



IVAWA BILL OVERVIEW 2017

One out of every three women worldwide will be physically, sexually, or otherwise abused during her lifetime—with rates reaching 70 percent in some countries. This type of violence ranges from rape to domestic violence and child marriage to so-called “honor killings.” Nearly 39,000 girls under the age 18 are married each day. Female genital cutting has impacted more than 200 million women and girls alive today. The International Labour Organization estimates that there are 20.9 million victims of human trafficking globally, 55% of whom are women and girls. Violent extremism is on the rise and it places the subordination of women at the center of the ideology and war tactics, where captured women and girls become tools for recruitment and commodities or a source of income for war chests. Violence against women and girls is a human rights violation, a public health epidemic, and a barrier to solving global challenges such as extreme poverty, HIV/AIDS and conflict. Violence against women and girls also has an economic cost to both household incomes and broader economic development around the world. Gender-based violence (GBV) occurs in peacetime and in conflict and knows no national or cultural barriers.

The **International Violence Against Women Act**, also known as **IVAWA**, makes ending violence against women and girls a top diplomatic, development, and foreign assistance priority by ensuring the U.S. government has a strategy to efficiently and effectively coordinate **existing** cross-governmental efforts to prevent and respond to GBV globally. IVAWA would ensure transparency by putting in place Congressional oversight of U.S. GBV initiatives that have been ongoing for years. Key to this accountability are two positions that would be tasked with overseeing a GBV strategy: the Senior Coordinator for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment at USAID and the State Department’s Office of Global Women’s Issues with the position of Ambassador-at-Large. **These entities exist within the current agency structure, having first been established in the early 2000’s.**

IVAWA will streamline and better coordinate anti-GBV programming across various U.S. government agencies. **Since this legislation is aimed at coordinating and integrating existing programs, it does not require the appropriation of additional funding.** More specifically, IVAWA would do the following:

CALLS FOR COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION:

In developing the strategy, the Secretary of State is called upon to collaborate with heads of relevant Federal agencies, the Senior Policy Operating Group on Trafficking in Persons, and representatives of civil society and multilateral organizations. This is an important step towards creating a more coordinated and collaborative process and ensuring that all prevention and response efforts reflect a multi-sectoral approach.

IDENTIFIES PRIORITY COUNTRY SELECTION:

IVAWA establishes criteria for selection of priority countries where the strategy is to be implemented, and draws attention to key requisite selection criterion such as the capacity by government or nongovernmental organizations in the selected country to manage and implement gender-based violence prevention and response program activities.

For more information please contact any of the Coalition Co-Chairs

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DEVELOPMENT OF COUNTRY PLANS:

IVAWA calls for the creation of comprehensive, multi-sectoral, and holistic individual country plans designed to address and respond to violence against women and girls. The plans are to take into consideration factors such as the capacity of the identified country to address and respond to violence against women and girls, and existence of coordination mechanisms with the selected country's federal government. Furthermore, the plans are to include description of the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and a projection of general level of resources needed to achieve the said objectives.

ESTABLISHES REPORTING & BRIEFING REQUIREMENT:

IVAWA ensures transparency in this process and calls on the Ambassador-at-Large and the Senior Coordinator to submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report detailing the priority country selection process, country plans, and an overview of the programming being undertaken. It further calls on the Ambassador and the Senior Coordinator to provide to the appropriate congressional committees a briefing on international violence against women and girls prevention and response strategies, programming, and associated outcomes and an assessment of human and financial resources necessary to fulfill the objectives of this Act.

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