



Australian Government  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



## Safe homes and safe communities

Australia's commitment to ending all forms of violence against women and girls

## **Safe homes and safe communities**

Australia's commitment to ending all forms of violence against women and girls



Foreign Minister Julie Bishop arrives in Wapenamanda on a visit to Papua New Guinea, 7 November 2015.  
Photo credit: DFAT

# Ministerial foreword



Violence against women and girls is a pervasive human rights violation that has a profound and devastating impact on the victims, their families and communities.

Globally, it is reported that more than one in every three women have been beaten, coerced into sex, or abused in some other way, most often by someone they know, including husbands or other male family members. Over 60 per cent of surveyed women and girls in some Pacific countries have experienced violence by an intimate partner or family member.

Australia's message is clear—violence against women and girls is unacceptable anywhere, anytime in whatever form it takes.

Gender equality is central to Australia's foreign policy and development agenda where addressing violence against women and girls is one of our key priorities. Internationally through our aid program, we are working with partner countries to end this devastating manifestation of gender inequality.

Australia is also a strong advocate in international forums for eliminating violence against women. Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls, Natasha Stott Despoja, has played a central role in this agenda.

Australia's advocacy helped deliver a specific target for addressing violence against women in the Sustainable Development Goals, agreed by members of the United Nations on 25 September 2015.

This booklet highlights some of the important work that Australia's aid program is supporting to end all forms of violence against women and girls, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region. This includes providing services for women who have been affected by violence, programs that improve access to justice for survivors and help women rebuild their lives, education to change attitudes towards violence, and engaging men and boys in initiatives to prevent violence from occurring in the first place.

The Australian Government will continue to provide strong leadership to ensure women and girls live free of violence and from the fear of violence.

**The Hon Julie Bishop MP**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs



A young mother cradling her son at a Women's Crisis Centre in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.  
Photo credit: Ng Swan Ti, MAMPU

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# Introduction

Violence against women is a serious issue which occurs all over the world, including in Australia.

One in three women across the globe has experienced some form of violence, frequently by someone they know.<sup>1</sup> Violence against women and the threat of violence diminish the capacity of women to achieve their leadership potential, fully participate in their communities and care for their families. The damage it causes to women, their children, families and communities is severe and long-lasting.

Violence against women is a significant violation of women's human rights as well as a constraint on development. It imposes significant strain on national economies with costs escalating for health care, social services, policing and the justice system.

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**“Living free of violence and from the fear of violence is a basic human right for women and girls. The Federal Government will continue to provide leadership on this issue, within Australia, in our region and globally.”**

The Hon Julie Bishop MP, Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, in her message on International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, 25 November 2015

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Violence against women and girls takes many forms. It includes violence in the home, sexual abuse of girls at school, sexual harassment at work and in the streets, rape by husbands or strangers, child marriage, acid attacks, trafficking and female genital mutilation. In conflict situations, rape is often used as a tactic of war. In the aftermath of natural disasters and during conflicts, violence against women and girls increases.

To mark International Women's Day in 2016, this booklet features case studies that highlight Australian-supported initiatives, organisations and individuals addressing violence against women internationally. These case studies illustrate Australia's strong commitment to ending violence against women.

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1 World Health Organization (WHO), 2013. *Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence.*



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## “Evidence shows a strong link between gender inequality and levels of violence against women.”

Natasha Stott Despoja, Australia’s Ambassador for Women and Girls

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### Defining violence against women

**Violence against women** is ‘any act of gender-based violence 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 deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.’<sup>2</sup>

**Gender-based violence** refers to violence that targets individuals or groups on the basis of their gender. It is an umbrella term for any harmful act perpetrated against a person’s will that is based on socially ascribed differences between males and females.<sup>3</sup> The term reflects how most forms of violence perpetrated against women and girls are a manifestation of historical and structural inequality in power relations between women and men. It is linked with the gender stereotypes underlying and perpetuating violence.<sup>4</sup>

**Domestic violence** refers to violence perpetrated by a spouse or intimate partner. It may include physical, sexual, financial, emotional or psychological abuse. Emotional or psychological abuse may include controlling behaviours such as verbal threats, enforced isolation and restrictions on finances.

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2 United Nations (UN), 1993. *Declaration on the elimination of violence against women* (A/RES/48/104).

3 Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2015. *Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action: Reducing risk, promoting resilience and aiding recovery*.

4 United Nations, 1994. *Declaration on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls*. Agreed Conclusions of the 57th Session of the Commission of the Status of Women.

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## “Violence against women has a profound and devastating impact on women, their families and communities.”

The Hon Julie Bishop MP, Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs

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**Family violence** refers to violence between family members as well as between intimate partners.<sup>5</sup>

**Sexual violence** refers to any act, attempt or threat of a sexual nature that results, or is likely to result, in physical, psychological or emotional harm. It includes rape and marital rape, sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.

**Conflict-related sexual violence** refers to incidents or patterns of sexual violence against women, men, girls or boys occurring in a conflict or post-conflict setting.<sup>6</sup> This can include rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilisation, indecent assault and trafficking. Sexual violence can amount to a tactic of war when used to ‘humiliate, dominate, instill fear in, disperse and/or forcibly relocate civilian members of a community or ethnic group.’<sup>7</sup>

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5 Australian Government, 2011. *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children 2010–2022*, Department of Social Services.

