

# SAFE FROM THE START ACT

## END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN EMERGENCIES

Women and girls fleeing emergencies risk rape, violence, and exploitation on the road to safety. Now, the COVID-19 pandemic is making gender-based violence (GBV) in crises even worse.

In humanitarian emergencies, women and girls are particularly vulnerable to GBV, as it is often used to intimidate and exert control in an unstable situation. GBV can range from increased levels of child marriage, human trafficking, intimate partner violence (IPV); sexual assault or exploitation; to other harmful practices such as female genital cutting.

These issues are a matter of life and death for many women and girls caught in crises.

The **Safe from the Start Act** would keep women and girls safe from violence, early marriage, and other abuses in emergencies, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Safe from the Start Act prioritizes prevention and protection from gender-based violence and will make humanitarian assistance more efficient and effective at addressing the needs of the communities it serves.

The legislation will help humanitarian actors prevent GBV, provide critical protections and, at the same time, open opportunities for affected women to lead and make decisions that impact them and their communities as they react to and recover from crises.

The Act will ensure:

- Context-appropriate services for girls and women who are subjected to GBV during crises;
- Tools and structures for greater efficiency and accountability of response and recovery efforts;
- Financial and institutional support for female-led civil society organizations (CSOs); and
- Prioritization of local prevention and response All people have the right to live from free violence: co-sponsor the Safe From the Start Act to help end gender-based violence in emergencies.

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