

**Gender-Based Violence as Weapon of Warfare
Advocacy Campaign**

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Gender Violence During Conflict and Post-Conflict (Rape as a Weapon of Warfare)

Gender-based violence is an immediate threat to women and girls in conflicts throughout the world. It was first defined in 1993 in the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women as any act of violence directed at women “that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”¹ It has become a general term for all violence perpetrated against a woman’s will on the basis of inequalities in gender. Many crimes fall under this definition including, but not limited to, the abduction of women and girls into forced prostitution and trafficking, sexualized torture and mutilation, rape, sexual abuse and sexual intimidation.²

The Current Situation

Rape has been a part of post conflict pillaging for centuries. After Rome fell 16 centuries ago, St. Augustine called rape in wartime an “ancient and customary evil.”³ The victorious soldiers raze a village, taking whatever they please. This often includes the women and girls on the losing side. However, the 20th century brought a fairly new phenomenon--or at least one that was never before documented--rape as an intentional, orchestrated method of *conducting* warfare, not a *result* of warfare.⁴ In today’s armed conflicts, almost 70% of casualties are civilians, the majority of them are women and children.⁵ In 2008, the United Nations Security Council noted in Resolution 1820 that “rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute a

¹ “Selected Links on Gender Based Violence” Health and Human Rights Info, http://www.hhri.org/thematic/gender_based_violence.html; accessed 17 February 2011

² “Violence against Women: War’s Overlooked Victims,” January 13, 2011, *The Economist* <http://www.economist.com/node/17900482> (Accessed February 26, 2011)

³ “War’s Overlooked Victims”

⁴ Laura Smith-Spark “How did rape become a weapon of war?” BBC News, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/4078677.stm>; accessed 9 February 2011

⁵ “Fact & Figures on VAW” UNIFEM, http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/violence_against_women/facts_figures.php?page=7, accessed 11 February 2011

war crime, a crime against humanity, or a constitutive act with respect to genocide.”⁶ It has been committed by both insurgents and government troops, often condoned or explicitly orchestrated by commanding officials.⁷ Rape is used during and after conflict as a weapon and means of intimidation in countries throughout the world. Recently, it has been used in Colombia, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chechnya, Iraq, Nepal and Afghanistan, although these are not the only situations. Violence against women has been reported in nearly every international and intra-national war-zone.⁸

Rape and other extreme sexual violence and humiliation are used against women during conflict for several reasons. It has recently been used as a method of ethnic cleansing during conflicts between different ethnic groups. It has occurred between the Serbian paramilitaries and Albanian women in Kosovo,⁹ Arab militias and African women in Darfur,¹⁰ and Shiites and Sunnis in Iraq.¹¹ In many of these cultures, and others, identity is passed down through the father. A child born in such a patrilineal society, for example, to an Arab father and a Kurdish mother is considered to be 100 percent Arab. The child’s social and legal standing are conferred only by the father. This sort of inter-ethnic rape exacerbates existing conflict and, even worse, can be seen as grounds for genocide due to the intentional elimination of a generation of children born of the mother’s heritage. To make matters worse, in some cases where such rape is committed, the woman either kills herself or is killed by a male family or community member in what is known as an “honor suicide” or “honor killing,” respectively.¹² These are done to avoid

⁶ “Resolution 1820,” June 19, 2008, United Nations Security Council http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/unscl_resolutions08.htm; accessed 26 February 2011.

⁷ “War’s Overlooked Victims”

⁸ “Facts & Figures on VAW”

⁹ “Kosovo: Rape as a Weapon of ‘Ethnic Cleansing,’” Human Rights Watch, March 1, 2000

http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/topic/4565c22538_4565c25f449_3ae6a87a0_0.html; accessed 17 February 2011.