6 UN Action Against Sexual Violence, 2011. *Analytical and Conceptual Framing of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence*. Available from: <http://www.stoprapenow.org/uploads/advocacyresources/1321456915.pdf>

7 United Nations Security Council Resolution 1820 (2008). Preamble.

# Australia's response

Ending violence against women and girls is one of the three priorities in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy*.

This strategy guides the government's foreign policy, economic diplomacy, development and corporate work on gender equality. Its three priorities are:

1. enhancing women's voice in decision making, leadership and peace-building
2. promoting women's economic empowerment
3. ending violence against women and girls.

Australia has zero tolerance for violence against women. Eliminating violence against women is a priority of the Australian Government. Australia is committed to supporting and partnering with other countries in this area through its foreign policy and aid program. The table below provides a snapshot of Australia's vision, aim and intended outcomes for ending violence against women.

Ending violence against women and girls		
<b>Vision:</b> Women and girls are able to live free from violence and the fear of violence		
<b>Aim:</b> To work in partnership with national governments, civil society, international partners, and men and women to reduce and respond to violence against women		
<b>Outcome 1:</b> Women have access to support services	<b>Outcome 2:</b> Women have access to justice	<b>Outcome 3:</b> Violence against women is prevented

Violence against women is a major obstacle to achieving development outcomes, including gender equality, economic empowerment and a peaceful society. This complex area demands integrated responses which account for the diverse forms of violence against women and girls. A particular focus is women and girls with disabilities, since they are more likely to experience violence and face additional barriers in seeking support services and accessing justice.

# Working at a global level

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**“Everyone has a responsibility to prevent and end violence against women and girls, starting by challenging the culture of discrimination that allows it to continue. We must shatter negative gender stereotypes and attitudes, introduce and implement laws to prevent and end discrimination and exploitation, and stand up to abusive behaviour whenever we see it. We have to condemn all acts of violence, establish equality in our work and home lives, and change the everyday experience of women and girls.”**

Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General, in his message on International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, 25 November 2014

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## United Nations Commission on the Status of Women

At the UN, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global policy-making body dedicated to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The 60th session of the CSW, to be held in March 2016, will review member country progress on eliminating and preventing all forms of violence against women.

At its 57th session in 2013, the CSW historically agreed that discrimination and violence against women and girls have no place in today's world. It also agreed on a comprehensive blueprint of actions and called on governments to implement these.

## The Sustainable Development Goals

### Women and the Sustainable Development Goals

On 25 September 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by 193 members of the United Nations General Assembly. Among the 17 goals and 169 targets, the Sustainable Development Goals have a stand-alone goal for gender equality and women's empowerment and a specific target for ending violence against women.

**Goal 5:** *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.*

**Target 5.2:** *Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.*

### United Nations Partnerships

Australia works with the UN to improve understanding of the **prevalence, impact and effectiveness of responses** to violence against women. This includes support to:

- **UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women.** This leading global grant-making facility works with governments and non-government organisations (NGOs) to expand access for female survivors of violence to services, strengthen implementation of laws, policies and action plans, and prevent violence.<sup>8</sup>
- **Joint Global Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence.** Led by UN Women, this program brings together UN partners, experts, researchers, practitioners, and civil society organisations to achieve global agreement on the services required to respond to violence against women. In 2016, Australia will support implementing these services in up to 10 countries.
- **Partners for Prevention (P4P).** This joint program for the prevention of violence against women and girls in Asia and the Pacific brings together the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Women and UN Volunteers (UNV) with governments and civil society. Phase 1 resulted in ground-breaking research which was published in the report: *'Why Do Some Men Use Violence Against Women and How Can We Prevent It? Quantitative Findings from the UN Multi-country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific'*. Australia is pleased to be supporting Phase 2 which is enhancing

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<sup>8</sup> On 25 November 2015, the Minister for Foreign Affairs announced funding of \$6 million to the UN Trust Fund, bringing total support to \$13.11 million since November 2012.



Foreign Minister Julie Bishop meets with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon at UN Headquarters in New York, Thursday 24 September 2015. Photo credit: Trevor Collens

global understanding of what works to prevent violence against women and transform harmful masculinities.

- **Family Health and Safety Studies in the Pacific.** Since 2008, Australia has supported studies using the World Health Organization's methodology on the prevalence of violence against women. Studies have been conducted in Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu.

## Regional partnerships

Australia engages in regular dialogue on the importance of addressing violence against women in bilateral and regional forums. This includes with international organisations and forums, such as the Group of Twenty (G20), multilateral banks (particularly the Asian Development Bank and World Bank), and regional organisations and forums, such as the Asia Pacific Economic Forum (APEC), Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and Pacific Islands Forum (PIF). Australia encourages and works with these forums to develop strategies such as action plans, and to coordinate and monitor responses to violence against women.

# Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls

Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls, Natasha Stott Despoja, is one of Australia's most senior global advocates for gender equality. Her work reflects the central position of empowerment of women and girls in Australia's diplomatic and development agenda. The Ambassador's participation in multilateral and regional meetings, along with her bilateral advocacy, ensures that Australia has a strong voice in international efforts to empower women.

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**“We stand beside all those who are affected by violence and renew our commitment to realise a world where women and girls can live free of violence and the fear of violence.”**

Natasha Stott Despoja, Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls, in her keynote address at the inaugural Women's Forum at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), Malta, 23 November 2015

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One of Ambassador Stott Despoja's key priorities is eliminating violence against women and girls and supporting survivors. At the UN Security Council, UN Commission on the Status of Women and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), and through regional organisations such as ASEAN and IORA, Ambassador Stott Despoja has pressed for stronger commitments to protect women and girls from violence and address the gender inequalities underpinning violence. She has visited more than 24 countries, launching programs to prevent violence and provide services for survivors and their families. The Pacific remains a focus, but Ambassador Stott Despoja has also announced new funding initiatives in Bhutan, India and Cambodia. These include, funding for a national outreach campaign to end violence against women and girls in Bhutan, assisting trafficked women and girls in India, and supporting women and girls with disabilities in Cambodia.



Natasha Stott Despoja, Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls, delivers a keynote address at the inaugural CHOGM Women's Forum, Malta, 23 November 2015. Photo credit: CHOGM 2015 Taskforce, Malta

## Addressing violence against women and girls in humanitarian settings

More than 59 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced in 2014 as a result of persecution, conflict, generalised violence, or human rights violations. Today, more than half of the world's refugees are children.<sup>9</sup> Being displaced exacerbates vulnerabilities and means women and girls are more likely to experience discrimination and lack safe and equitable access to humanitarian assistance. This can contribute to increased risks of intimate partner violence, sexual violence and exploitation, forced marriage, unplanned pregnancy, pregnancy complications, and exposure to sex or labour trafficking. It can also disrupt girls' education. Sexual violence, including rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution and forced pregnancy, continues to be used as a tactic of war.<sup>10</sup>

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9 Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2014. *UNHCR Global Trends—Forced Displacement in 2014*. Geneva: UNHCR.

10 Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2015. Op. cit.



It is a long-standing principle that Australia's humanitarian responses to support those affected by natural disasters and armed conflict pay particular attention to the needs and rights of women and girls. Preventing and responding to gender-based violence is a key priority in Australia's *Protection in Humanitarian Action Framework (2013)*.

Australia's support in humanitarian settings includes funding for the following:

- Global protection activities through the Women's Refugee Commission, Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Protection (ProCap) and Gender Standby Capacity Projects (GenCap), and the Global Protection Cluster's Gender-based Violence Area of Responsibility.
- International Committee of the Red Cross' Special Appeal to Strengthen the Response to Sexual Violence.
- Provision of minimum life-saving sexual and reproductive health supplies and services in emergencies which includes ways to address sexual and gender-based violence, and plan for comprehensive recovery services.
- UN Women's Global Acceleration Instrument for Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action.
- Implementation of the UNHCR's *Action against Sexual and Gender-based Violence Strategy*.

Australia supported the *International Protocol on the Investigation and Documentation of Sexual Violence in Conflict* launched in London in June 2014 at the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict. Australia has also signed the global *Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies* communiqué.

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**“The use of sexual violence in conflict is an appalling human rights abuse; and the absence of women from conflict prevention initiatives and peace negotiations has profound and devastating consequences for the preservation and rebuilding of lasting peace in conflict-affected states. My advocacy on these issues is a core element of my work as Ambassador.”**

Natasha Stott Despoja, Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls, Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, London, June 2014

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# From global commitments to local action

Building on global work, Australia's foreign policy and aid program provides direct and practical support on the ground to prevent and respond to violence against women.

This includes the Australian Government working with other governments, UN agencies, civil society organisations and women's rights' organisations at local level. Australia's advocacy and programs focus on ensuring that women can access support services, including sexual and reproductive health services and legal redress, as well as strengthening understanding and practice of preventing violence against women.



(From left to right) Natasha Stott Despoja, Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls, and Melissa Alvarado, UN Women's former Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW) specialist, at the launch of the EVAW toolkit for Women and Girls with Disabilities in Fiji, 30 April 2015. Photo credit: UN Women



Participants at a training session on women's rights, gender equality and gender-based violence at the Women and Girls Centre in Myanmar. Photo credit: Ben Manser, UNFPA

# Providing access to support services

Violence against women is a breach of their human rights. It kills, disrupts lives and fosters ongoing fear. Women often get trapped in a vicious cycle of violence from which they cannot break free. This cripples their ability to stand up against their perpetrators and, in many cases, weakens access to essential services and legal support.

International evidence shows that violence against women escalates during conflict. It also remains at high levels after conflict and is exacerbated in the aftermath of natural disasters where women and girls are displaced.<sup>11</sup>

Responding to such violence requires women to access essential and integrated support services. This is fundamental to responding to such violence, whatever the context.

Australia supports partner governments and civil society organisations to increase women's access to essential support services by:

- providing counselling, accommodation, legal and practical support for women and their children
- assisting governments to improve health sector and workplace responses to violence against women
- supporting governments to enable access to social protection or social transfer
- ensuring responses integrate and respond to factors that increase women's vulnerability to violence.

