Women in an Insecure World

Violence against Women
Facts, Figures and Analysis

Edited by Marie Vlachová and Lea Biason

Executive Summary

Geneva, September 2005

Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces

The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) works with governments and civil society to foster and strengthen the democratic and civilian control of security sector organisations such as police, intelligence agencies, border security services, paramilitary forces, and armed forces.

The Centre conducts research to identify the central challenges in democratic governance of the security sector, and to collect those practices best suited to meet these challenges. DCAF provides advisory programmes and practical work assistance to all interested parties, most commonly to parliaments, military authorities, and international organisations.

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Slaughtering Eve

The Hidden Gendercide

According to estimates by the United Nations, up to 200 million women and girls are demographically 'missing'.[1] The euphemism hides one of the most shocking crimes against humanity. Given the biological norm of 100 new-born girls to every 103 new-born boys, millions more women should be living amongst us. If they are not, if they are 'missing', then they have been killed, or have died through neglect and mistreatment.

Women live in a very insecure world indeed. Many fall victim to gender selective abortion and infanticide (boys being preferred to girls). Others do not receive the same amount of food and medical attention as their brothers, fathers and husbands. Others again fall prey to sexual offenders, to 'honour killings' and to acid attacks (most often for refusing a suitor). An estimated 5,000 women are burnt to death each year in 'kitchen accidents' because their dowry was seen as being too modest. Scores succumb to the special horrors and hardships that conflict, war and post-conflict situations reserve for girls and women. A shocking number of women are killed within their own walls through domestic violence. Rape and sexual exploitation remain, moreover, a reality for countless women; millions are trafficked; some sold like cattle.

The full magnitude of the issue sinks in only if we put the figures into perspective:

The number of the 'missing' women, killed for gender-related reasons, is of the same order of magnitude as the estimated 191 million human beings who have lost their lives directly or indirectly as a result of all the conflicts and wars of the 20th century – which was, with two world wars and numerous other murderous conflicts, the most violent period in human history so far.[2]

A sustained demographic 'deficit' of 100-200 million women implies that *each year* 1.5 to 3 million girls and women are killed through gender related violence. In comparison: each year some 2.8 million people die of AIDS, 1.27 million of malaria.[3] Or, put in the most horrible terms: violence against women causes every 2 to 4 years a mountain of corpses equal to the Jewish Holocaust.

Globally, women aged between fifteen and forty-four are more likely to be injured or die as a result of male violence than through cancer, traffic accidents, malaria and war combined.[4]

For each girl and woman killed by mankind, there are scores who are physically or psychologically wounded, if not maimed for life:

The World Health Organisation estimates that globally one woman in five will be the victim of rape or attempted rape in her lifetime.[5] Other data suggests that in Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States the corresponding figure is one in six women.[6] In South Africa a frightening 40 per cent of girls aged 17 or under are reported to have been the victim of rape or attempted rape.[7] Even in peaceful Geneva, in a study of 1,200 randomly selected ninth-grade students, 20 per cent of girls revealed that they had experienced at least one incident of physical sexual abuse.[8] Translated into absolute figures: globally, the number of victims is estimated at more than 700 million girls and women; in the United States at some 25 million; in the United Kingdom at over 4 million. It must be feared that these estimates are conservative.

According to The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 100 to 130

million women around the world have been genitally mutilated.[9] This would translate to a figure as large as 2 million girls or more being genitally mutilated each year.

The number of women forced or sold into prostitution is estimated at anywhere between 700,000 and 4 million per year. Between 120,000 and 500,000 of them are sold to pimps and brothels in Europe alone. Profits from the sex slavery market are estimated at US$7-12 billion per year.[10] In some countries (such as Moldova) sex trafficking has reached proportions that threaten to destabilise the population equilibrium – with potentially devastating long-term consequences.

Over 60 per cent of HIV positive youth between the ages of 15 and 24 around the world are women.[11] Women's inability to negotiate safe sex and to refuse unwanted sex is closely linked to the high number of new HIV/AIDS infections amongst women and girls. The HIV/AIDS problem in many parts of the world, particularly in Africa, clearly cannot be solved if violence against women is not addressed as a major cause.

Even the economic costs of violence against women are staggering. In the United States, the cost of domestic violence alone is estimated to be up to US$67 billion each year; in Canada, US$1.6 billion each year.[12] In Chile, in 1997, female victims of domestic violence lost US$1.56 billion in earnings - more than 2 per cent of the country's 1996 GNP.[13] In Switzerland, the annual cost of violence against women is over US$325 million.[14]

The list of horrors is endless. The picture is all too clear. We are confronted by the slaughter of Eve, a systematic gendercide of tragic proportions. While the facts are known and the figures easily available in United Nations and other dedicated publications, the issue has not sunk in and, consequently, is not given remotely the attention it deserves. It has become politically correct to analyse most issues also from a gender perspective. This is obviously a step in the right direction, yet it is clearly not enough (and may actually be counter-productive by transforming violence against women into an annex of other issues). Violence against women must be recognised as a key issue in its own right, as one of the significant causes of death on our planet – comparable in importance only to war, hunger and disease.

Women in an Insecure World has, therefore, tried to bring together in one book – in probably the most comprehensive effort so far – the facts and figures. Often these figures are not more than best estimates – for violence against women goes all too often unreported. The recognition that – in face of a problem of such magnitude – we cannot even count on good statistics is in itself a shocking and unacceptable fact.

Why DCAF

This book is the result of work done at the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), an international foundation with some 46 Member States promoting the reform and good governance of the security sector. DCAF works with governments, parliaments, security sector authorities, international organisations, academic institutions and non-governmental organisations to encourage and support democratic, civilian and parliamentary control of armed and security forces.

In our work we are confronted by the reality that security and safety are not enjoyed equally by men and women. The victims of the collapse of the state monopoly of legitimate force, of war and conflict, and of an unreformed security sector are to a large extent civilians, very

often women and children. DCAF therefore decided that it is critical for the Centre to look at its subject matter also from this perspective. We must recognise and understand these inequalities if we want to come up with proposals for change.

DCAF thus established, in early 2003, an international project 'Women and Children in an Insecure World'. *Women in an Insecure World* is its first major product. It is a comprehensive study on violence against women – in daily life, during war and conflict, and in post-conflict situations – that maps the pervasiveness of violence against women, analyses strategies to prevent and punish that violence, and highlights the key role that women play in initiatives to counter violence. We hope that this book will be a useful tool for policy makers, activists, scholars and security sector actors in understanding and responding to this crucial endeavour.

Women in an Insecure World has been written under the auspices of the Swiss Foreign Minister, Micheline Calmy-Rey. Financial support was granted by the Swiss Ministry of Defence and – for a TV documentary based on the book that is currently under preparation – by Amnesty International. DCAF plans as a next step to develop a package of teaching materials based on the book and the documentary. A companion volume to this book, *Children in an Insecure World,* is also in preparation. The Centre will, beyond that, obviously also focus much work on those aspects of violence against women that fall into its more traditional area of work – trying to provide security sector actors with the knowledge, the mandate, the capacity and the tools necessary to protect women against violence.