¹⁰ Emily Wax, “We Want to Make a Light Baby,” June 30, 2004, *The Washington Post*, Page A01 <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A16001-2004Jun29.html>

¹¹ Diane E. King “Using Rape as a Weapon,” *The New York Times*, July 8, 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/08/opinion/08iht-edking.1.6549043.html?_r=1

¹² Diane E. King

giving birth to an “enemy” baby. However, they effectively have the same consequences that the perpetrator wanted--the elimination of members of the opposite ethnic group. Additionally, women who have been raped often believe--unfortunately correctly, in some societies--that they will not be able to marry later. In these cases, society deeply values a woman’s purity and believes that the rape that has “tainted” her is her fault, not her attackers’.¹³ This generally prevents these women from having children later in life, even if they do not fall victim to an “honor” death.¹⁴

Violence against women has also been used to accomplish other, more basic, results. Rape has been used to humiliate women and their families. In some cases, men invade the homes of their victims and attack women in front of, or in earshot of, their children, husbands, parents, and other family members. This humiliates the victims, as well as the family members who are powerless to defend their women.¹⁵ When the family experiences such an atrocity, it is often difficult to heal. Internally displaced and refugee women face similar experiences--they are assaulted in front of those traveling with them, demoralizing the entire group. In some cases, women would have preferred death to the brutal, humiliating sexual violence they faced and the destruction of their families.¹⁶

Sexual violence can also destroy the ability for a community to function properly. In many societies, women are the cornerstones. When women are raped or are victims of other sexual abuse, they often choose or are forced to leave by their families and/or communities (when they are not killed, as already mentioned). These women are integral to the economies,

¹³ “War’s Overlooked Victims”

¹⁴ “Kosovo: Rape as a Weapon of ‘Ethnic Cleansing’ “

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid

particularly agriculture, and child-rearing in a communities of many developing countries.¹⁷ For example, in Sub-Saharan Africa, women are responsible for 60 to 80 percent of the farming.¹⁸ When they leave or are driven out of the village, it can destroy the livelihoods and way of living of individual families, clans or similar groups, and the general social fabric of a given community. In some cases, it could take generations to recover from the loss of females.

Perhaps the most well-known case of rape as a weapon of warfare has occurred in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. According to a service of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, more than 17,500 incidents of sexual violence were reported in the country in 2009 alone.¹⁹ As with most cases of sexual violence, this number likely represents only a fraction of the true total number of victims.²⁰ Rape in the South Kivu region, where it is most prevalent, has been committed by all of the various armed groups, from local militias and the national army to the former Rwandan Armed Forces.²¹ Most, however, are believed to have been committed by the Interahamwe, who have remained hidden in the country, terrorizing towns.²² The brutality and depravity that victims have since recounted is terrible, as have been the physical and psychological results of the sexual violence. Many conceived unwanted children and suffered permanent damage to their bodies.²³

Rape as a weapon of warfare, however, does not only occur in Africa. During the Bosnian War, it was estimated that 20,000 women and girls as young as 12 were raped from 1992-1995.²⁴ The Bosnian government believes the number to be closer to 50,000.²⁵ They were

¹⁷ "Gender Based Violence," Reproductive Health Response in Crisis Consortium, Updated December 2010 <http://www.rhrc.org/rhr%5Fbasics/gbvkeymessages.html>; accessed 19 February 2011.

¹⁸ "Empowering Women," Hunger Report 2011, Bread for the World, <http://hungerreport.org/2011/report/chapters/one/women>; accessed 16 February 2011.

¹⁹ "Getting Away with Rape," IRIN Humanitarian News and Analysis, July 2010 <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=89802>

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ "DRC: Fighters Commit Atrocities Against Women and Men," IRIN Humanitarian News and Analysis, September 2, 2004, <http://www.irinnews.org/InDepthMain.aspx?InDepthId=20&ReportId=62827&Country=Yes>

²² Ibid

²³ Ibid

²⁴ "Violence against Women: War's Overlooked Victims"

held in prison camps and buildings where they were forced to clean, wash and cook for soldiers during the day sexually exploited at night.²⁶ Many were later killed.²⁷ All three parties, including the Bosnian Muslims and Croats had perpetrated sexual abuse, but the Serbs were the main perpetrators.²⁸ They raped Bosnian Muslim women to dilute the Bosniak identity and create half-Serbian children as well as to generally humiliate and intimidate Bosnian Muslims of both genders.²⁹ About 80 percent of the survivors continue to suffer psychological and physical abuse, years later.³⁰ Rape as a weapon continues to hurt survivors much longer than after it is over.