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<sup>11</sup> Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2015. *Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action*, Geneva: Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

# Putting it into practice—in Fiji

## Disability inclusive toolkit on ending violence against women in Fiji

Australia supported a study by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre which revealed that 64 per cent of women and girls in Fiji experience physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, women and girls living with disabilities are at greater risk. Their awareness of and access to services is constrained by physical, social and economic barriers. For many, social isolation is a consequence of violence.

Setareki Macanawai, the Chief Executive Officer of the Pacific Disability Forum, is emphatic that the world must 'speak up when inappropriate behaviour towards women and girls with disabilities occurs in the workplace, among families or in the immediate community.'

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**"In all our efforts to eliminate violence against women we must include measures to assist those with particular vulnerabilities, to encourage the participation and active involvement of those with a disability and to ensure their access to justice and support services."**

Natasha Stott Despoja, Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls, at the launch of the toolkit in Suva on 30 April 2015

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To help respond, Australia supported the development of the Toolkit on Eliminating Violence Against Women And Girls With Disabilities in Fiji. This was funded through the UN Women Pacific Regional Ending Violence Against Women Facility Fund. The toolkit, developed by the Pacific Disability Forum and Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation, includes group exercises, role plays, case studies and practical tools. Organisations can use the toolkit to build understanding of the barriers women and girls with disabilities face. It also helps ensure that services are accessible and that action plans are included in planning processes.

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<sup>12</sup> Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, 2013. *Somebody's Life, Everybody's Business! National Research on Women's Health and Life Experiences in Fiji (2010/2011): A survey exploring the prevalence, incidence and attitudes to intimate partner violence in Fiji*, Suva: Fiji Women's Crisis Centre.

## Toolkit on Eliminating Violence Against Women And Girls With Disabilities In Fiji



This toolkit was developed by the Pacific Disability Forum, working with Disabled People's Organisations and the Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation, the national umbrella body for Disabled People's Organisations. Photo credit: Pacific Disability Forum and the Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation

# Putting it into practice—in Myanmar

## Responding to and preventing gender-based violence in Myanmar

In conflict-affected areas of Myanmar's Northern Rakhine State, gender-based violence includes sexual violence, intimate partner violence, trafficking, forced and early marriage, and exploitation. This violence has physical, social, psychological and economic impacts. It also decreases women's access to life-saving sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning.

To respond, Australia supports UNFPA's emergency assistance program—Integrated Gender Based Violence Prevention and Response in Rakhine State—which provides a holistic approach to reproductive health and response services to victims of violence.

The program promotes a coordinated and multi-sectoral approach to addressing gender-based violence, which includes providing sexual and reproductive health services for women through mobile health clinics. Outreach workers raise awareness in the broader community to address and mitigate the causes and incidence of violence against women.

The program also addresses the need to secure the safety of women and girls and ensure their dignity and good health in all humanitarian responses, including in armed conflict and during natural disasters. UNFPA has included indicators on gender-based violence and life-saving sexual and reproductive health care and services in the 2015 Humanitarian Response Plan for Myanmar.





Dignity kit being handed out to a participant at the Women and Girls Centre in Myanmar.  
Photo credit: Ben Manser, UNFPA



# Putting it into practice—in Indonesia

Supporting survivors of violence through Women's Crisis Centres in Indonesia

In Indonesia, the Empowering Indonesian Women for Poverty Reduction (MAMPU) program works with the National Commission on Eliminating Violence against Women, *Komnas Perempuan*, and an extensive network of organisations across the country to provide services for survivors of violence. The program also supports research and data collection on the incidence of violence and implements prevention activities. To date, MAMPU has directly supported more than 2000 women survivors.



Sri Mujiyati, Counsellor at Women's Crisis Centre and her four children in Bantul District, Yogyakarta.  
Photo credit: Ng Swan Ti, MAMPU

Women's Crisis Centres are an important part of this network. They provide critical and life-saving assistance to survivors. They also manage their cases and recovery, working with local governments to strengthen referral systems to hospitals and police. In many cases, police officers ask teams from Women's Crisis Centres to assist survivors.

One such centre is *Nurani Perempuan* in West Sumatra. It provides psychological and legal assistance to survivors of domestic violence, trafficking and sexual violence and their families, as well as shelter support. The centre's monthly meetings support women and complement counselling work. It has developed guidance materials for community paralegals, developed standard operating procedures for shelters and services to women survivors of violence, and established referral networks.

Volunteer counsellors are central to the success of the centres. Counsellor Sri Mujiyati supports women with disabilities at a crisis centre in Yogyakarta. MAMPU supports this centre to provide community information on women's sexual and reproductive rights and training on case handling. Sri counsels survivors and works with local officials and the community to improve understanding of the causes of violence and support services available.