We need to act now

The deeply rooted phenomenon of violence against women is one of the great crimes of humanity. We hope that the facts, the figures and the analysis brought together in this book will not only shock the reader, but shake the international community. There cannot be any room for complacency in face of slaughter, maiming, rape and degradation of women. We cannot live with it. We cannot close our eyes to it. We cannot hope that it will simply go away. We must act. Now.

Theodor H. Winkler

Director
Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces

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[6] UNDP, *Human Development Report 1995: Gender and Human Development*, p. 7.
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The roots of violence against women

The international community recognises 'violence against women' as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women.

Gender-based violence is violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or affects women disproportionately. Examples include rape, domestic violence, trafficking, forced prostitution, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Violence against women includes threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty. Violence against women can occur in private (such as in the home) or in public settings (including places of work and educational institutions).

The roots of gender-based violence lie in the pervasive systems of inequality that perpetrate the domination of men and the subordination of women. As recognised in the United Nations (UN) General Assembly's 1993 *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*, violence against women 'is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women, and … is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men.'

Women in an Insecure World explores the roots of gender-based violence in social conditioning and social institutions, helping to understand the steps necessary to reverse these patterns.

Table 1: Gender violence throughout the life cycle

Prenatal phase

Battering during pregnancy (emotional and physical effects on the woman; effects on birth); coerced pregnancy; deprivation of food and liquids; sex-selective abortion

Infancy

Female infanticide; emotional and physical abuse; differential access to food and medical care for girl infants

Childhood

Child marriage; genital mutilation; sexual abuse by family members and strangers; differential access to food and medical care; child prostitution

Adolescence

Rape and marital rape; sexual assault; forced prostitution; trafficking in women; courtship violence; economically coerced sex; sexual abuse in the workplace

Reproductive age

Abuse of women by intimate partners; marital rape; dowry abuse and murders; partner homicide; psychological abuse; sexual abuse in the workplace; sexual harassment; rape; abuse of women with disabilities; legal discrimination

Old-age

Abuse and exploitation of widows

Source: United Nations Development Programme, Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, *A Life Free of Violence: It's our Right: United Nations Inter-Agency Campaign on Women's Human Rights in Latin America and the Caribbean* (1998)

Violence against women is a violation of human rights

In the international sphere, women have been instrumental in lobbying for the recognition of violence against women as a violation of human rights, and the development of a strong normative framework condemning violence against women. This underscores that the human rights obligations of states and non-state actors include their obligation to combat violence against women.

Women in an Insecure World traces the development of the legal framework concerning violence against women, and examines its implementation.

The adoption of the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* in 1979 was a milestone. The most wide-ranging of international legal documents on women, the Convention calls for the eradication of discrimination in political life, education, employment, access to financial credit, health, family, marriage and other aspects of economic and social life. It advocates for changing cultural norms and stereotypes that maintain women's inferiority. It includes measures to suppress prostitution and trafficking of women. The *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* has, as of September 2005, 180 state parties.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women does not explicitly address gender based violence. The subsequent UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women goes some way to filling this gap. It recognises inter alia that violence against women is an obstacle to the achievement of equality, development and peace, and violates the rights and fundamental freedoms of women. It declares gender-based violence unacceptable, regardless of whether it occurs in private or public, and whether committed by state or non-state actors.

The *Platform for Action* of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 further elaborated the nature and scope of gender-based violence, acknowledging that there can be no development without equality, and that as long as violence is tolerated, development becomes more elusive. The *Beijing Platform for Action* identifies twelve critical areas of concern, including:
- o the increasing poverty of women;
- o education and training of women;
- o women and healthcare;
- o violence against women;
- o the effects of conflict upon women;
- o women and the economy;
- o women in power and decision making;
- o mechanisms to promote the advancement of women;
- o promotion and protection of the human rights of women;
- o women and the media;
- o women and the environment; and
- o the girl-child.

The *Beijing Platform for Action* serves as a strategic guide for states in the implementation of their policies around women and equality.

In 2000, in the Millennium Declaration, states explicitly pledged to combat all forms of violence against women, and to implement the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* as part of their global vision for the new millennium. The Millennium Declaration recognised gender equality and women's empowerment as key aspects to poverty eradication and to the true achievement of sustainable development. Whilst the third goal of the Millennium Development Goals specifically targets equality and empowerment of women, it has been

progressively accepted that incorporation of gender perspectives into all of the Millennium Development Goals is essential, since gender equality is a prerequisite for their achievement.

The years 2000 and 2005 also presented an opportunity for assessment of implementation of the *Beijing Platform for Action*. 'Beijing +5' and 'Beijing +10' events brought together governments and women's groups to evaluate progress in achieving women's equality and eradicating violence against women, and to identify obstacles to implementation of women's rights.

Beijing +10 identified a number of key obstacles to fulfilment of women's rights. These include low participation of women at decision-making levels, the persistence of stereotypical attitudes and discriminatory practices, and occupational segregation. Violence against women, specifically domestic violence, remains prevalent in all countries, and women continue to suffer from so-called traditional violence in many parts of the world. In Asia, Latin America and Africa, women are disproportionately affected by poverty and lack of access to healthcare, exemplified by high maternal mortality rates. Trafficking and a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS amongst women are problems in countries in Africa, Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe. In many countries, discriminatory legislation still prevents women's full enjoyment of political, civil, economic and social rights. Many states acknowledged a gap between legislation and the implementation of gender policies.

Women in an Insecure World examines these problems in detail, and the different approaches taken by civil society actors and governments to address them.

The scope of violence against women in daily life

Gendercide against women

The epidemic nature of violence against women has led analysts to identify a 'gendercide' - a gender-selective mass killing - targeting women. 'Gendercidal institutions', or enduring features of human culture and society, lead to large-scale, disproportionate mortality of women.

Women in an Insecure World analyses some of the key gendercidal institutions, such as female infanticide and foeticide, gender based violence and gendered deficits of health care, education and nutrition.

Selective abortion and female infanticide

Amartya Sen, the 1998 Nobel Laureate for Economics, estimates 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.

Infanticide has been practised throughout human history in societies where boy children are valued, economically and socially, above girls. Advances in technology permit the modern horror of selectively aborting female foetuses. Medical testing for sex selection, although officially outlawed, has become a booming business in China, India and the Republic of Korea.

China's census in the year 2000 revealed that the ratio of new-born girls to boys was 100:119. The biological norm is 100:103.

The 2001 census in India recorded 927 girls for every 1,000 boys under six years old, a decline from 962 girls twenty years earlier. India's census commissioner estimated that several million foetuses have been aborted in India in the last two

decades because they were female. In 1996, India banned the use of ultrasound machines for sex determination.

