



COMITÉ DE LA CONDITION DE LA FEMME
COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN



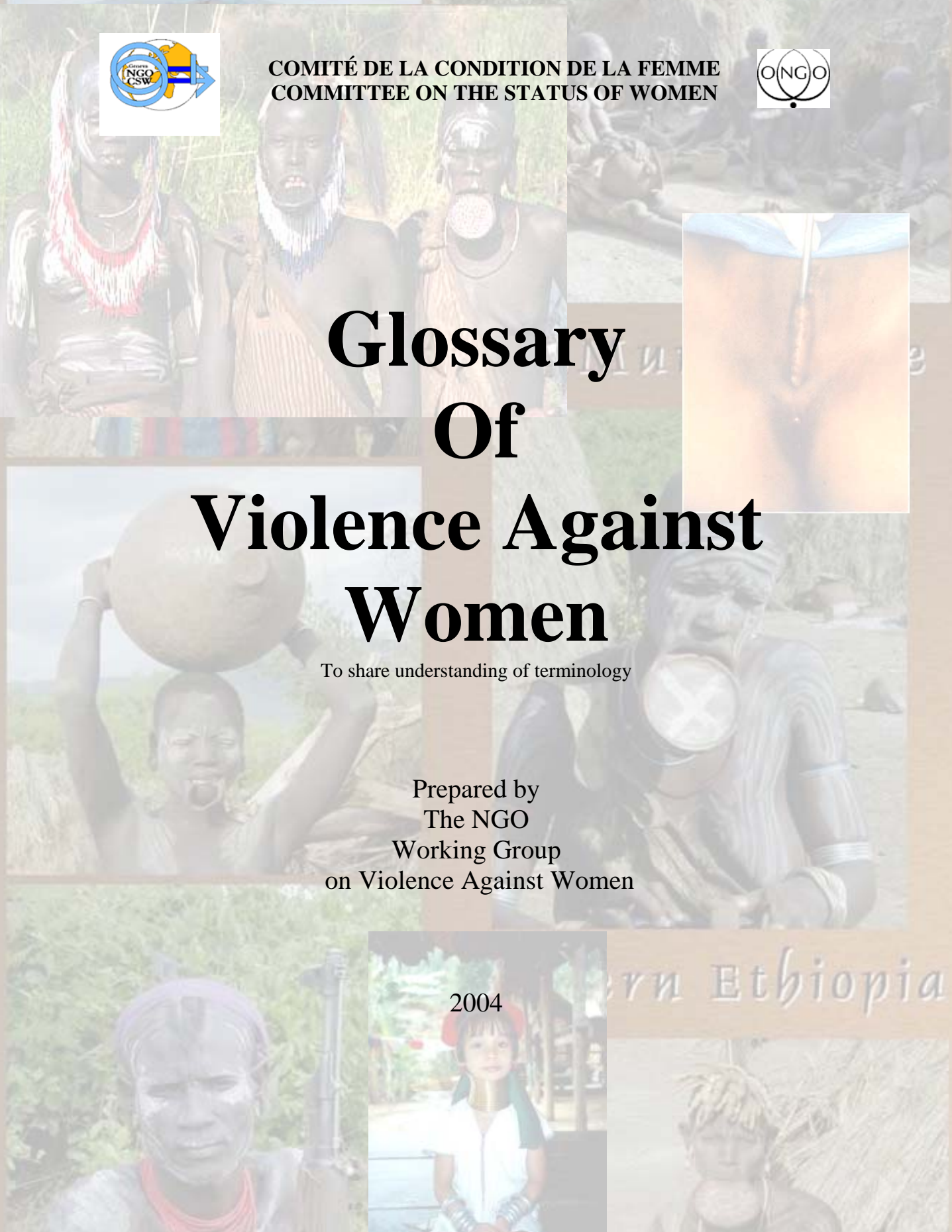
Glossary Of Violence Against Women

To share understanding of terminology

Prepared by
The NGO
Working Group
on Violence Against Women

2004

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Working Group on Violence Against Women

The Working Group on Violence Against Women was born out of the long standing efforts of the Working Group on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women set up in 1977 as the Working Group on Female Circumcision.