Despite its prevalence, rape is not a necessary part of modern warfare. While the front lines of many conflicts have moved away from traditional battlefields and soldiers to villages and civilians, rape is not used as a weapon in all cases. In some cases it is strategically illogical. For example, in El Salvador, insurgent forces knew rape was not a way to obtain reliable, long-term intelligence.³¹ They believed it works as a tool to force people from an area, but to gather information. In other wars, rape has been deemed abhorrent due to religious or moral codes, proving that it is not an inherent part of war even when it may be a feasible or “logical” strategy. In most cases, it is not used as a military tactic when soldiers are well-disciplined and commanding officers forbid it.³² When officers turn a blind eye or allow lower-ranking commanders to promote it, that is when it turns into a tool of warfare.

International Response:

²⁵ “Bosnian Rape Camp Trial Opens,” March 20, 2000, BBC News, [BBC News | EUROPE | Bosnian rape camp trial opens](#); accessed 21 February 2011.

²⁶ Marlies Simons “For First Time, Court Defines Rape as War Crime,” June 28, 1996, The New York Times, [For First Time, Court Defines Rape as War Crime](#); accessed 21 February 2011.

²⁷ “Women Raped During Bosnia and Herzegovina Conflict Still Waiting for Justice,” September 30, 2009, Amnesty International [Women raped during Bosnia and Herzegovina conflict still waiting for justice | Amnesty International](#); accessed 26 February 2011.

²⁸ Simons

²⁹ “Rape as a Tool of War,” September 1, 2004, IRIN Humanitarian News and Analysis <http://www.irinnews.org/InDepthMain.aspx?InDepthId=20&ReportId=62817>; accessed 24 February 2011.

³⁰ [UNFPA - Dealing With a Legacy of Rape and Torture in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

³¹ “War’s Overlooked Victims”

³² Ibid

Currently, there are many treaties, committees and other instruments in place committed to ending violence and other forms of abuse and discrimination against women throughout the world. There are currently 100 United Nations treaties that concern or include women and the UN has started to create documents explicitly demanding countries act to protect and promote the welfare of women.³³ The initial rights document, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 10, 1948 equally impacted the human rights of men and women. The following year, Article 27 of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, provided that “women shall especially be protected against any attack on their honour, in particular against rape, enforced prostitution or any form of indecent assault.”³⁴ But these did not suffice for the protection of women’s rights.

The first covenant designed for the specific protection of women was the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). It was adopted in December 1979 and came into force on September 3, 1981. Under CEDAW, countries are legally obligated to prevent all forms of discrimination against women--whether political, economic, social, cultural or civic.³⁵ It is considered by many as “the international bill of rights for women” and has accounted for significant change on behalf of women, bettering their lives in many countries.³⁶ Every four years member states submit a report to the monitoring Committee, detailing the measures they have taken to support the Convention. But, it was still not enough.

In 1993, the General Assembly created the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. It was officially adopted on December 20 of that year. Six years later, the

³³ “Factsheet: United Nations Treaties and Women” UN Women: National Committee Australia, <http://www.unifem.org.au/Content%20Pages/Resources/un-treaties-womens-rights>; accessed 25 February 2011.

³⁴ Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War,” August 12, 1949, Geneva.

³⁵ “Men commit wide-scale sexual crimes with impunity in conflict zones, says UN” October 12, 2009, UN News Centre, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=32516&Cr=sexual+violence&Cr1>; accessed 22 February 2011.

³⁶ “Men commit wide-scale sexual crimes with impunity in conflict zones, says UN”

General Assembly also declared a day honoring the commitment to prevent violence against women, November 25, called the “International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.” November 25 had been recognized for 18 years already as a day to honor this cause, chosen for a day three Dominican women’s rights activists became martyrs in 1960. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, also that year, was adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights and stated that “violations of the human rights of women in situations of armed conflict are violations of the fundamental principles of international human rights and humanitarian law.”³⁷ It seems, however, that these laws were forgotten during times of conflict.

Two years later, the UN held their Fourth World Conference on Women which developed a specific platform for action for equality, development and peace. Its main objectives outlined how women, particularly refugees and internally displaced persons, need to be protected in times of conflict. It also, equally importantly, highlighted the importance of peaceful conflict resolution and the need for women to become involved in the process at decision-making levels.³⁸ There has been some success on this front. A UN sponsored project in Rwanda allowed for female ex-combatants, many of whom were survivors of sexual violence during the fighting, to become leaders in the fight against that violence and HIV/AIDS in their communities. The project sponsored training and provided a space for the women to speak about their experiences, empowering them to move forward as leaders.³⁹ More can be done though.

