

women's rights are human rights: from words to action

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unspoken

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unheard

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caption

South Korean women used as sex slaves by the Japanese Imperial Army during the Second World War demand compensation and redress © AP

In it's in our hands, and yours. Your financial contribution to Amnesty International's Stop Violence Against Women campaign will generate real change and improve the lives of women all over the world.

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Exposing the facts

- At least one in three women has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime.
- At least 54 countries have discriminatory laws against women.
- Up to 70 per cent of female murder victims are killed by their male partners.
- More than 60 million women are 'missing' from the world today as a result of sex-selective abortions and female infanticide.

Changing the reality

We don't just call on governments, organizations and communities to change – we act to make that change a reality. As part of its campaign to Stop Violence Against Women, Amnesty International will fight to ensure that authorities at international, national and local levels:

- Introduce and enforce laws that protect women, and criminalize rape and other forms of violence against women.
- Change existing laws that discriminate against women and restrict women's rights.
- Establish and implement legal frameworks that treat violence in the family as seriously as violence in other contexts.
- Grant women safe access to reproductive health care and family planning.

Overcoming violence against women is no easy task – but for the many women suffering today, living their lives in fear and uncertainty, trapped under the shadow of violence; for our mothers, sisters, daughters and wives; for ourselves, we must have the courage to confront those in authority and demand change.

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Nobel laureate Toni Morrison has said,

'Oppressive language does more than represent violence; it is violence'

At the same time, liberating language does more than talk about change; it creates change.

caption

Celebrating the opening of the first safe house in Kenya to shelter girls threatened with female genital mutilation. Throughout the world, women are claiming the right to live free from the fear of violence and bringing hope to new generations of girls. © Paula Allen

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At the heart of Amnesty International's campaign to Stop Violence Against Women is the imperative to listen to the women and to women and believe them.

In June 2002, Mukharatan Bibi, a 30-year-old woman of the Gujjar tribe in Pakistan was sentenced by a 'tribal court' to being gang-raped as punishment for her younger brother's alleged 'illicit affair' with a girl from another tribe considered higher in the tribal hierarchy. Several hundred villagers stood by while the sentence was carried out.

'I told the female officer on duty at the front desk that I wanted to find out how I could report a rape. She started asking me questions about it in front of the other people also waiting at the station. When I told her that it had happened abroad, the first thing she said to me was "were you drunk at the time?"' – Testimony of a young woman who visited a police station in London, UK, in 2001.

Fifteen schoolgirls were burned to death and dozens of others injured in a fire at their school in Mecca. Religious police prevented the girls from leaving the building because they were not wearing headscarves and had no male relatives to receive them. They also reportedly prevented rescuers who were men from entering the premises.

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unacceptable

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Challenging the way we think and speak about women's rights

www.amnesty.org/actforwomen