Female-specific abortion and infanticide reflect the low status accorded to women in most parts of the world. *Women in an Insecure World* examines how state policy can play a key role in modifying attitudes toward women and in seeking to prevent these practices. Strategies include the enhancement of state family planning policy, better pension schemes for the elderly, 'caring for girls' campaigns, laws banning gynaecologists from telling pregnant women the sex of their child, and tighter prohibition over sex-selective abortions.

| 585,000 women die annually from complications arising from pregnancy and childbirth – a holocaust of the order of the Rwandan genocide of 1994, repeated every year. |

The 'female deficit'

In poor communities, little girls are often neglected and denied food, education and medical care. Data from developing countries indicates that the mortality rate among girls aged one to four is higher than that among boys in the same age group.

This is just the beginning of a lifetime pattern of discrimination against women in differential access to health care, education and leisure. This causes excess mortality among women and girls, and contributes to their lack of opportunities and powerlessness.

UNICEF refers to maternal mortality as 'in scale and severity the most neglected tragedy of our times.'

Addressing these problems requires strong international will. It also requires a significant allocation of resources to women's education, healthcare and reproductive services.

Cuba has demonstrated that even poor countries can effect massive transformations in women's health, including maternal mortality. With aggressive policies to extend health infrastructure beyond the cities, by 1996 Cuba's maternal mortality rate stood at 2.4 per 10,000 births, barely higher than in North America. Indonesia, Iran, Mexico and Uganda have also taken important steps to confront maternal mortality and related health crises.

Globalising grassroots approaches to maternal mortality would involve training some 850,000 health workers, according to UNICEF and World Health Organization (WHO) reports, as well as the necessary drugs and equipment. The total cost would

Table 2: Maternal mortality estimates	
Region	**Lifetime risk of maternal death, 1 in:**
Central and Eastern Europe, Commonwealth of Independent States	770
East Asia and Pacific	360
Latin America and Caribbean	160
Middle East and North Africa	100
South Asia	43
Sub-Saharan Africa	16
Industrialized countries	**4000**
Developing countries	**61**
Least developed countries	**17**
WORLD	**74**

Source: UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children*

be US$200 million – about the price of half a dozen jet fighters.[15]

The feminisation of poverty

Closely linked to the 'female deficit' is the increasing 'feminisation' of poverty. Women comprise more than two-thirds of the 2.5 billion people defined as 'poor': that is, living on less than US$2 a day.

Women's economic vulnerability contributes to their vulnerability to violence - manifest when a woman cannot

Some facts on women's status

In all manifestations of poverty, women tend to fare worse than men:

- 66 per cent of the world's illiterate people are women.

- Women provide 70 per cent of the unpaid time spent in caring for family members. This unpaid work provided by women is estimated at US$11 trillion per year – one-third of the global GDP.

- Women own one per cent of the land in the world.

- Women's participation in managerial and administrative posts is around 33 per cent in the developed world, l5 per cent in Africa and 13 per cent in Asia and the Pacific.

- There are only five women chief executives in the 'Fortune 500' corporations, the most valuable publicly owned companies in the United States.

- Worldwide, only about fourteen per cent of members of parliament are women. Seven per cent of the world's cabinet ministers are women.

- In the United Nations system, women hold only 9 per cent of the top management jobs and 21 per cent of senior management positions, but 48 per cent of the junior professional civil service slots.

Sources: UNIFEM Statistics on Women and Development; UN Statistics Division

leave a violent partner because she has no other home or means of support, in abuse of female migrant workers, and in the trafficking of women.

Through development assistance, the international community can play a central role in reversing the feminisation of poverty. Development programmes can be structured to enhance women's empowerment and reverse enduring patterns of poverty and subordination.

After the Rwandan genocide, the international community targeted development assistance to women, with support for women's associations, capacity building projects, micro-finance programmes and projects to improve women's political participation. Rwanda's new constitution set aside 24 of 80 parliamentary seats for women, and called for a minimum of 30 per cent women in decision-making posts. In 2003, women won 48.8 per cent of the seats in the National Assembly, and half of Rwanda's High Court judges were women.

'Gender sensitive budgeting' identifies the different impacts of fiscal policies on women and men. It can be used to reprioritise financial resources and economic decisions in line with commitments to gender equality. Gender budgets have been initiated in Australia, South Africa, the Philippines, Tanzania and Barbados to achieve a broader policy focus on gender.

Violence against women in the family

Domestic violence

For many women and girls, home is a place of violence. Domestic violence (or 'intimate partner violence') constitutes the most common form of violence against women worldwide, without regional exception. Other forms of violence in the family include sexual abuse of female

children and dowry-related violence. Physical and sexual violence is commonly accompanied by emotional abuse, humiliation, intimidation and control.

Between 16 and 41 per cent of women are physically assaulted by a male partner in an intimate relationship, according to studies conducted between 1986-1997 in Cambodia, India, Korea, Thailand, Egypt, Israel, Kenya, Canada, New Zealand, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States and Uganda.

40 to 70 per cent of female murder victims are killed by their husbands or boyfriends,

frequently in the context of an ongoing abusive relationship.[16]

The Russian Government estimates that 14,000 women were killed by their partners or relatives in 1999, yet the country still has no law specifically addressing domestic violence.[17]

Honour killings and dowry deaths

Domestic violence and murder may be related to so-called traditional practices. In India and Pakistan, thousands of women are victims of 'dowry deaths', killed because their bride-wealth is deemed insufficient by the groom's family. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) estimates that 5,000 women are killed every year in 'honour' crimes. In a study of female deaths in Egypt, 47 per cent of the women were killed by a relative after the woman had been raped.[18] It is estimated that at least three Pakistani women are murdered in 'honour killings' *every day.* Sometimes attacks with fire or acid leave the woman alive but disfigured or blinded.

Sexual abuse of girls

A review of 25 studies worldwide indicates that 11 to 32 percent of women report having experienced childhood sexual abuse.

Sexual abuse of girls, often by family members, is widespread but shrouded in taboo. In a treatment centre in Nigeria, 15 per cent of female patients requiring treatment for sexually transmitted diseases were under the age of five, with a further six per cent between the ages of six and 15 years. In South Africa, one in four men report having had sex with a woman against her consent by the time he was 18 years of age.

The law, the police and the courts

Unfortunately, violence committed against women within the family is still largely treated as a private matter, rather than an

Table 3: Sexual violence against women by country

Percentage of adult women reporting sexual victimisation (attempted or complete forced sex) by an intimate partner: Selected population-based surveys conducted in 1989-2000

Country	Sample size	Attempted or completed forced sex (%)
Brazil	941	10.1
Canada	12,300	8.0
	420	15.3
Finland	7,051	5.9
Japan	1,287	6.2
Mexico	384	42.0
Nicaragua	360	21.7
Peru	1,086	22.5
Sweden	251	7.5
Switzerland	1,500	11.6
Thailand	1,051	29.9
United States	8,000	7.7
Zimbabwe	966	25.0

Source: Adapted from WHO, *World Report on Violence and Health* (Geneva: WHO, 2002), 152.

urgent political and public problem and a violation of human rights.