The Group operates under the umbrella of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women which in turn is a Special body of the Conference of Non – Governmental Organizations (CONGO). The principle objectives of the Working Group on Violence Against Women are:

- To follow up the recommendations contained in the reports of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and of the Special Rapporteur on Harmful Traditional Practices.
- To lobby for the adoption and implementation of mechanisms, legislation and action plans at the national level to eliminate violence against women.
- To identify the root causes of violence against women and the consequences of such violence and to bring these to the attention of governments.
- To empower national NGOs through the provision of relevant information in order for them to act as pressure groups for policy change.
- To continue to work closely with the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women , Special Rapporteur on Harmful Traditional Practices and other concerned Special Rapporteurs.

Foreword

Gender - based violence affects women throughout their life cycle, from the cradle to the grave. Although it is an age – old tradition commonly practiced among all human societies, its root causes are becoming increasingly structural. Fortunately, there is also a new and growing shift in public perception that recognises violations of women's human rights as fundamental human rights violations. It is also increasingly accepted that gender-based violence carries with it unsustainable social and economic costs. At a time when social problems are quantified in financial terms, it can be hoped that this new awareness will lead to the recognition that it makes economic sense to invest prevention of violence against women and promotion of women's human rights.

Misinterpretation and wrong application of religious teachings are often advanced to keep women subservient, deny them access to basic services in health, education, etc. and subject them to violence. The studies of Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, the previous Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and those of Ms. Halima E. Warzazi, Special Rapporteur on Harmful Traditional Practices confirm this state of affairs with compelling evidence on the magnitude of the problem. Ms. Warzazi has been working as a Special Rapporteur on Harmful Traditional Practices since 1988 submitting reports on the issue. Mrs. Radhika Coomaraswamy was appointed by the Commission on Human Rights in 1994 and served up until 2002 presenting reports on violence against women. They both have presented proposals on how best to address the problem of violence.

In a context relating to fundamental rights, such as the right to health, and indeed to life, the WHO *World report on Violence* (2002) has clearly

demonstrated that violence is a major, and very costly, health problem, targeting a sizable percentage of women. Over the years, the UN Fund for Population has also addressed this issue and so has the ILO regarding violence at the workplace. Finally, UNESCO deals with gender – based violence in the media targeting girls and boys and with the serious impact this may have on both in adult life. All of these organisations have collaborated with civil societies to establish definitions and recommend guidelines for action.

As a follow-up to the work of the Special Rapporteurs, the NGO Working Group on Violence against women has compiled a glossary of violence against women highlighting the actions or non actions undertaken by governments to address this problem.

Further, as the same words often mean different things to different people, and in different contexts, this document also provides some relevant definitions used by the international community, including the UN Specialised Agencies. This list cannot be exhaustive but this document could serve as a starting point for easy reference. Further, the format of this document will ensure that the compilation of terms remains an on-going process and allows for additions and/or modifications as concepts, emphasis and priorities evolve.

We hope this Glossary will be helpful to governments, state institutions and decision makers as well as NGOs and other stakeholders, including the private sector, to ensure all begin speaking the same language when discussing various forms of violence against women.

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Definition of Violence Against Women

Article 1 of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in its resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993, defines the term “violence against women” as: “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 in private life. Three contexts of violence are differentiated in Article 2: Family, community and state. The forms shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to, the following:

- a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family: wife-battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, and female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation.
- b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community: rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work and education institutions, trafficking in women and forced prostitution.
- c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.

The various forms of violence listed in Article 2, while not exhaustive, demonstrate that much violence against women stems from unequal power relations, society's insistence on controlling women's sexuality, and the importance of women in protecting family "honour." Importantly, Article 3 of the Declaration affirms women's equal right to the enjoyment of a variety of rights, including the right to be free from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

Main international instruments

- Universal Declaration on Human Rights
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its optional protocol*
- Recommendation 19 of the Committee on the CEDAW
- Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two optional protocol *
- Convention Against Torture and other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading treatment or punishment *
- Convention against Transnational and its Optional Protocols *
- Vienna Declaration and Plan for Action (VDPA Vienna), 1993
- The UN Declaration on Violence Against Women, 1993
- Declaration and Programme of Action of ICPD (International Conference on Population and Development), 1994
- The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995
- The Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols (1949 and 1977)*
- The Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages (1964)*
- Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of Others (1949)*

