



# **ACTION ALERT**

## **Act to End Violence Against Women and Girls: Tell Congress to Support the International Violence Against Women Act!**

According to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), at least one out of every three women around the world has been a victim of violence, with the abuser usually someone known to her. This violence comes in many forms—physical, sexual, psychological and economic. It includes rape, domestic violence, “honor killings,” dowry deaths, forced prostitution, acid burning, female genital mutilation, human trafficking and much more. The World Health Organization estimates that the rate of abuse for women reaches 70 percent in some countries. Violence against women and girls is an extreme human rights violation with far reaching consequences; impeding women from fulfilling their potential, restricting economic growth and undermining development.

*Violence against women must be given greater priority at all levels—it has not yet received the priority required to enable significant change. Leadership is critical. Much can be achieved with political will, but there is also a need for considerable investment of resources and for consistent assistance, especially to the least developed countries and countries emerging from conflict. A more cohesive and strategic approach is needed from all actors, including governments, the international community and civil society.*

—Ending Violence Against Women: From Words to Action  
(Study of the General Secretary of the United Nations)

### **What is the International Violence Against Women Act (S.2279 and HR 5927)?**

The International Violence Against Women Act (I-VAWA) creates a comprehensive, integrated approach to addressing violence. It will increase the United States government efforts to stop the global crisis of violence against women and girls. Specifically, it would direct the U.S. government to create a comprehensive five year strategy to reduce violence in 10-20 diverse countries that have severe levels of violence against women and girls. The Act allocates more than \$1 billion in U.S. assistance over five years and makes ending violence against women and girls a U.S. diplomatic priority. Portions of the funding will go directly to women’s nongovernmental organizations and community based organizations. The bill was authored by Senators Joseph Biden (D-DE) and Richard Lugar (R-IN), Chairman and Ranking Republican of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and was drafted in consultation with 40 international women’s groups, the United Nations and 150 U.S. based organizations, including the Women’s Division Washington Office of Public Policy.



### **UNITED METHODIST WOMEN’S ACTION NETWORK**

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## What will the bill specifically do?

The bill would:

Integrate efforts to end violence against women and girls into existing, appropriate U.S. foreign assistance programs.

Establish one central State Department Office for Women's Global Initiatives to coordinate women's issues.

Incorporate best practices on addressing violence against women into programs that prevent violence, encourage legal reform and changes in public attitudes, promote access to safe schools, and support health care.

Enable the U.S. government to develop a faster and more efficient response to violence against women.

Enhance the capacity of the U.S. government to develop emergency measures to respond to mass rape including efforts to provide direct services to victims and hold perpetrators accountable.

Build the effectiveness of overseas nongovernmental organizations, specifically women's nongovernmental organizations, in addressing violence against women.<sup>1</sup>

## Where can I get additional information?

**The Women's Division Washington Office of Public Policy is an organizational supporter of I-VAWA. To see the full list of organizational supporters go to <http://www.amnestyusa.org/The International Violence Against Women Act/QA Legislation/page.do?id=1351029&n1=3&n2=39&n3=1504>**

For more information on I-VAWA visit the Women Thrive Worldwide, a coalition partner of the Women's Division, web site at [www.womenthrive.org](http://www.womenthrive.org) or call them at (202) 884-8396. You may also visit Amnesty International USA's web site at [www.amnestyusa.org](http://www.amnestyusa.org)

Read *The Book of Resolutions 2004* #186. Violence Against Women and Children pg.468

## What can I do?



Act to protect women from violence! Write or call your Representative and Senators and urge them to support the International Violence Against Women Act (S.2297 and HR 5927)!

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<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International USA Issue Brief. *Co-Sponsor The International Violence Against Women Act*, No. 7, May 2008.