A decade after that conference, the 2005 World Summit reinforced earlier conventions and the belief that “progress for women is progress for all.” Among other items, it specifically called for states’ obligations to end impunity and ensure the protection of women and girls

³⁷ “Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action,” World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, June 14-25, 1993

³⁸ “The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women: Platform for Action,” United Nations, Beijing China, September 1995

³⁹ “Facts & Figures on VAW”

during and after armed conflict (under international humanitarian and human rights law).⁴⁰ The convention had some “teeth” coming right after the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court when into effect in July 2002. The ICC, more than many other tribunals or treaties, has had a stronger emphasis on bringing justice to victims of State condoned and State perpetrated sexual violence. Four commanders have been charged with rape or other sexual violence related to the conflicts in the DRC and Central African Republic . The cases are still ongoing. While the ICC is a step in the right direction, this small number of trials and the lengthy, costly procedure have not yet reached an effective level of punishment and deterrence for future crimes.

In June 2008, Resolution 1820 was adopted by the Security Council. It reaffirmed previous similar conventions and summits and reinforced the need to work harder to end acts of violence against women and girls. It officially demonstrates that the existing institutions are important and have made an impact, but do not suffice.⁴¹

These various conventions, summits and committees have worked to establish a solid framework for the protection of women and girls during and after conflict. The system is far from perfect, however. In many cases, the conventions lack legitimacy internationally or are not respected within countries that have signed and ratified them. Some important countries, like the United States, have not ratified major treaties and, therefore, detract from their legitimacy. They are all recent, as well, in terms of the history of war. While, with time, these treaties and UN actions might affect change on the ground in conflict, these women and girls do not have that time. Further action must be taken now to protect them and promote the importance of an end to GBV among governments and armies worldwide.

What else is being done?

⁴⁰ “2005 World Summit Outcome,” United Nations General Assembly, September 15, 2005 http://www.srhivlinkages.org/uploads/docs/articles/worldsummitoutcome_2005_en.pdf

⁴¹ “Resolution 1820”

The legal foundation for the protection and promotions of women's rights has expanded greatly in recent decades. In the past 15 years, the elimination of gender-based violence has become a big topic of discussion on the international scene. Theoretically, there is a big push to prevent rape and sexual violence during and after times of conflict. Tribunals for the Balkans and Rwanda each convicted men for sexual violence as crimes against humanity and part of a genocidal campaign, respectively.⁴² In reality, however, sexual violence is "less fiercely prosecuted" than other war crimes and the women are far from safe.⁴³ Violence often continues long after the conflict ends and the memories and physical problems can last lifetimes.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the worst atrocities still continue, ratified CEDAW almost 15 years ago. They have promised a zero-tolerance for sexual crimes committed by the army with serious sentences to violations.⁴⁴ Yet, very few victims have seen justice. In many places in the country, there simply are not police to hear the crimes and no courts to try them. The country has held fewer than 20 prosecutions of rape as either a war crime or crime against humanity.⁴⁵ Corruption among judges is rampant.⁴⁶ And even the few trials the country has held combined with the ICC trials will account for a minuscule amount of the actual victims. These women will never see justice.

In other places, the government actively works to cover up the violence and silence the women. In Darfur, government officials reported that the rapes connected to the recent war were not ethnically motivated but rather an inevitable part of war. The government also sent "minders" to villages to intimidate victims to stop talking about the violence or "face beating or

⁴² "War's Overlooked Victims"

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ "DRC: Getting away with rape"

⁴⁵ "War's Overlooked Victims"

⁴⁶ "DRC: Getting away with rape"

death.”⁴⁷ Other minders attempted to bribe the women from speaking with outsiders, presumably journalists and aid workers.⁴⁸ Still others threatened victims that they would impersonate victims themselves in order to convince foreign delegations that done nothing wrong.⁴⁹ Actions like that must be punished and, ultimately, prevented. Countries need to first sign and ratify conventions, then support them.