# Putting it into practice—in Lebanon

## Protecting Syrian refugees from gender-based violence in Lebanon

More than half of the estimated 1.1 million Syrian refugees living in Lebanon are women and girls who, along with poor Lebanese communities, are disproportionately affected by violence, sexual exploitation and abuse. In Lebanon, 87 per cent of survivors of gender-based violence are reported to be female.<sup>13</sup>



A Syrian woman finds refuge in a shelter in Lebanon, giving her family renewed hope.  
Photo credit: Nikki Gamer, Catholic Relief Services

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13 Catholic Relief Services, 2015. *Protection and support for vulnerable Syrian and Lebanese Women.*

Women face heightened risks of discrimination, inequality and violence in post-conflict settings. Moreover, women and girls from households with a higher incidence of poverty, female-headed households, and women and girls with disabilities, are most at risk.

Australia responds to these risks through the Humanitarian Partnership Agreement. Australia supports Caritas Australia, Plan International Australia and their local partners to strengthen protection for Syrian refugees and host communities in Lebanon.

Australia's support includes training for primary health care staff, security and police services, and volunteers to help recognise and treat survivors of violence. Australia also provides funding for shelters which offer women a safe space to live with their children; and cash to non-shelter survivors to assist with rent and food costs for up to two months. Survivors are also provided with legal counselling, court representation, as well as psycho-social support and group therapy as needed.

Australia has provided more than \$190 million in humanitarian assistance since the conflict in Syria began in 2011. This includes support for people inside Syria as well as refugees and their host communities in neighbouring countries.

# Putting it into practice—in Mongolia

## Emergency domestic violence shelter for women and children in Mongolia

The National Center Against Violence in Mongolia estimates that one in three women in Mongolia has experienced domestic violence.<sup>14</sup> While the Mongolian Government recognises the need to protect women from violence through its 2004 domestic violence law, implementation has been weak with few available support services.

In 2014, the Australian Government supported the establishment of the Uvurkhangai Emergency Domestic Violence Shelter for Women and Children. The shelter, in Uvurkhangai Province, southern Mongolia, provides 24-hour emergency accommodation for women and children escaping domestic violence.

The shelter opened in June 2015. It includes eight beds, a children's playroom and space for counselling. In its first three months, seven women and three children stayed in the shelter for between one and four nights at a time.

The shelter employs two social workers and a psychologist, who counsel women and children. They also partner with law enforcement agencies, medical health centres and the Mongolian Labour Department to improve the quality of domestic violence services.

The shelter also holds community education sessions in Uvurkhangai Province on preventing domestic violence. Two volunteers, supported through the Australian Volunteers for International Development program, have delivered training and workshops on domestic violence and referral services.

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14 National Center Against Violence in Mongolia, 2010. The Advocates for Human Rights, *Violence against Women in Mongolia*.



Opening ceremony of the Emergency Domestic Violence Shelter for Women and Children, Uvurkhangai Province. From left: Ms Lkham.Ya (Staff, Department of Children and Family Development), Mr Togtokhsuren.D (Governor), HE Mr Erdene.S (Minister, Ministry of Population Development and Social Protection). Photo credit: Mr Uuganbayar.B, Soyombo TV—Uvurkhangai Province





A woman with her baby at the Women and Girls Centre in Myanmar. Photo credit: Ben Manser, UNFPA

# Providing access to justice

It can be overwhelming for women to break through barriers preventing them from accessing legal assistance and navigating the legal and justice system. While some countries have progressed criminalising violence against women over the past few decades, laws are often not fully or effectively implemented. In addition, many countries still do not recognise forced sex (rape) within marriage as a crime. Accessing legal assistance to escape a situation of violence and seeking justice are critical for women and girl survivors of violence to begin to heal and rehabilitate.

Australia is working with partner governments and civil society organisations to develop and implement strong justice sector responses. This includes support:

- to develop, implement, monitor and review laws and policies that address violence against women and children and improve their access to the justice system
- to help strengthen the capacity of the justice system, including the police, courts and informal structures, to respond effectively to violence against women
- for NGOs helping women access justice, including by increasing their knowledge of the legal system and their rights.



# Putting it into practice—in Pakistan

Accessing justice and challenging violence against women in Pakistan



A survivor of violence discusses her case with a legal officer, supported through Australia's Challenging Gender Based Violence Program. Photo credit: Trocaire

Violence against women is a serious problem in Pakistan. It includes rape, 'honour' killings, acid attacks, domestic violence as well as child, early and forced marriage. Accessing legal aid and seeking justice for these crimes are significant challenges for women. In addition to an active advocacy program at national and provincial levels to promote gender equity and to encourage action to eliminate gender-based violence in Pakistan, Australia is supporting the Challenging Gender Based Violence Program, managed by Trocaire and implemented by eight local NGOs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh provinces.

Asma's\* experience highlights the real difference legal assistance can make. In 2010, Asma was married to her cousin and they had one son together. After a year, Asma's husband demanded that she bring him her father's property documents. Asma realised that her husband's motivation for marriage was to gain property.

When Asma refused, her husband became violent. He beat her badly and threw her out of the house. Asma escaped to her parent's home. Instead of being welcomed, the family elders tried to force Asma to return to her husband. They accused her of being a family disgrace.

While staying with her parents, Asma's father had a heart attack and passed away. Asma wanted to file a case for child maintenance to support her son, but no one would support her in court. 'In our culture, a woman is considered bad character if she approaches a court for justice,' she explains.

