund

Make Ending Violence Against Women and Girls a Foreign Policy Priority: Recommendations for the State Department and USAID

One out of every three women worldwide will be physically, sexually or otherwise abused during her lifetime, with rates reaching 70 percent in some countries. This type of violence and abuse ranges from rape and domestic violence to acid burnings, dowry deaths and so-called “honor killings.” Violence against women and girls is a human rights violation, a public health epidemic and a barrier to solving global challenges such as extreme poverty, HIV/AIDS and conflict. It also serves as both a proxy for and barrier to addressing gender inequality, which the World Health Organization, World Bank and United Nations have all identified as one of if not the best means of improving the effectiveness of foreign aid, reducing poverty and crises, and solving our greatest public health challenges.

In 2007, Vice President–elect Joe Biden, and his Senate colleague Richard Lugar, introduced the bipartisan *International Violence Against Women Act*. This legislation, which was co-sponsored by President-elect Obama and Secretary of State Designee Hillary Clinton includes the critical elements necessary to reduce violence against women globally and help meet the Millennium Development Goals.

Actions:

- Create an Office of Global Women’s Initiatives within the Office of the Secretary of State to coordinate all efforts to combat violence against women.
- Create a new and restructured Women in Development Office at USAID that has the power and resources to integrate violence prevention and gender-responsive programming across U.S. foreign assistance.
- With the leaders of these two new offices, create a national strategy to reduce violence against women and girls in 10-20 countries with high rates of violence against women, and provide enough funding and coordination for programming that supports local women’s non-governmental organizations in those countries. This strategy must include rigorous evaluation so promising practices may be used in other countries and regions, and transparency and reporting that identifies who receives the funding and how the money is used.
- Prioritize within our foreign assistance projects that include intra-U.S. government coordination and strong gender analyses, and focus on holistic approaches to ending violence against women and increasing women’s social status. This holistic approach would include multiple elements working in concert such as legal reform, women’s economic empowerment, girls’ education, health care training, public education to change social norms and humanitarian and security force training.

For additional information, please contact Kiersten Stewart at the Family Violence Prevention Fund, 202-682-1212.