Whilst many countries have reformed their laws to criminalise physical and sexual abuse by an intimate partner, there must be a stronger commitment to implement these laws. It is essential that the state ensure hotlines, crisis-centres and shelters for women experiencing domestic violence and their children. Specialist services must be in place to intervene and protect children who are at risk of violence within the family.

> *'The men say the wife did not obey their orders, or was having relations with someone else. The police often say it is a domestic matter and refuse to pursue the case. Some judges even justify it and do not consider it murder.'* Pakistani lawyer and activist, Nahida Mahbooba Elahi

A state's police forces and courts play a key role in protecting victims of family violence. Like the general public, police officers are often of the view that domestic violence is a private issue, and may belittle or patronise victims. Police, lawyers, judges and medical professionals require special training to respond appropriately and to support women. Some Latin American and Asian countries have established police stations entirely staffed by women. In some countries, rather than requiring the victim to press charges, police officers are compelled to prosecute domestic violence. Alternative legal measures include protection orders, that may remove a perpetrator from the home, and orders that perpetrators attend a treatment program.

In a number of countries, murder is not prosecuted or not punished when it is perceived as 'honour killing'. Proper laws are essential, as is proper implementation and monitoring. Until recently, under Jordanian law a man could be excused for

killing his wife or a female relative if she was judged to have committed adultery. Whilst this provision has been amended, other legislation exempts murderers who are 'provoked', allowing courts to grant lenient sentences. For an 'honour killing', the usual sentence is from three months to one year.

How do we prevent domestic violence, and other forms of violence within the family?

Women in an Insecure World brings together creative initiatives that have sought to address the roles and behaviour of various actors that perpetrate violence. There must be reinforced efforts to raise public consciousness and change behaviour, reaching from the local to the global, emphasising that everyone must be involved in combating this worldwide scourge.

Female Genital Mutilation

Genital mutilation causes lasting psychological trauma, extreme pain, chronic infections, bleeding, abscesses, tumours, urinary tract infections and infertility. Haemorrhage and infection can cause death. In some cases, a woman cannot give birth without being cut open.

Female genital mutilation is not exclusive to one religion or social class. It is

This girl undergoes excision without anesthesia, as do 70 percent of women in Burkina Faso. © IRIN

Table 4: Female genital mutilation among women aged 15-40, 1998-2003 (%)

Country	Women			Daughters
	total	urban	rural	total
Benin	17	13	20	6
Burkina Faso	72	82	70	40
Central African Republic	36	29	41	-
Chad	45	43	46	-
Côte d'Ivoire	45	39	48	24
Egypt	97	95	99	50
Eritrea	89	86	91	63
Ethiopia	80	80	80	48
Ghana	5	4	7	-
Guinea	99	98	99	54
Kenya	38	23	42	11
Mali	92	90	93	73
Mauritania	71	65	77	66
Niger	5	2	5	4
Nigeria	19	28	14	10
Sudan	90	92	88	58
Tanzania	18	10	20	7
Yemen	23	26	22	20

Source: UNICEF, *The State of World's Children 2005*

Violence against women in custody

All around the world, women in custody are at risk of rape, sexual assault and torture. Women are placed at particular risk of sexual and physical abuse when male staff are employed in inappropriate capacities in women's prisons, or when they are imprisoned with men. Invasive strip searching traumatises women (who are likely to already be survivors of sexual assault). Women who are abused or exploited by prison staff have little opportunity of escaping from their abuser. Those who file a complaint or take legal action are at risk of retaliation.

Custodial violence against women is a particularly egregious violation of women's rights. Where persons are deprived of their liberty by public authority, the state must protect the individual from violence.

Amanda is being detained at Bon Pastor women's prison in Bogotá, Colombia, for her involvement in the Colombia armed conflict. © ICRC, Nick Danziger, 2001

Prostitution

Women in prostitution suffer enormous physical and psychological health costs. The International Labour Organization has documented 'the rapes, beatings, imprisonments, sexual abuse, servitude, illness, and the permanent destruction of millions of women's souls.'[19] Even in developed countries: in Norway, interviews showed that 73 per cent of

inflicted upon girls and women in at least twenty-eight countries. The practice is linked to restriction of female sexuality and rites of passage into womanhood and marriage. In some communities, girls who have not undergone genital mutilation are considered unable to marry.

Programmes to eradicate female genital mutilation need to be closely linked to the relevant communities, rather than imposed. A successful programme in Senegal combines health education and human rights awareness, using song, dance and theatre to reach women who have little formal schooling.

Continued international advocacy is required to counter arguments that so-called traditional practices are not subject to universal human rights obligations.

prostituted women suffered from physical assaults, rapes, captivity and death threats.[20] Prostituted women have a high probability of acquiring sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. They commonly suffer unwanted pregnancies, infertility and miscarriage. Many experience serious post-traumatic stress disorder. Many slide into drug and alcohol abuse. Suicide rates are high.

Prostitution is often also the means of rape of children. The UNFPA estimates that each year 2 million girls aged between 5 and 15 are introduced into the commercial sex market.

Prostituted women are often maltreated by law enforcement authorities. They are prone to arbitrary arrest, physical assault and sexual harassment. In some cases, the police are part of the prostitution business, receiving bribe money or a sum for every transaction.

Sex worker, South Africa. © IRIN

Trafficking

The volume of trafficking worldwide grew by almost 50 per cent from 1995 to 2000. The UNFPA estimates that 700,000 to two million women are trafficked across international borders annually.

The recent explosion of trafficking in women and girls is linked to the prostitution industry, but a broader problem.

Women are trafficked for prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation, for forced labour, for slavery and for the removal of their organs.

The *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* attempts to address trafficking by a three-pronged approach of 'prevention' of the act of trafficking, 'protection' of the victims of trafficking and the 'prosecution' of the perpetrators of trafficking.

Serious attention and resources and genuine political will are required to implement anti-trafficking measures. Mere ratification of anti-trafficking conventions by major source countries of trafficking in order to appease donors, without effective implementation, is a fruitless exercise. Source countries should be fully integrated in preventive efforts, both at governmental level and through civil society. In countries of destination, demand for trafficking needs serious attention.

Because trafficking disproportionately affects women, gender-mainstreaming policies should form the basis of anti-trafficking strategies. Long-term policies to combat trafficking need to address poverty and pervasive gender discrimination as root causes of trafficking.