Asma asked in her village what she could do. She was referred to a local NGO which guided Asma through the entire process, including having her case filed by a pro-bono lawyer. After a long court proceeding, an order was passed in Asma's favour for monthly child maintenance benefits. Asma is thankful for the support she received which has enabled her, and her child, to live their lives with financial security and free from the threat of further violence.

*\*name changed to protect identity*

# Putting it into practice—in Timor-Leste

## Navigating the justice system in Timor-Leste

Australia is implementing Nabilan: Ending Violence Against Women Program in Timor-Leste, through The Asia Foundation. This program aims to reduce the proportion of women who experience violence, and improve the wellbeing of women and children affected by violence. It also helps women navigate the formal justice system and ensure justice actors, such as the police, lawyers and the courts, register, progress and resolve cases.

In February 2015, a survivor of incestuous sexual abuse tried to report her case against her father to the Vulnerable Persons Unit of the Timor-Leste police. The unit failed to take her seriously and accused her of lying. Turned away and unable to return home, the survivor hid in a Timor-Leste Government child protection official's office overnight. When the official found the survivor, she contacted Nabilan's women's legal aid partner organisation, *Asisténsia Legál ba Feto no Labarik* (ALFeLa, Women and Children's Legal Aid).

ALFeLa tried to explain the serious nature of the case to the Vulnerable Persons Unit, initially without success. The unit considered the case to be a domestic violence incident.

ALFeLa then took the survivor to Psychosocial Recovery and Development in East Timor (PRADET) in Dili, an organisation supported by Nabilan to provide forensic and medical services. PRADET's medical examination confirmed the survivor had suffered sexual violence. Armed with forensic evidence, ALFeLa took the case back to the Vulnerable Persons Unit and the Prosecution. This time, with the backing of ALFeLa and PRADET, the case was registered with the prosecutor's office. The suspect has since been charged with offences against the survivor and her sister and is awaiting a hearing in Baucau Court.



From left: Laura Afonso de Jesus and Marcia Sequeira, legal officers at ALFeLa, enact the roles of a lawyer and client before entering a court in Dili. Photo credit: Conor Ashleigh

# Putting it into practice—in Cambodia

## Helping women access justice in Cambodia

Women who have experienced violence in Cambodia often do not have access to critical services, including counselling, shelter and legal support. Around one in five women reports physical, sexual or emotional abuse from her spouse.<sup>15</sup> Few seek legal help after experiencing violence because of financial and attitudinal barriers in the law and justice sector.

The Access to Justice for Women Program funded by Australia addresses this by supporting women and girls, particularly in rural areas, who have been victims of, or are at risk of, violence in Kompong Thom and Siem Reap provinces. The program works with local institutions, such as provincial departments of women's affairs and court systems, to train Judicial Police Agents (JPAs).<sup>16</sup>

'The JPAs have four roles,' explains Mrs. Kang Sithavy, a Provincial Department of Women's Affairs staff member and JPA in Siem Reap. 'Firstly, we represent the victim by acting as an accuser against their attacker. Secondly, we report and log the incidents and all subsequent case activities. Thirdly, we investigate the crimes along with the police. Lastly, we also investigate the procedures of the courts, to make sure domestic violence cases are being handled appropriately.'

In December 2014, there were 129 JPAs at national level providing support to survivors of violence, with another 108 at sub-national level.

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15 Of women aged 15 to 49 years old. *Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2014*, p. 257.

16 According to the *Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims 2005*, JPAs have a mandate to represent victims in court.



Training JPs on guidelines for legal protection of women and children in Siem Reap Province.  
Photo credit: *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)*, the German Development Agency

# Putting it into practice—in Africa

## Strengthening transitional and gender justice in Africa

From 21 September to 3 October 2015, an Australia Awards Fellowship program brought together leaders from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda to work on transitional and gender justice in post-conflict contexts.



Fellows from several post-conflict African countries talk about strategies for reconciliation and justice for survivors of human rights abuses. Photo credit: University of Sydney



Led by the University of Sydney and in collaboration with ActionAid, the 21 Fellows (18 women and three men) developed practical strategies for rebuilding post-conflict societies. They focused on reconciliation and delivering justice to survivors of human rights abuses, particularly women and girls.

The Fellows discussed best practice in administering transitional justice to address the needs of women affected by violence in conflict settings. They also developed practical strategies for implementing gender-sensitive transitional justice policy in their own countries.

The program was an opportunity for leaders from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya and Uganda, who are positioned to influence transitional justice policies and practices, to gather with women and men from Rwanda and South Africa who had personal experiences to share from their own countries. It was an empowering experience for the Fellows to share lessons, strategies, successes and challenges.

The Fellows were selected from a range of sectors—government, NGO, community and private—based on their work in leading women’s rights and gender justice organisations. The action plans developed provide ongoing opportunities for enhancing the impact of transitional and gender justice initiatives in Africa, including those developed as part of the Australian aid program.