* Legally binding

Glossary

I. Violence against women in the family

The most common form of violence is the violence against women in the private sphere. Already before birth where son preference is current: sex-selective abortion and female infanticide take place. During childhood devaluation of girls, which results in practices such as enforced malnutrition, unequal access to medical care, incest, the sale of children by their parents for prostitution or bonded labour, female genital mutilation, early childhood marriage and other harmful traditional practices are common. Then throughout their adult lives, women suffer from physical or psychological violence: marital rape, battering, domestic murder, dowry and bride-price related violence, sati and honour killings. Older women may become victims of violence at the hands of family because of their age. In some countries old widows are chased away from the society as witches.

Although the distinct social, cultural and political contexts in which violence in the family exists give rise to different forms, its prevalence and pattern are remarkably consistent, spanning national and socio-economic borders and cultural identities. It frequently stems from the same root, their subordinate status and their subjugation as women. Violence happening in the domestic sphere is unfortunately often not treated by the authorities as a serious crime but as a private matter.

Dowry death

Killing a woman whose family fails to pay full dowry (some countries in Asia)

Dry sex

Inserting herbs into women's vagina to keep it dry. Repeated sexual relation in this condition can cause pain and laceration (e. g. Southern Africa).

Early and childhood marriage

The marriage of children and adolescents below the age of 18, which can lead to poverty, health problems (fistula), early pregnancy and vulnerability to violence (e. g. Middle East and some African countries)

Forced marriage

Any situation in which women and girls are coerced, enticed, induced or tricked into marriage. Forced marriages are sometimes used to justify the sexual exploitation of children, especially young girls (e. g. Ethiopia, Turkey).

Female Genital Mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM), often referred to as 'female circumcision', comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural, religious or other non-therapeutic reasons. There are different types of female genital mutilation known to be practised today. They include:

- Type I - excision of the prepuce, with or without excision of part or all of the clitoris;
- Type II - excision of the clitoris with partial or total excision of the labia minora;
- Type III - excision of part or all of the external genitalia and stitching/narrowing of the vaginal opening ;

- Type IV – Infibulation: this is the removal of the clitoral hood, the clitoris, the labia minora, the labia majora and the stitching together of the two sides of the vulva, leaving a very small hole to permit the flow of urine and menstrual blood.

The most common type of female genital mutilation is excision of the clitoris and the labia minora, accounting for up to 80% of all cases; the most extreme form is infibulation, which constitutes about 15% of all procedures.

- Type V – Unclassified types of FGM: includes pricking, piercing or incision of clitoris and/or labia; stretching of clitoris and/or labia; cauterisation by burning of clitoris and surrounding tissues; scraping (angurya cuts) of the vaginal orifice or cutting (gishiri cuts) of the vagina; introduction of corrosive substances into the vagina to cause bleeding or herbs into the vagina with the aim of tightening or narrowing the vagina; any other procedures which fall under the definition of FGM given above (28 countries in Africa, Indonesia, Malaysia, communities in Sri Lanka, some countries in the Middle East, some communities in Europe, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand etc.).

Female infanticide

Female infanticide is the killing of a girl child within weeks of her birth (e.g. China, India & Bangladesh).

Forced labour including prostitution

The term "forced or compulsory labour" means all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty. Forced labour is a means of political coercion or education or a punishment for holding or expressing political views or views ideologically opposed to the established political, social or economic system; it is a method of mobilising and using labour for purposes of economic development, and a means of racial, social, national or religious discrimination.

Prostitution is the commercial sexual exploitation of human beings. It is mostly the exploitation of women and girls and is a fundamental violation of human rights. It constitutes a particular form of forced labour, coercion, violence and contemporary form of slavery (worldwide).

Incest

Incest, sexual abuse occurring within the family, although most often perpetrated by a father, stepfather, grandfather, uncle, brother or other male in a position of family trust, may also come from a female relative. As with sexual abuse, incest is accomplished by physical force or by coercion. Incest takes on the added psychological dimension of betrayal by a family member who is supposed to care for and protect the child (world wide).

