

# You Have the Power: End Violence Against Women & Girls Worldwide



Kavira Muraulu, in Democratic Republic of Congo, complained about rape by a soldier and was raped again and bayoneted in the stomach in revenge for the complaint.

The I-VAWA enables the U.S. government to identify and take emergency measures in cases of mass violence against women in conflict and calls for prosecution of perpetrators.

## Background

Every year, violence in the home and community devastates the lives of millions of women and girls around the world. At least one out of every three women, globally, has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime, with rates of domestic violence reaching up to 71%. Somewhere a woman is raped, beaten, killed by her husband, trafficked or forced to trade sex for food everyday.

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, armed conflict and terrorism. It devastates the lives of millions of women and girls, in peacetime and in conflict, and knows no national or cultural barriers. Violence prevents women from going to work, participating in community life, and accessing economic and educational opportunities to create better lives for themselves and their families.



A young woman at a BRAC Microfinance Village Organization meeting in Tangail, Bangladesh. A woman client of a different

microcredit organization explained that before she received a loan, "my husband used to beat me when I asked him for money, now, even if he doesn't earn enough every day, I can work, we don't have to suffer" (Kabeer, 2002). The I-VAWA focuses on reducing women's vulnerability to violence by improving their economic status and educational opportunities. *Photo credit Amin/DrikAI.*

## The I-VAWA Sponsors & Supporters

The I-VAWA (S. 2982/H.R. 4594), was introduced by the bi-partisan teams of Senator John Kerry (D-MA), Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Senators Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Susan Collins (R-ME) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME), and by Representatives Bill Delahunt (D-MA) and Ted Poe (R-TX). The I-VAWA was drafted in consultation with more than 150 groups including 40 women's groups across the globe. It is supported by Amnesty International USA, the Family Violence Prevention Fund, Women Thrive Worldwide and more than 60 organizations.

## Changing Lives—the International Violence Against Women Act (S. 2982/H.R.4594)

The International Violence Against Women Act (I-VAWA) is an important effort by the U.S. government to decrease violence against women and girls globally. The bill will help support survivors, hold perpetrators accountable, and prevent violence. The bill would increase U.S. diplomatic attention to decreasing violence against women and incorporate best practices into U.S. foreign assistance.

## Change is Needed: Current U.S. Efforts to End Violence Against Women Worldwide are Inadequate

Current U.S. efforts to address violence against women are well-intentioned but fragmented, piecemeal and uncoordinated. The I-VAWA is a comprehensive, multi-sectoral, coordinated response to violence against women that is not only more efficient, but also a wise investment. Investing in women and girls and ending violence generates returns for families and communities, nationally and internationally.



**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**

**Family Violence  
Prevention Fund**

**Thrive**  
WOMEN  
WORLDWIDE  
[www.WomenThrive.org](http://www.WomenThrive.org)

## How The I-VAWA Will Help Stop the Violence

The goal of the International Violence Against Women Act is to significantly reduce violence against women and girls globally by integrating anti-violence work across U.S. foreign assistance programs and make ending violence against women and girls a diplomatic priority.

### The I-VAWA will:

- Incorporate best practices on addressing violence against women into programs that provide health care, encourage legal reform and changes in public attitudes, promote access to economic opportunity projects and safe schools, and prevent violence in selected countries.
- Build the effectiveness of overseas non-governmental organizations - particularly women's nongovernmental organizations – in addressing violence against women.
- Create U.S. leadership to address violence against women and girls and make prevention of violence a greater U.S. diplomatic priority.
- Require the U.S. government to respond to violence against women in conflict and crisis situations.

Emine Yaman (Turkey) was paralyzed from the waist down when her husband shot her just before she was to receive alimony in their divorce. He was detained a few months then released with a \$1200 fine.

The I-VAWA would ensure increased legal protection for women in violence cases and adequate prosecution of perpetrators of such violence.



## Raise Your Voice: Take Action

End violence against women and girls worldwide. Visit our websites to contact your Member of Congress and ask them to co-sponsor I-VAWA (S.2982 and H.R. 4594).

Raise Your Voice: Take Action  
[www.amnestyusa.org/ivawa](http://www.amnestyusa.org/ivawa)  
[www.endabuse.org](http://www.endabuse.org)  
[www.womenthrive.org/ivawa](http://www.womenthrive.org/ivawa)

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