The main goal for the organization would be to to pressure the US to ratify CEDAW and the Convention on the Rights of the Child and support the ICC. These actions would further legitimize both mechanisms and allow more international dialogue. When the US ignores or actively does not associate with something, that stifles the discourse and some action on the issue. The US needs to join the fight against GBV and other terrible crimes.

These are obviously not easy tasks and will not be accomplished over night. Before the organization can even really begin working on them in earnest, it must first work to raise awareness of GBV issues. Many people in the U.S. have no idea of the prevalence of violence against women and girls and those who do know often do not think they can help. The organization will work to increase awareness and feelings of efficacy.

The second measure needs to be the coordination of efforts on the ground in war zones. So much of what happens is never told, vastly under-representing the victims of gender violence world wide. By establishing relationships with organizations directly working with survivors of GBV, more stories are told. This both helps the women cathartically and, possibly, may result in more justice. It would also allow for the organization to send resources (at the very least, information) to these women, impacting the issue on a very basic level. These two general ideas,

⁴⁷ “We Want to Make a Light Baby”

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ Emily Wax, “Sudanese Refugees Told to Stay Silent on Government, Militia Abuses,” *The Washington Post*, June 28, 2001, Page A16 <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A10226-2004Jun27.html>, accessed 22 February 2011.

my plans and the obstacles to these plans and goals, are explained in greater detail in my advocacy plan.

Advocacy Plan for my Organization's Campaign to End Gender- Based Violence

Why use a human rights framework?

One of the biggest successes in the push for women's rights is to frame the violation of women's rights as violations of human rights. This takes violence against women from the private sphere, where it's a personal matter, to the public sphere, where it is a concern for everyone and an issue on which the government and other authorities need to take action.⁵⁰ It has not been an easy struggle to make this transition.

Most importantly, it creates a legal framework with binding obligations that the state needs to enforce on behalf of its women. The human rights framework declares that all people have the same basic rights--among them, the rights to life, liberty and security and freedom from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment--regardless of sex. Then it establishes a common language that activists all over the world can use in their individual cases and together. It allows the formation of networks to pressure governments involved, but also to move for more international solutions to violence against women.⁵¹ This also allows for a common system of measurement to determine if governments are fulfilling their obligations.⁵² It also grants the necessary mechanisms for "holding governments to account if they fail to meet those obligations."⁵³

Furthermore, a human rights approach to women's rights transcends the common cultural or social excuse for violence against women--it's "tradition" or other similar ideas. Human rights are universal--they apply equally to everyone and anyone. In many places, it is against norms for women to be seen as having responsibilities outside the home and to stand up for their human

⁵⁰ "It's in our hands: Stop violence against women summary" 2004, Amnesty International <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ACT77/003/2004/en/d40502d6-f7a7-11dd-8fd7-f57af21896e1/act770032004en.pdf>; accessed 27 February 2011.

⁵¹ "It's in our hands: Stop violence against women summary"

⁵² Scott Leckie, "Framing a Discussion about Housing Rights: Why take a rights-based approach to housing issues?" Center on Housing Rights and Eviction

⁵³ "It's in our hands: Stop Violence against women summary"

rights. Activists in these places face a particularly difficult challenge. But it is in these places that they are especially needed.⁵⁴

The legal basis for a human rights approach also moves beyond political party. All officials holding government positions are responsible for upholding and protecting the same basic rights--it is not a matter of political affiliation. A political framework for women's rights holds up only as long as the supporting party holds office--this is useless for long-term change and protection of rights.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ "It's in our hands: Stop violence against women summary"

⁵⁵ Leckie

I. Define issue⁵⁶

What is the problem: Gender-based violence (rape, sexual exploitation, sexual slavery, etc) during and after conflict

Who does what to whom: Men abuse, rape, trade, abduct, exploit, terrorize, and humiliate women and girls

What are the possible causes: Rape is often permitted, even encouraged, by commanders and higher-ranking officers. At the very least, they knowingly turn a blind eye to the situation. In many cases, the rape is seen as a way for soldiers to bond, especially when they have been abducted into the fighting.⁵⁷

In the countries where this occurs, women are often seen as inferior to men based on cultural, religious and legal tradition. In cases where rape is used as an act of genocide or ethnic cleansing, the women who are raped are seen as subhuman based on their ethnicity, religion or cultural heritage as well.