Women and HIV/AIDS

The AIDS epidemic is affecting women and girls in an increasing harsh way. In Sub-Saharan Africa, among people aged 15-24, women are three times as likely to be HIV/AIDS infected as men.

These discrepancies have been attributed to several factors, including that HIV/AIDS is more easily transmitted from men to women, and that young women tend to have sex with older partners. There is also a strong correlation between sexual and other forms of abuse against women and HIV/AIDS infection. A recent study in South Africa found that women who are beaten or dominated by their partners are nearly 50 per cent more likely to become infected with HIV than women who live in non-violent households. In addition, cultural practices like early and forced marriages tend to deprive women of means to protect themselves from contracting HIV/AIDS.

HIV/AIDS prevention activities need to occur alongside efforts to address and reduce violence against women and girls. Such programmes must address the interconnection between gender and socio-economic inequality and vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

[15] *Women and Health,* 2000:
http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/session/presskit/fs3.htm
[16] WHO, *World Report on Violence and Health 2002.*
[17] Fifth Periodic Report of the Russian Federation, UN Doc. CEDAW/C/USR/5, para. 6.
[18] WHO, *World Report on Violence and Health 2002.*
[19] O. Wilson, 'Globalized Female Slavery', *Said It: Feminist News, Culture, Politics* (April 2000): http://www.saidit.org
[20] Farley *et al*., 'Prostitution in Five Countries'.

Anti AIDS campaign in Bouake, the rebel-held main city in the centre of Cote d'Ivoire, 2004.
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Violence against women in armed conflict and in post-conflict situations

The impact of armed conflict on women

During armed conflicts, women are susceptible to marginalisation, poverty and suffering, with existing inequalities and patterns of discrimination tending to be exacerbated. Whilst the impact of armed conflict on women differs considerably between contexts and between individual women, it is possible to identify common characteristics: widespread sexual violence, the extreme burden which war places on women to ensure their own survival and the care of children and the elderly, and the challenges that war brings to women who decide to take up arms.

Armed conflict may be accompanied by increased trafficking of women for use as combatants, for forced prostitution and for slavery. Girls are vulnerable to recruitment as child soldiers and to being abducted by armed groups to act as sexual and domestic slaves. Girl soldiers and other female combatants tend to be excluded from demobilisation programmes, and to face greater stigma within their communities after hostilities.

Sexual violence during armed conflict

Recent conflicts have highlighted the systematic and specific targeting of women for sexual violence. Rape, sexual assault, forced prostitution, sexual slavery, forced pregnancy and other forms of sexual violence are used as a method of warfare.

Sexual violence may be part of a calculated policy to attack the heart of a society, to demoralise and dishonour the opponent. The manner of the sexual violence is often such as to maximise the humiliation of the victim and their family and community, and to ensure a level of powerlessness and fear that will remain entrenched. Such elements may include:

Gang rape – often as a spectacle, with non-voluntary (family, other victims, local population) and voluntary (military and militia) spectators;

> It is estimated that 90 per cent of rapes in war are gang rape.

Sexual torture – including rituals, mutilation and filming for pornography;

Psychological torture – such as being forced to sing songs or say prayers whilst being raped;

An expressed motive for the rape. When sexual violence is used to forcibly expel populations, communities have been told, for example, that if they did not leave the soldiers would return the next day to rape again.

Consequences of sexual violence in armed conflict

Sexual violence in armed conflict has grave social, cultural, domestic, physical and psychological repercussions, which are only beginning to be understood.

Two of the most serious long-term risks of rape are of pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease. Women who are impregnated by rape face the psychological trauma of carrying the child of their rapist, as well as the physical risks of being pregnant during an armed conflict, when safety is precarious and resources are scarce. In some conflicts, there has been a notable increase in HIV/AIDS infection along the corridors of armed conflict. Of women who survived rape during the Rwandan genocide, an estimated 70 per

> According to Physicians for Human Rights, 50 per cent of all women in Sierra Leone were subjected to sexual violence, including rape, torture and sexual slavery.

cent are infected with HIV/AIDS.

A woman who has suffered sexual violence is often ostracised by her family or the wider community, due to the perception that the woman has brought 'dishonour' upon them. Children born of sexual violence may need particular protection and assistance, as share the stigma of the rape. Those who work with survivors of sexual violence testify that breaking down the taboos surrounding rape and sexual assault takes a long time.

Survivors of sexual violence may experience severe, ongoing physical injuries. The nature of physical injury after sexual torture (such as cutting off breasts) is an ever present, horrific reminder of the rape. Some of the most frequent psychological symptoms are anxiety, sleep disorders, nightmares,

When one was finished the next would start. Democratic Republic of the Congo. © IRIN

apathy, loss of self-confidence, depression and, in more severe cases, psychosis. Self-loathing and suicide are not uncommon responses.

For the survivor of sexual violence in a post-conflict situation, there a pervading misconception is that their situation is 'post-traumatic'. In fact, many of the traumatic circumstances that are experienced at the time of rape continue for months and often years after the assault. Post-conflict, chronic malfunction of state institutions and unremitting hardship for and displacement of the population often continues. Women remain the sole providers, family members remain missing, and medical facilities are little improved. Surrounded by such an array of shattering experiences, it is difficult to isolate the particular effects that 'belong' to the rape experience. The consequences of rape are inextricably linked to the consequences of a number of war and post-war experiences.

Women in an Insecure World highlights initiatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross and other agencies working with survivors of sexual violence in armed conflict.

Fighting impunity

Over the last decade, important progress has been made in ending impunity for violence against women during armed conflict. The International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda convicted persons of rape and other forms of sexual violence as war crimes, crimes against humanity and acts of genocide.

This jurisprudence was codified and developed in the *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court*. The Rome Statute acknowledges the seriousness of sexual violence, as capable of being an international crime for which a perpetrator and their military commanders or other

superiors may be held individually accountable. The Rome Statute recognises rape and other forms of sexual violence by combatants in the conduct of armed conflict as war crimes. When rape and sexual violence are committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population (whether during armed conflict or not), they are considered crimes against humanity, and in some cases may constitute an element of genocide. Many acts of sexual violence - including rape, abduction and sexual slavery, forced marriage, forced pregnancy, and sexual mutilation – also constitute torture in international law.

> During the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, between 20,000 and 50,000 women were raped.

However, prosecution of perpetrators of sexual violence in armed conflict is challenging, not least for their victims. *Women in an Insecure World* examines the experience of women who acted as witnesses in prosecutions by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

Refugee and internally displaced women

Whether in camp or urban settings, refugee and displaced women are particularly at risk of gender-based violence, abduction, exploitation, poverty and illness. The breakdown in social values that occurs as a result of displacement may increase violence within the family. Women are also vulnerable to violence from outside the family when traditional community protection is disrupted.

Women tend to face discrimination in refugee determination systems. Gender-based persecution is not in itself grounds for the grant of protection under the *Refugee Convention*. Refugee status determinations tend to emphasise public, political activity, traditionally associated with men.