Marital rape

Marital rape is any unwanted sexual acts by a spouse or ex-spouse, committed without consent and/or against a person's will, obtained by force, or threat of force, intimidation, or when a person is unable to consent. These sexual acts include intercourse, anal or oral sex, forced sexual behavior with other individuals, and other sexual activities that are considered by the victim as degrading, humiliating, painful, and unwanted (world wide).

Naka

Naka is forcing women to marry several times for the family to get money or property (e. g. India).

Son preference

Son preference is a worldwide phenomenon although the degree and the manifestation vary. It is a form of discrimination that in some cultures takes a

violent form such as the practice of prenatal sex selection leading to foeticide of girls, the lack of access of girls to food, education and health care (e. g. Asia).

Wife Inheritance

A brother in law or a cousin in law inherits a widow (many countries in Africa, Asia and Middle East).

Woman Battering

A "battered woman" is a woman who is beaten by her husband or partner. The batterer systematically uses physical violence, economic subordination, threats, isolation, and a variety of other behavioral controlling tactics to ensure she does what he wants her to do (Worldwide).

II. Violence against women in the community

Abduction

Kidnapping girls by force from their family in order to violate, abuse and forcefully marry (e.g. Ethiopia).

At work place

Sexual harassment is a behaviour of sexual nature unwelcome to the one to whom it is addressed, which has become a condition of work and which creates a climate of hostility, humiliation or intimidation. It may assume the form of physical contacts, remarks and jokes with a sexual connotation, unwelcome invitations, and exhibitions of pornographic material of physical aggression (Worldwide).

Caste based violence

Caste based violence is situation where women are raped exploited because of their gender and caste (e.g. Asia, Africa).

Forced dress code

Women forced to cover themselves or their head not to tempt men by showing their face or parts of their body (e.g. parts of Africa, Middle East, Asia, among some communities in the western world).

Forced feeding

Young girls are fed by force to gain weight and appear fat and obese for marrying a husband who considers this as beauty. The health consequences are multiple including hypertension malformation of the bones, diabetic etc. (e. g. Mauritania, Niger and Mali)

Honor killing

The killing or mutilation of a woman when she allegedly steps outside of her socially prescribed role, especially but not only, with regard to her sexuality and to her interaction with men outside her family (e.g. Africa, Asia, Latin America, Middle East, some communities in Europe).

Neck imprisoned in rings

The neck muscle is not allowed to develop as it is imprisoned by metal ring. An angry husband just needs to break the ring to let the head drop and the woman can die (e.g. Western and Southern Africa, Asia).

Lip plates

Women wearing huge plates of clay for protection and marriage ability. In some cases the hole is so big that it can pass through the head of the woman (e.g. Eastern Africa).

Polygamy

A man marrying more than one wife or temporary wives leading to insecurity of women and facilitating the spread of HIV/AIDS. It is illegal in most countries but still persists.

Rape

Rape is the sexual penetration, however slight of any part of the body of the victim with a sexual organ, or of the anal or genital opening of the victim with any object or any other part of the body. The invasion is committed by force, or by threat of force or coercion, such as that caused by fear of violence, duress, detention, psychological oppression or abuse of power, against such person or another person, or by taking advantage of a coercive environment, or committed

against a person incapable of giving genuine consent (if affected by natural induced or age related incapacity). (Worldwide)

Sexual violence

Sexual violence is an overarching term used to describe any violence, physical or psychological, carried out through sexual means or by targeting sexuality. Sexual violence includes rape and attempted rape, and such acts as forcing a person to strip naked in public, forcing two victims to perform sexual acts on one another or harm one another in a sexual manner, mutilating a person's genitals or a woman's breasts, and sexual slavery (Worldwide).

Sati

It is a bereaved widow burnt on her husband's funeral ceremony (e.g. India).

Trokosi

Young girls being sacrificed to the gods, but they are not being slaughtered on the altar. They are given to fetish shrines, forced under threat of death to live as domestic and sexual slaves. Their crimes are simply being related to a family member who committed a petty offense, often generations before the girls' births (e.g. Nigeria, Togo, Ghana, Benin).

Devadasi, Deuki and Devaki

Girls offered to temple to provide full services including forced prostitution (e.g. India, Nepal).