There is a stigma around discussing rape and sexual abuse in many countries. Women who have been violated are often blamed and turned out from their families and communities.

Governments often lack the willpower and resources to persecute sexual crimes, if they even believe them to be legitimate offenses at all. Because of this, many perpetrators have no fear of repercussions for their actions.

What can be done to improve the situation?

1. Identify nations where there is an issue or risk of GBV during conflict
2. Identify stressors and causes of GBV, specific to each country
3. Tap into NGOs within the country and local resources to empower women
4. Pressure governments to ratify necessary treaties and conventions
 - a. Specifically, the US needs to ratify CEDAW, sign & ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court
 - i. [I recognize the difficulty in both the situations, particularly the ICC with respect to torture, detainment, etc]
 - b. Pressure the leading Congressman in the relevant committees and subcommittees in the Senate and House
5. Petition UN to persecute individuals responsible for rape as a weapon of warfare
6. Support ICC--petition for further inclusion of sex crimes⁵⁸
 - a. CAR: Bemba: crimes against humanity (rape & murder)
 - b. Darfur: Bashir: Genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes
 - i. Garda: case lacked sufficient evidence
 - i. Banda, Jerbo: three counts of war crimes
 - a. DRC: Lubanga: underage soldier conscription

⁵⁶ Julie Mertus, "5 Steps to Advocacy," Summer Human Rights Institute 2008, American University

⁵⁷ "Evolving News about Gender, Conflict, Crisis and Renewal: Bibliography" State of the World Population 2010, UNFPA, <http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2010/web/en/notes.shtml>; accessed 26 February 2011.

⁵⁸ "Cases & Situations" Coalition for the International Criminal Court, <http://www.iccnw.org/?mod=cases&situations>; accessed 28 February, 2011.

- i. Katanga – Ngudjolo Chui: war crimes including sexual slavery, rape
- ii. Ntaganda: conscription of underage children
- iii. Mbarushimana: alleged crimes include rape, torture, attacks on a civilian population
- b. Northern Uganda : all perpetrators are still at large
- c. Kenya : government missed deadline for initiating proceedings in September 2009

What kind of change would I want to make?

- 1. Increase awareness of issues--people can't write to their elected officials to ratify treaties if they are unaware of the problem
- 2. Increase awareness of US inaction (to prevent it) or actions that worsen it (money to governments that allow or perpetuate violence against women)
- 3. Petitions
 - a. Organizations like Amnesty International petition the United Nations, US government and foreign government to act in accordance with human rights standards and/or cease human rights violations
- 4. Positive US action
- 5. Awareness for victims of places to turn to (on-the-ground NGOs, WITNESS video program, etc)
- 6. Education for victims

Short-Term Goals for Campaign:

The organization I have created is called P.O.W.E.R, which stands for Protect Our Women, End Rape.

These are examples of goals that the organization could undertake. The deliverables I have created have covered part, but not all of these.

3 months:

Identify 10 biggest GBV issues currently occurring --establish framework for campaign

6 months:

Establish relationships with six local NGOs and non-profits (to collaborate with in the future)

Hold events on the campus of each DC college to generate student interest

12 months:

Hold first letter-writing campaign (target students, similar NGOs and relevant ethnic organizations to participate)

18 months:

Increase media coverage within the district on those 10 biggest GBV issues by 10%

Establish one contact on the ground in each of the 10 areas of interest

Long-Term Goals:

2 years:

Have five Senators actively promoting ratification of CEDAW and the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Increase annual letter-writing campaign results by 10 % each year

Generate regional interest in target US areas with large proportions of immigrants and refugees from 10 interest areas

3 years:

- 8 Senators actively promoting ratification
- Increase annual letter-writing campaign results by 10 % each year

5 years:

- Increase annual letter-writing campaign results by 10 % each year

10 years:

- A vote on ratification of one or both treaties
- US consideration of involvement in the ICC (the ICC is still new, so action on this front will take longer to accomplish)

What differentiates you from others with respect to this problem and what is my initial proposed solution?

Many organizations focus on rape or gender violence through a broader lens. This organization and campaign is very specific to rape and sexual violence during or as a result of conflict. It does not include domestic violence, FGM, and other non-conflict related gender violence.