States bear the legal responsibility for protecting refugee and displaced women. In this, those states which disproportionately host refugees rely upon the assistance of other states. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and NGOs also rely heavily upon donor and host states to support their efforts to protect and assist refugee and displaced women.

UNHCR has introduced a *Policy on Refugee Women* and *Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women*, and continues to improve gender (and age) mainstreaming in its assistance and protection activities. Of great importance is involving refugee women in all decisions that affect their lives: participation promotes protection. Refugee and displaced women have a strong voice - the international community must learn to listen.

A displaced Roma family from Kosovo living, like many others, under difficult conditions where food is scarce and rationed.
Photo by ICRC, Boris Heger, 1999

Sexual exploitation of women by peacekeepers and humanitarian workers

During armed conflict and displacement, women and girls may face sexual violence and exploitation at the hands of, or with the complicity of, their supposed protectors – peacekeepers and aid workers. Cases of sexual assault by peacekeepers have shocked the international community. More insidiously, humanitarian workers fuel markets for trafficked women in brothels and as domestic labour. Women may enter into sexual relationships in exchange for food and shelter.

The UN has attempted to respond to exploitation of women by peacekeepers through gender training, gender mainstreaming and codes of conduct that apply to all categories of UN personnel (civilian, civilian police, military observers and military members of national contingents). The *Code of Personal Conduct for Blue Helmets* includes:

> 'Do not indulge in immoral acts of sexual, physical or psychological abuse or exploitation of the local population or United Nations staff, especially women and children.'

However, allegations of sexual abuse of under-aged girls by peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of Congo in January 2005 exposed persistent deficiencies in training and in the punishment of such crimes. UN staff benefit from immunities and privileges from legal processes, and in the case of a crime committed by a military peacekeeper, exclusive jurisdiction is granted to the contributing state. The onus is on states to prosecute peacekeeping troops who abuse women. Further, the training of military and civilian peacekeepers is primarily the prerogative of those states that provide them. Gender training must be mainstreamed in every stage of the training of military and civilian peacekeeping personnel.

Strategies to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation in emergency situations must include not only UN staff, but staff of NGOs. Employees from all levels, working in all sectors of humanitarian aid, from NGO drivers, to child-care workers, to distribution staff, have been implicated in sexual exploitation of women.

Family violence in post-conflict situations

In recent years there has been a growing awareness and concern about the increase of family violence in post-conflict communities. This may be related to widespread trauma, disruption of community and family networks, and the disarray of pre-war security institutions. In countries where women traditionally have been confined to home-making roles, sexual violence can be seen as the ultimate expression of an attempt to return gender relations to the pre-war situation.

Post-conflict planning and assistance should include a co-ordinated and comprehensive approach to family violence. This requires attention to local penal law; appropriate police training, staffing and resources; and proper medical facilities to provide examinations and treatment.

The role of the state and the security sector

Women in an Insecure World highlights the manner in which state systems and institutions may perpetuate women's inequality and legitimise violence against women.

As examples: some states fail to criminalise and/or to punish marital rape and so-called honour killings. Laws that prevent a woman from owning property or travelling without a male guardian make women vulnerable to control by abusive spouses. Failure of police to protect a woman suffering violence in the home, and failure of the state to provide safe alternative housing for women and their children, leave women trapped in dangerous situations. Economic systems that perpetuate the increasing feminisation of poverty contribute to the exploitation of women and girls through prostitution, slavery and trafficking. Women are often victims of violence at the hands of the state itself, when in detention, during armed conflict and during periods of social instability. At the same time, the state may be the most important enabler for eradicating gender-based violence.

Security Council Resolution 1325 (discussed below) recognised women's

In **Iraq**, the magnitude of sexual violence has increased sharply during the war and occupation. However, according to Human Rights Watch, if a victim of sexual violence reports the crime, there are serious barriers to obtaining justice. These include a lack of female police officers, a reluctance of police to investigate, and prevailing views that the victim may be blamed for sexual violence. Without a referral from the police, a victim cannot receive the forensic examinations that provide legal proof of sexual violence.

role in making the world more secure. This is part of a broader re-conceptualisation of 'security' and security providers. Current threats have prompted a recognition that 'security' is not only the protection of states, but an indivisible need and value that all people have the right to enjoy. The task of the security sector is thus to create conditions that enable all people to satisfy their need for security and safety.

This concept of security goes beyond state-centred military security and focuses on the ability or inability of state institutions to ensure the protection of all citizens. It enables the identification of vulnerable groups that bear the brunt of poverty, armed conflict, malfunctioning of the security sector and inefficient legal protection. It recognises the contribution of civil society to security.

Within this framework, violence against women can be seen as a malfunctioning of the security sector: the failure to protect women, the failure to empower women, and the commission of violence against women.

The security sector in post-conflict situations

Violence against women is particularly prevalent in post-conflict situations when security sector institutions fail to operate properly. Dissolution of, or disarray in, security institutions such as the police leaves them unable to protect the civilian population. There are commonly gaps in penal law, inefficient procedures for filing and pursuing complaints, and a lack of medical facilities to provide medical examinations and treatment.

Post-conflict governments often have little interest in investigating and punishing perpetrators of violence against women. They may grant amnesties to groups that have perpetrated violence, in an attempt to secure peace. The international

community tends to be reluctant to exert pressure on national governments to investigate and punish violence against women, either because such matters are seen as linked to peace processes, or not acknowledged as of international concern.

Reform of the security sector in post conflict situations is essential to establish good governance, and to promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Security sector reform processes must include development of mechanisms to prevent and respond to violence against women, to empower women, and to include women in security sector institutions. This is examined more closely in *Women in an Insecure World.*

Women responding to violence, women building peace

Women's movements have been the driving force behind global efforts to address gender-based violence. Women have challenged states to address abuses against women that occur in the private sphere, such as domestic violence and female genital mutilation. Grassroots organisations contributed to the sensitisation of the international community to violence against civilians during armed conflicts and in their aftermath.

The international community recognises the importance of the participation of women's organisations in international fora, bringing critical views and standpoints to the table, and being able to shed light on numerous problems that otherwise might be unseen.

Female de-miners, mostly widows or amputees, hired by an NGO for mine action located in Battambang, Cambodia.
Photo by ICRC, Philippe Dutoit, 1996

UN Security Council Resolution 1325

During and after armed conflict, women demonstrate the capacity to overcome the trauma of violent acts, to survive and help the survival of others, and to contribute actively to defending and building peace.

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on *Women, Peace and Security*, adopted in 2000, recognised the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building. The Security Council stressed the importance of women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase women's role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution.

Although women have been included in recent peace processes in Iraq, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Sierra Leone, all too often, women are still excluded from formal efforts to negotiate and implement peace agreements. Barriers include a lack of institutional infrastructure to consult women.

