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# ACTION ALERT

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## Support the International Violence Against Women Act Nicole Kidman Testifies at U.S. House Hearing

Last week, the **Women's Division** co-sponsored a House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing with testimony from **UN Goodwill Ambassador Nicole Kidman**, **Ambassador Melanne Verwee** from the State Department, and other experts on the crisis of violence against women and girls. Witnesses supported the re-introduction of the International Violence Against Women Act (I-VAWA), which would make gender-based violence a U.S. diplomatic priority for the first time in history and comprehensively incorporate proven solutions for reducing violence against women into U.S. assistance programs.



Photo used with permission from Women Thrive.

"I-VAWA represents an effective cross-cutting approach that elevates the issue so it will count and be counted." -- Nicole Kidman, UN Goodwill Ambassador

I-VAWA would add personnel to the State Department and USAID with an exclusive focus on global women's issues. These advocates would work together to create a comprehensive international strategy to combat violence against women and girls. The President will have to submit to Congress a specific strategy for 10-20 countries.

For each country the report must outline two or more programs that will be implemented and which U.S. agencies will participate in each program. There will be five program sectors for the President to choose from: legal reform and judicial protection, health care initiatives, public awareness campaigns, economic improvements, and educational opportunities.

In addition to increased collaboration between different U.S. government agencies, the bill provides specific funding for non-governmental organizations, community-based groups, foreign governments,

and multilateral institutions seeking to prevent and reduce violence against women.

*Women are the key to progress and prosperity in the 21st century. When they are marginalized and mistreated, humanity cannot progress. When they are accorded their rights and afforded equal opportunities in education, health care, employment, and political participation, they lift up their families, their communities, and their nations.*

**-- Ambassador Melanne Verveer, Office of Global Women's Issues, U.S. Department of State**

This is the turning point in the effort after five years of hard work building political will for U.S. government action. I-VAWA is the result of extensive research, the input of more than 150 groups including U.S.-based nonprofits, UN agencies, and 40 women's groups around the globe.



**We need your help to pass the International Violence Against Women Act!**

Call your representatives at (202)224-3121 and tell them to support I-VAWA.

**November 25, 2009** is International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women! Show your support for this U.N.-sponsored day by contributing to UNIFEM's "Say NO to Violence Against Women" campaign, volunteering at women's shelters or anti-violence organizations, or advocating against violence in your neighborhood's schools.

For more information, visit: [www.unifem.org/campaigns/view](http://www.unifem.org/campaigns/view)

Read the Book of Resolutions, which states, "The United Methodist Church affirms the sacredness of all persons and their right to safety, nurture and care. It names domestic violence and sexual abuse as sins and pledges to work for their eradication." (See BOR 2008 #3423, page 509).

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