



SUMMARY OF INTERNATIONAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (IVAWA)

Overview

The International Violence Against Women Act (IVAWA) aims to make combating violence against women a priority for U.S. foreign policy. The legislation authorizes strategic programs and services to women who are physically, sexually or psychologically abused in countries that have severe levels of violence against women and girls. The legislation is sponsored by Sens. Kerry (D-MA), Boxer (D-CA), Snowe (R-ME) and Collins (R-ME) in the Senate, and Reps. Delahunt (D-MA) and Poe (R-TX) in the House.

Legislation Highlights

IVAWA is comprehensive legislation that develops a 5-year strategy to reduce, prevent, and respond to violence against women and girls around the globe. IVAWA creates new governmental authorities, responsibilities, and provides funding for strategic global programs. President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton have shown strong and unwavering leadership on women's development, empowerment and protection; IVAWA will provide additional tools to build on the successes they have already begun to achieve. IVAWA brings together USAID, the State Department and other Federal agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations to implement effective programs and practices.

Empowering Women Strengthens Global Security

According to the United Nations, approximately 1 out of every 3 women throughout the world has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime. The World Health Organization has reported that up to 70 percent of women in some countries report having been victims of domestic violence at some stage in their lives. Lack of justice and impunity for acts of violence against women and girls often occur in places of insecurity and poor governance. In countries where gender-based violence is significant, IVAWA programs will partner with non-governmental groups to strengthen legal and judicial systems to prevent and punish violence against women and girls. The programs will seek to engage men and boys as community leaders, partners, and

advocates to foster new attitudes toward women and girls and understand the destructive nature of violence. With IVAWA, communities can overcome a reliance on violence, create stronger institutions and work together toward long-term, sustainable development. Through the implementation of IVAWA programs in these communities, U.S. assistance dollars will go further, radicalization will not be as appealing, and terrorists will not find safe-havens.

How IVAWA is Effective

- IVAWA does not fight the problem incrementally, but comprehensively through education and economic empowerment for women and girls, community programs for male leadership and advocacy, stronger legal and judicial structures, and greater capacity within health-care systems to respond to the physical and emotional needs of survivors and their families.
- It creates strong, new responsibilities and authorities for the Secretary of State and the Administrator of USAID to guide their agencies toward a coordinated, comprehensive approach to the fight against violence. In so doing, it mainstreams the issue, leverages existing funds, and helps U.S. dollars go further and last longer.
- It authorizes funding for five years to ensure continuity.
- Instead of one-off programs, it mandates a collaborative strategy for up to 20 countries that requires cooperation with other donor countries, multilateral organizations, private sector institutions and relevant Federal agencies.
- It considers the roles of all sectors in responding to violence in wartime and peace by mandating strong and effective training for foreign police and judicial officials, U.S. military in peacekeeping missions, and humanitarian workers in protection for vulnerable women and children in humanitarian, conflict and post-conflict environments.
- IVAWA funds research and data-collection on the causes and consequences of gender-based violence, to make the links between violence and poverty, and better focus our diplomatic and development strategies.
- Through IVAWA's special section on humanitarian crises, the Department of State will have new authorities to respond rapidly to reports of widespread violence against women and girls, and U.S. humanitarian programs will be required to factor in women's and girls' protection and security from the beginning.