Women in Black demonstrators protest the Balkan wars in Novi Sad City Square, Serbia and Montenegro.
© Vesna Pavlovic, 1994

Women's involvement in UN peace operations

Security Council Resolution 1325 also urged the UN to expand the role and contribution of women in all its field operations, in particular, emphasising peace operations. Within a gender mainstreaming framework, the UN has achieved significant progress over the last five years in increasing women's involvement as peacekeepers, and developing programming that better identifies and addresses the needs of women and girls.

As of July 2004, women constituted 27.5 per cent of the professional personnel in peacekeeping operations. However, only some 1 per cent of the total military personnel deployed in international operations are women. Several states have launched initiatives to improve representation of uniformed women (both in armed and police forces) in international peace operations.

Much more could be done. The mandates of all peace operations should include protection of women, consultation with women and involvement of women as decision makers. All missions should have gender advisers appointed at a senior level, with proper resources.

> **Women in Black** is a network of women worldwide committed to peace and actively opposed to war and other forms of violence. Women in Black vigils were started in Israel in 1988 by women demanding peace between Israel and the Palestinians. Italian women supporters brought the idea back to Italy, and their contacts with Yugoslav women led to Women in Black vigils during the Yugoslav wars. Women in Black networks encourage and support other women around the world. They try to educate, inform and influence public opinion so as to make war an unthinkable option.

Action to stop violence against women: what next?

Profound and positive changes in the status and roles of women have occurred in the last 50 years. Women have been major actors in the rise of global civil society, promoting a gender sensitive approach to the resolution of all vital economic, political and social processes. There is a relatively well-developed international legal and normative framework, that has contributed to practical steps in bringing to justice the perpetrators of violence against women. Within international bodies, violence against women has been recognised as one of the main obstacles to development and peace. There are worldwide campaigns to end violence against women. 25th November has been declared the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Most major human rights NGOs monitor and advocate on gender issues. Public awareness of the issues of gender-based violence has increased significantly during the last two decades.

Given the near-universal condemnation of violence against women, why does it persist? The disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS on women, the growing feminisation of poverty and the rise of trafficking in women demonstrate that, whilst there has been progress in recognition of violence against women, new forms of violence and inequality continue to emerge. Further, increasing international disorder is accompanied by malfunctioning of state institutions that are responsible for the protection of citizens, unwillingness to implement international law, and marginalisation of human rights. In this environment, it becomes more difficult to prevent and punish violence against women.

Whilst conventions and international treaties provide crucial normative legitimacy for those working against gender-based violence at international, national and local levels, their implementation requires significant resources and commitment.

At a national level, programmes to stop violence and advance women's equality require allocation of proper budgets. The division between public and private space persists, with violence against women in the home treated in practice (and in some states, in law) as not a matter for the state, or as less a crime than other crimes. A global survey of national progress on gender equality and women's empowerment by the UNFPA found that, of the 172 countries surveyed, only two thirds had put laws in place to counter violence against women, and only 16 per cent of countries had taken legal measures to enforce the laws.[21]

At an international level, the monitoring of states' and other actors' compliance with their human rights obligations requires strong political will. The public/private dichotomy persists, with states insulating

themselves from criticism by claiming that violence against women is linked to so-called cultural, traditional or religious values.

The eradication of gender-based violence requires not just institutional change at international and national levels, but a change of mindset and attitudes among individuals and state actors.

The following part of this Executive Summary contains a synthesis of *Women in an Insecure World*'s key recommendations to end violence against women.

DCAF presents *Women in an Insecure World* as a substantial resource for those working on violence against women, and as a tool to increase awareness amongst those not yet engaged with the problem as to its terrible scope. DCAF hopes to broaden the number of governments, institutions and experts contributing to the effort to end violence against women. We invite all readers of *Women in an Insecure World* to become a part of this process.

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[21] UNFPA, 2004, *Investing in People: National Progress in Implementing the ICPD Programme of Action*, p. 27.

Key recommendations

Women in an Insecure World is an extensive resource of good practices to prevent and respond to violence against women, at local and international levels. It draws on the success of women's groups, and the progress made through the framework of international human rights law.

The three key strategies in eradicating violence against women are prevention, protection and empowerment. Each approach must involve women and men, civil society and government, and has local, national and international dimensions.

1. Prevention

1.1. Prevention through awareness-raising and training

a) Changing attitudes that perpetrate violence against women

Deeply entrenched social beliefs regarding the subordinate roles of women constitute a strong barrier to preventing violence against women. It is necessary to take positive action to change attitudes that perpetrate violence against women through systematic and comprehensive education and awareness programmes, including educating women and girls about their right to live free of violence.

b) Effective training for all actors in society

Specific education and training should be given to all public actors regarding the nature of violence against women, its criminality, and how to prevent and respond to violence against women. In particular, training should target the military, law enforcement personnel, the judiciary and other security sector actors, who are often the 'front line' protecting women.

Training materials should be developed at community, national, regional and international levels, as appropriate. For example, trafficking - being a form of violence with distinctly international dimensions - requires internationally coordinated anti-trafficking action.

1.2. Prevention through research

a) Effective collection of gender-disaggregated data

Reliable and consistent data on violence against women is imperative in order to formulate responses and strategies. However, deficiencies exist in the systematic collection of gender-disaggregated data by state and other agencies. Medical, law enforcement, social services and humanitarian workers should have specific procedures to identify and document violence against women.

b) Furthering research on causes, consequences and solutions

Research on the root causes and consequences of violence against women helps us to develop effective solutions. Research should examine methods to rehabilitate perpetrators, prevention of violence in armed conflict, and the role of women in conflict resolution. Governments should lead and support this type of research at local, national and international levels, and use it to formulate government policies.

c) Effective monitoring and assessment

To facilitate effective monitoring of violence against women, there must be international agreement on indicators. Effective follow-up mechanisms should include reporting on progress toward the attainment of women's rights at the highest levels.

2. Protection

2.1. Protection through law

a) Universal ratification of international human rights and humanitarian law instruments

International human rights and humanitarian law provides important protection for women from violence by

establishing common standards and norms. Accession to relevant human rights and humanitarian law instruments marks the commitment of states to improve the status of women. Treaty reporting mechanisms (such as to the *Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination*

Table 5: Women's political participation in March 2004: seats in national parliaments held by women (percentage of total)

Country	per cent of women in parliament
Rwanda	48.8
Sweden	45.3
Denmark	38.0
Finland	37.5
Netherlands	36.7
Norway	36.4
Cuba	36.0
Belgium	35.3
Costa Rica	35.1
Austria	30.6
Germany	28.3
Spain	28.3
Switzerland	25.0
Uganda	24.7
Canada	20.6
United Kingdom	17.9
United States	14.3
France	12.2
New Zealand	12.2
Italy	11.5

Source: UNDP, *Human Development Report 2004*

against Women) provide useful monitoring of states' actions in perpetrating or addressing violence against women. It is of utmost importance that international human rights and humanitarian law instruments are ratified by all states, and that they are implemented.

b) Reform of national law and women's access to justice

National legislation, including the constitution, must assure women's rights. It is crucial to criminalise violence against women in all its forms, including domestic violence and so-called traditional practices that are harmful to women. Women and girl victims should be provided with access to legal remedies, including compensation.

c) End impunity by ensuring adequate punishment of violence against women

Laws criminalising gender-based violence must be enforced, including when the violence is perpetrated in the home. In particular, members of the police, the military and public officials who commit acts of violence against women must not escape punishment.