Ideally, the organization would be able to pressure the US government to ratify treaties they have been avoiding and establish relationships with relevant organizations on the ground in conflict zones. This way resources, volunteers and whatever else is needed can be funneled directly to the source of the problem.

Desired output:

I want to increase awareness and generate action to prevent gender-based violence against women and violence during and after conflict.

I believe that women's issues around the world should be shared by all women--it's a matter of human rights.

Resources & Assets⁵⁹

Resources:

The organization would most likely start off as fiscally sponsored by an organization willing to allow other projects and organizations to use its 501 (c) 3 status. The Washington Peace Center, for example, does this. Eventually, the organization will grow enough to be able to support itself.

Fundraising and generating a donor/sponsor list will play a large role in the initial start up of the organization.

Staff:

The organization will start out with a small staff of three individuals and two interns. It will actively seek volunteers to work with the organization and will hope to increase in size as the budget allows.

People you expect to be available

Campus groups

⁵⁹ "Developing a Plan for Advocacy," The Community Tool Box http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/sub_section_main_1206.aspx; accessed 28 February 2011.

Relevant NGOs (to form partnerships)

Interested activists who have already become involved with women's rights or human rights issues

Contacts (e.g. with media resources)

As this would be a young organization, most contacts would come from relationships in college or other internships/jobs. As the organization grows, pursuing the media will be an important part of increasing awareness of issues, so contacts will increase.

Facilities (e.g., access to transportation and computers, meeting rooms, etc)

Small office, computers, no access to transportation--basic needs met

Access to information archives or libraries

DC is fortunate to have good facilities for research.

II. Identify Audience:⁶⁰

Who do I want to reach with the my message?

1. Relevant US Congress Committees and Sub-committees (specifically the Senate)
2. NGO's-- I want to form a coalition of general women's rights and anti-GBV groups to work together, network and share resources
3. NGO's on the ground in countries where this is a major problem (identify 10, based on magnitude of violence, response to violence, and other factors)
4. Victims who have sought refuge/asylum in new countries--might be best advocates
5. College campuses- women's groups, issues' groups, students in general
6. People with demonstrated interest in other women's rights issues (ex: those at certain conferences, walks and other events)
7. Ethnic organizations comprised of the demographic of relevant nations

Who can make the change?⁶¹

1. US Congressmen (specific)
 - a. Students/activists can get representatives' attention by letter-writing campaign with constituents, etc
2. NGOs on the ground
 - a. A network of NGOs on the ground during conflicts and relating to NGOs here might be able to get more information out
3. UN-stricter punishment and enforcement of anti-GBV crimes

Who influences that group?

Voters

Donors

Powerful groups and coalitions

Companies

⁶⁰ Julie Mertus

⁶¹ "Developing a plan for Advocacy"

Media

Identify Opponents:

- Congressmen who are anti-CEDAW and ICC
- Congressman who are anti-equality for women
- Pro-torture Congressman
- Isolationist Congressman
- Governments of states condoning GBV

To what extent do you wish to address the media?

The media is integral to the awareness part of this campaign. GBV during conflict is underrepresented in statistics and often ignored during discussions of fighting. It will take media coverage--specific and general--to garner enough awareness to start pursuing those who might be interested in getting involved.

Social media will be an effective and cheap way to generate awareness among young people and activists about the specific issues in gender-based violence.

Specific media will also be important. Creating interest in media directed at certain demographics will be helpful in generating interest to people who may already have a reason to be interested. For example, followers of allAfrica.com might be immigrants from African nations. Some of those nations have huge GBV problems. So those readers might be more inclined to listen to the organization's information and possibly get involved. -

Local media coverage of events is a good place to start. The district is an advantageous place to be located. Local media coverage here can often lead to national coverage.

Desired output:

Senators are the ones who can immediately make a difference in how the US views and acts on gender-based violence issues.

The UN also makes a big difference, but it more difficult to reach and be heard there.

These two groups are the biggest targets.

Interested activists and organizations (including students) are the next best group to target to increase awareness and bring attention to the issue.

Senators will care about GBV if it is something that they believe their constituents care about or is a big issue in the media.

The UN has already shown interest in the issue, but any and all reinforcement from external organizations that this issue is tremendously important will keep their attention focused.