Partnership brokering meeting with Provincial Alliances, as part of the Safe Families program in Solomon Islands. Photo credit: Peni Tawake, Pacific Leadership Program

# Preventing violence against women

Violence against women and girls is not acceptable anywhere, anytime. There is no single cause but the latest international evidence shows that certain factors consistently predict or drive higher levels of violence against women. These include beliefs and behaviours that demonstrate disrespect for women, low support for gender equality and adherence to stereotypical gender roles, relations and identities.<sup>17</sup>

In countries where women's economic, social and political rights are better protected, and where power and resources are more equally distributed, violence against women is significantly and consistently lower.<sup>18</sup>

Gender inequality is not only a cause of many forms of violence against women and girls, it contributes to its widespread acceptance and invisibility. This means that perpetrators are not accountable and survivors are discouraged from speaking out and accessing support and justice.<sup>19</sup>

Australia assists governments and civil society organisations to prevent violence against women and their children through support and advocacy for:

- a broad range of organisations conducting community awareness and advocacy, including with men
- research and evidence-based interventions changing community attitudes and ensuring the safety and empowerment of women
- prevention activities through the education sector
- protection and addressing sexual and gender-based violence in humanitarian emergencies and responses
- women playing an active and central role in peace-building and reconstruction efforts in post-conflict settings to ensure that women's safety and gender equality are prioritised.

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17 Our Watch, 2015. *Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia.*

18 Our Watch, 2015. *Ibid.*

19 *The Declaration on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls*; Agreed Conclusions of the 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

# Putting it into practice—in Afghanistan

## Supporting the voices of women in Afghanistan

Australia is working with the Afghan Government to protect and empower Afghan women and girls, including by implementing Afghanistan's Elimination of Violence Against Women Law and the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan.

Along with providing support services and improving access to justice for women and children who survive violence, the Australian aid program works with local organisations to help change community attitudes, prevent violence and advocate for the protection of women's rights. This includes support to the Afghan Women's Network and its 115 member organisations.

Australia funds the Afghan Women's Network's Young Women's Leadership Program. This program aims to increase opportunities for Afghan women in rural and urban areas to influence and contribute to decision making in their communities. It is building a network of young women leaders in Afghanistan. It is also strengthening women's networks across the country to advocate for, and raise awareness of, violence against women and of women's rights, and to prevent violence from occurring.

The Afghan Women's Network conducts monthly networking, advocacy and coordination meetings in 16 provinces among member organisations, civil society organisations, government officials and provincial Peace Councils. At these meetings, the Network advocates for the implementation of the Elimination of Violence Against Women law. The network researches the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 32 provinces. It regularly holds media conferences at provincial and national levels to advocate for the protection of women's rights, influence policy debates and support the long-term process of changing community attitudes.



Members of the Afghan Women's Network march in support of women's political participation. Photo credit: Afghan Women's Network



The Afghan Women's Network celebrates the graduation of participants from the Young Women's Leadership Program. Photo credit: Afghan Women's Network

# Putting it into practice—in Solomon Islands

## Preventing violence and making families safe in Solomon Islands

The incidence of violence against women in Solomon Islands is among the highest in the world. An estimated two-thirds of women aged 15 to 49 have experienced physical or sexual violence (or both) from an intimate partner.<sup>20</sup> Creating safe family environments to prevent violence against women and girls is a central priority for the Government of Solomon Islands.

Australia provides funding to the Safe Families program, which works with the Solomon Islands Government, communities, churches, NGOs and other donors to prevent family violence. This ambitious program aims to create and sustain community-led attitudinal change by supporting community prevention activities, facilitating and building coalitions at provincial level, and rigorously monitoring and evaluating programs.

Safe Families is innovative. It works with a consortium of local civil society groups. New models of provincial alliances have been established between civil society groups, churches, government agencies and service providers such as police, health and legal services. The program's action/reflection approach enables partners to continually monitor implementation, learn lessons and make program adjustments when required.

While Safe Families is in its early stages, members of communities in targeted provinces already have greater understanding that family violence is unacceptable. Community members are willing to talk about the issues and develop new strategies to prevent violence.

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<sup>20</sup> Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2009. *Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study: A study on violence against women and children.*





The Safe Families team facilitating a scorecard session with women in Temotu Province, Solomon Islands.  
Photo credit: Annie Rafeasi, IOD PARC

# Putting it into practice— in Papua New Guinea

## Making public transport safe for women in Papua New Guinea

More than 90 per cent of women and girls in Port Moresby have experienced some form of violence or harassment when accessing public transport.<sup>21</sup> This includes while on buses, walking to and from bus stops, waiting for transport or riding in taxis. The most common types of abuse reported by women in a survey conducted by UN Women include verbal sexual remarks, robbery, threats and intimidation, inappropriate touching and indecent exposure.

To respond to these issues and to prevent violence against women, the *Meri Seif Bus* (Safe Bus) was established by the Ginigoada Bisnis Development Foundation and UN Women, in partnership with the National Capital District Commission, as part of a comprehensive Safe Public Transport Program. The purple women-only bus is a fixture on the road between Town and Gerehu, with more than 400 women using the service daily. It operates during morning and afternoon peak periods, with additional services planned.

The *Meri Seif Bus* is one of several interventions improving public transport safety. Other interventions within the bus program include trialing cashless ticketing, improving safety at bus stops, and improving responses to violence against women and girls on or around public transport.