The international community must continue to play a role in ensuring the prosecution of those who commit violence against women in armed conflict, or in other situations where national judicial mechanisms are not properly functioning.

2.2   Protection through institutions

a) Strengthening of state and civil society institutional mechanisms for protection

Responding to gender-based violence requires a multidisciplinary approach, engaging institutions from the political, justice, health, labour, media, education, social and security sectors, including civil society, at all levels. Dynamic strategies on gender issues, including mechanisms to prevent gender-based violence, must be incorporated in all sectors. This requires not just training, but in many cases, change of institutional cultures.

It is particularly important that the security sector and judicial institutions are sensitive to the nature of and needs of victims of gender-based violence. Women must be involved in security sector institutions and programmes, and their reform. Women should participate on an equal basis to men as judges, prosecutors and investigators in national and international judicial bodies, and in mechanisms for transitional justice.

Co-operation between state institutions and NGOs and other civil society anti-violence networks should be strengthened, on local, national, regional and international levels.

b) Allocation of proper budget
For institutions to transform themselves to incorporate gender perspectives and to establish proper mechanisms to respond to violence against women, a long-term allocation of sufficient funds is required. International development assistance can play a crucial role in promoting women's rights and safety in this regard.

c) Establishment of shelters and support mechanisms
Women and girls suffering from gender-based violence need to have safe places to go. Governments must ensure shelters and assistance hotlines, and medical, psychological, social and legal services for women suffering from violence.

d) The importance of international institutions in protecting women during and after armed conflict
The extreme vulnerability of women to violence during armed conflict and in its aftermath requires that the international community – states and institutions - play a strong role to ensure women's protection, and that assistance programmes and other interventions address the specific needs of women. Women should be centrally engaged in peace negotiations and the reconstruction process. The participation of women in peace support operations, in all phases and at all decision-making levels, should be increased.

3. Empowerment

3.1. Empowerment through education and labour

Increased access to education and labour systems are key for the empowerment of women and girls, which reduces their vulnerability to gender-based violence. It is crucial to identify and dismantle barriers to the education of girls and women, and to their access to labour systems. Further, education can play a key role in transforming a society's discriminatory attitudes and gender roles.

3.2 Empowerment through participation in decision-making

To eradicate gender-based violence, women must be empowered in all aspects of their lives. Essential is women's participation in decision-making, at family, community, national and international levels.

Increased women's political participation can be facilitated through quota systems, by assisting and training potential female candidates, and by active measures to remove barriers (including to ministries of defence and foreign affairs). Women should be engaged in decision-making in sectors involved with peace and security at the national, regional and international levels.

Women should be involved in all aspects of preventive diplomacy, peace negotiations, peacekeeping operations, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. On one hand, for peace agreements to have a lasting and sustainable effect, all sectors of society, including women's associations, need to be involved. On the other, national and international peace efforts can benefits from women's grassroots experience in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and reconstruction.

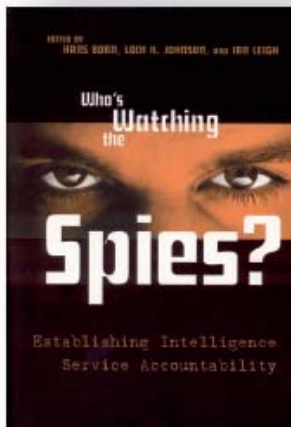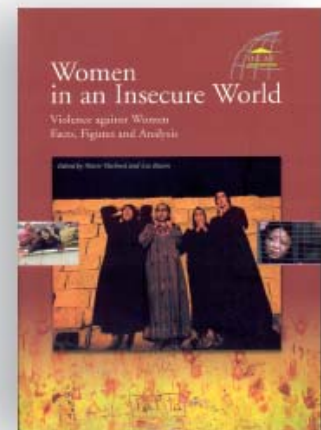# Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF)

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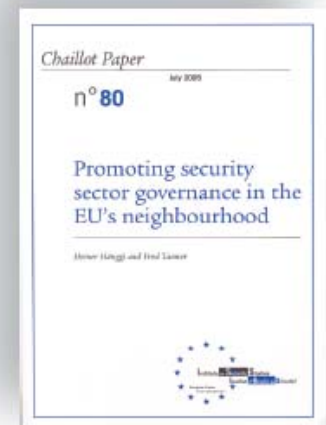
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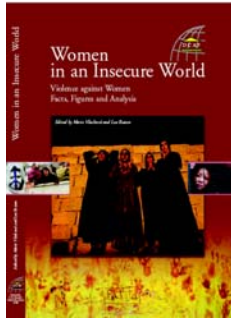
Marie Vlachovà and Lea Biason (eds)

Women in an Insecure World
Violence against Women
Facts, Figures and Analysis

Women constitute the most numerous group of the world's population exposed to systematic and persistent violence. The victims are claimed in conflict, but also next door. The causes are complex, but eventually point to the simple fact that for all too many, a woman's life and dignity are worth less than a man's. This situation is simply intolerable.

Developing the concept of democratic principles and standards of national security sectors, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) had to face the fact that security and safety is not enjoyed equally by men and women. Further, violence against women impedes the creation of a well-functioning security sector – that is, institutions capable of providing an adequate level of security for all citizens. Violence against women occurs in varying contexts – at the domestic and community levels, in situations of armed conflict and under repressive governments. In many cases it is a conscious policy, and often deliberate acts by individuals that are punishable by law.

Women in an Insecure World takes stock of the scope and magnitude of violence experienced by women in daily life, during armed conflict and in post-conflict situations. It aims to increase awareness among governments, donors, policy makers, academics, experts and civil society about the pervasive forms of violence against women. It also highlights the active role of women in peacemaking and post-conflict reconstruction. For what makes women's role in combating violence indispensable is not the omnipresence and magnitude of their victimisation, but the fact that women demonstrate the capacity to overcome the trauma of violent acts, to survive and help in the survival of others, and to contribute actively to defending and building peace. The book provides analytical data and statistics, legal documents and policy recommendations, complemented by feature stories and illustrations. Over 60 different authors, representing the major international organisations, governments, NGOs and Think Tanks dealing with gender issues, have contributed to this book.

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