The population of general people we will be targeting will already have a demonstrated interest in women's rights, human rights, and the regions of the world where this is an issue.

III. Frame your message

What are a couple of the most important messages that you need to communicate to your audiences?

Gender violence is NEVER acceptable and it must be stopped
 GBV is a huge issue in war zones and is something that we can actively work to change
 Governments have a HUMAN RIGHTS obligation to work to end violence
 NGOs can accomplish more together
 Activists can and should get involved, especially women's rights groups
 Victims CAN make a change (WITNESS program, those that have received
 refuge/asylum)

Gender based violence is NOT a necessary part of modern war fare

*Another more subtle message I've used is that these women are survivors, as opposed to victims. It portrays them as the strong individuals they are--an important item to mention in some of the outreach.

Desired Output:

In areas of conflict and following conflict, non-combatant women and girls are subject to rape and other sexual exploitation.

This is a human rights violation and, as such, is something that the international community should not allow and has pledged to fight.

My organization will work to increase awareness of the issue, have the US sign and ratify appropriate conventions and petition for the UN to increase pressure on governments permitting GBV and to increase punishment of those committing the crimes.

I ultimately want my audience to pressure Congress and the UN to make changes protecting women and girls from GBV.

IV Develop your plan⁶²

Questions to ask: In what way should these messages be communicated; what tools are you going to use? Newsletters? Events? Campaigns? Blogging?

1. Events - International Women's day Film Festival, Women's History Month events
2. Letter writing and phone calls to Congresspeople
3. On campus events with relevant groups
 - a. Letter writing drives, fundraisers, awareness events
4. Tweeting/blogging about issues (following important groups)
5. Working groups within the GBV advocacy community
6. Interviews with survivors

Strategy⁶³

The organization has two main plans:

1. Increase awareness of GBV issues within the US
2. Increase US involvement in anti-GBV work: ratify CEDAW and the Convention on the rights of the child, sign onto ICC, etc in order to make these conventions more effective and increase dialogue on the issue internationally.
3. Convince international bodies that there must be harsher punishment for perpetrators of gender-based violence and stricter enforcement of GBV laws and violations

⁶² Julie Mertus

⁶³ "Developing a Plan for Advocacy"

The organization also wants to create relationships with organizations on the ground with NGOs there to facilitate the sharing of information and resources.

The organization will work on these goals in a more-or-less chronological fashion. There needs to first be a strong grassroots interest before Congress will get involved and the US government needs to be involved to pressure international bodies. The deliverables of my campaign will focus mainly on the first two steps.

Tactics

Generate awareness through social media

Sponsor events to bring activists and possible activists together. Example: Anti-GBV Film

Festival on AU's campus, followed by a panel discussion

Utilize survivors of GBV (refugees, asylum seekers, and others) to speak up to increase awareness, generate media attention

Use International Women's Day, Women's History month, and other events to generate interest

Create letter-writing campaign to elected officials (see list), expressing constituents' interest in seeing the US ratify CEDAW, sign onto the ICC, or become more active in anti GBV issues in general

Generate awareness through flyers, stickers, etc on college campuses in DC

Reach out to local NGOs and Non-profits with similar interests

Create a network of NGO's and non-profits in DC and on the ground in conflict and post-conflict settings to create a mutually beneficial situation. Information flows into DC and resources flow into the NGOs etc on the ground

Create working groups for organizations in DC and the surrounding region to collaborate monthly on important issues and possible solutions

Identify 10 regions where biggest GBV violations are occurring

Determine NGO's and non-profits with field offices in those regions

Create relationships

Share information

Petition UN and governments where GBV occurs to enact stricter punishments

V. Evaluate your plan

Evaluation occurs throughout the campaign, not just at completion. Records of media hits, responses from interested activists and groups and donor lists must be maintained. Goals will be evaluated every two months to determine if the campaign is on track for reaching them or if the plan needs to be adjusted.

Budget:

The organization will start out very small, relying on interns and volunteers to get it going. We would start out being fiscally sponsored by a local organization to use their 501 (c) 3 status to avoid the costs incurred with trying to obtain that status.

We would actively search for donors and hold fundraisers (and ask for donations at general events). The website would have a PayPal button to make donations from businesses, companies and organizations easy.

The organization will also identify and apply for grants.

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