The Australian Government and UN Women are providing funding to the Safe Public Transport Program for the next three years, including for operational costs.

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21 UN Women, 2014. *Making Port Moresby Safer for Women and Girls: A Scoping Study*.



The women-only *Meri Seif Bus* funded by the Australian Government.  
Photo credit: Mary Josephine Smare, UN Women



# Putting it into practice—in Brazil

Raising awareness on preventing violence against women in Brazil



Since its launch in March 2015, more than 30 000 truck drivers have been involved with the Caravana Siga Bem convoy. Photo credit: Bruno Spada/UN Women

The Brazilian Government is committed to reducing violence against women and has made significant gains in legislation over the last decade.<sup>22</sup> Despite progress, the statistics remain alarming. Nearly 15 women are killed every day in Brazil and more than 92 000

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22 In March 2015, Brazil passed a new law criminalising femicide, the gender-motivated killing of women, and set tougher penalties for perpetrators. This built on the 2006 *Maria da Penha* Law on domestic violence which mandated preventative measures, women's police stations, special courts and tough sentences.

women were murdered between 1980 and 2010.<sup>23</sup> The 2015 Map of Violence<sup>24</sup> concluded that Brazil was the fifth most dangerous country for women around the world.<sup>25</sup>

In response, Australia has partnered with UN Women and Brazilian NGO, *Caravana Siga Bem*, on the Brave are Not Violent (*O Valente não é Violento*) initiative to encourage new discussions about gender stereotypes to prevent violence.

Since its launch in March 2015, the initiative's messages have been carried 32 000 kilometres by *Caravana Siga Bem*. Thirty-five trucks have travelled in two convoys to more than 49 cities in 20 states. Specialists travelling with the trucks deliver workshops in remote and rural areas about violence against women and gender stereotypes. Participating truck drivers are educated through the 'Brave or Violent' booklet and commit to carrying the anti-violence message while travelling the country.

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23 Institute of Applied Economic Research, 2013. *Violência contra a mulher: feminicídios no Brasil*. Brasília, Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada.

24 This is the 2015 survey 'Map of Violence: Murder of Women in Brazil'. This comprehensive study details the rates of female homicides across Brazil's 26 states and federal territory. <http://www.mapadaviolencia.org.br/>

25 Latin American Faculty of Social Science, 2015. *Mapa da violência 2015: Homicídio de mulheres no Brasil*, p28.

# Putting it into practice—in Vanuatu

## Male advocates play important role to prevent violence against women in Vanuatu

In Vanuatu, 72 per cent of all women have experienced physical and/or sexual abuse in their lifetime.<sup>26</sup> The Vanuatu Women's Centre is the only holistic service provider for women and girls experiencing violence in Vanuatu. It provides counselling, support and legal services. Australia has provided core funding to the centre since 1994.

The Male Advocates Program is an important part of the centre's work because it engages men to prevent violence against women. Male advocates are encouraged to advance women's rights within their spheres of influence. The advocates are drawn from diverse roles such as police officers, magistrates, activists and youth leaders.

After completing a seven-week training course, the advocates practise ways to challenge patriarchal beliefs within their networks. This includes raising issues at men's *kava*<sup>27</sup> circles, talking with community chiefs and advocating on behalf of women with police officers. Advocates raise awareness of violence against women as a crime, the nature of coercive control and ways that male privilege denies women's human rights.

Iaken Ampen, a Senior Sergeant with the Vanuatu Police Force, is a male advocate who has been supporting the Vanuatu Women's Centre for 10 years. Iaken is committed to ensuring that the public and the police understand the forms of violence against women and women's rights under the law. He introduced training for all new police recruits on gender equality, domestic violence and Vanuatu's Family Protection Act. Iaken has also played an integral role in the design and delivery of training on the Family Violence Policy and Standard Operating Procedures of the Vanuatu Police Force. The operating procedures provide guidelines and expectations for all police officers to use when responding to and preventing family violence.

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26 Vanuatu Women's Centre, 2013. Additional data analysis from the Vanuatu Women's Centre's National Survey on Women's Lives and Family Relationships. Port Vila: Vanuatu Women's Centre.

27 Kava is a drink made from the roots of the kava plant (*Piper methysticum*). It is well known throughout the Pacific. In the past it was used almost exclusively in traditional ceremonies, but today it is drunk recreationally on a daily basis by people, mainly men, who congregate with friends in kava bars or at home to drink kava in the evening.



Iaken Ampen, a male advocate for the Vanuatu Women's Centre. Photo credit: Australian High Commission, Port Vila, Vanuatu

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## **Contact**

Inquiries about this document should be directed to:

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
RG Casey Building  
John McEwen Crescent  
Barton ACT 0221  
Australia

Phone +61 2 6261 1111

Fax +61 2 6261 3111

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Contributing author: Sarah Boyd, Cardno Emerging Markets

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Cover image: The women-only *Meri Seif Bus* is a fixture on the road between Town-Gerehu in Port Moresby, with more than 400 women using the service each day. The Australian Government is providing \$3 million over three years from 2015 for the program.

Photo credit: DFAT

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