Virginity testing

In order to present a woman as a virgin on her marriage day, she is subjected to pressure, and put under control both by her family and societal norms. However, a man is free and never made to suffer any of the above. A woman found to be a virgin on her first night of marriage is seen as a respectable person while one suspected to have lost her virginity is shamed and rejected. Sometimes she is forced to go back to her own family (e. g. Middle East, East Africa).

Women trafficking

Trafficking in women and girls means the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring and receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force and other forms of coercion, of abduction. Deception, the abuse of power on a person in position of vulnerability or of giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person lead to exploitation. It includes forced prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or removal of organs. The consent of the victims of trafficking shall be irrelevant (worldwide).

III. Violence against women by the State

Women are subject to all forms of state violence, but also to gender – specific forms of state violence perpetrated by law enforcement officials or other security or military personnel. This can include rape, sexual abuse and harassment, virginity testing, forced abortion etc.

Gender-specific Torture and Ill Treatment

Gender often has a considerable impact on the form that torture takes, the circumstances in which it occurs, its consequences, and the availability of and access to remedies for its victims. Rape, threat of rape, electro-shock to the genitals and strip searching of women detainees by male guards are frequently the forms that such gender-specific torture takes place. In societies where a woman's sexuality is a reflection of family "honour", these forms of torture and ill treatment are rarely reported.

In Prison

The already vulnerable position of the prisoner is compounded by gender, and places women in detention in particular danger. The most differentiated element of gender-specific state violence is its sexualisation. Although, men are also subjected to sexual violence, these forms of state violence are more consistently perpetrated against women. A clear contributing factor to sexual violence against women in prison is that in many states male correctional staff are allowed to supervise female inmates, to undertake body searches, and to be present where female inmates are naked. Another underlying source of sexual violence is the lack of separation between men and women inmates.

Situations of armed conflict

During times of war women have always been targeted for sexual violence. Rape and enforced impregnation are weapon of war, a means of ethnic cleansing, a means of humiliating men and their family honour. In turn, women are often ostracized from the family and the community because they have been raped. It is an international crime against humanity (Rome statute of the International Criminal Court).

Rape and sexual violence

See chapter II, violence by the community.

When the rape is committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against a civilian population, when the perpetrator knows that, it is a crime against humanity (ICC)

Refugees and displaced women

According to the UNHCR, more than 75% of displaced persons are women and their children, they are subjected to physical and sexual violence as much during their flight as when they arrive in the country of asylum, be it from members of the armed forces, immigration agents, bandits, pirates, local populations, individuals belonging to rival ethnic groups or other refugees (Worldwide).

Violence against women's reproductive rights

At the International Conference on Population and development held in Cairo in 1994, the right of men and women to be informed and to have access to safe, available, affordable and acceptable methods of choice for regulation of fertility was upheld and confirmed. The right of access to appropriate health care services that will enable women to go safely through pregnancy and childbirth was accepted for couples to have a healthy infant. The denial of this right violates the bodily integrity of women (Worldwide).

What can be done to end violence against women ?

1. What is the role and responsibility of the education sector, e.g. teachers, and textbooks to eradicate violence against women?
2. What can legislators, judges and lawyers do to apply new concepts and new languages to advance and reinforce gender equality ?
3. How can multinational corporations and other employers, change their policies and practices to promote gender equality, such as pay equity?
4. What is the role and responsibility of religious leaders to promote all full human rights for women and women's full participation in social and political life ?
5. Who profits from the dehumanization, the degradation of their social status, the exploitation of women and girls? Do sex tourism, trafficking and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation contribute to a country's GNP?
6. Globally how can women, in solidarity with each other, hold accountable authorities for their words and actions in implementing the eradication of violence against women?
7. How does the image projection of women in popular culture (e.g., advertising, movies, music, television, stereotypes and caricatures) reinforce and legitimize violence against women?
8. Who are the perpetrators and what measures must be taken to end impunity on violence against women in all its forms?
9. How can we publicly expose and create awareness of the devastating consequences of psychological and physical violence against women?
10. How can individuals in their daily life contribute to the eradication of violence against women?

USEFUL WEB LINKS

International Labour Organisation (ILO)

www.ilo.int/

International Organisation for Migration (IOM)

www.iom.int/

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

www.unicef.org

United Nations High Commission for Human Rights (UNHCHR)

www.unhchr.ch

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

www.unfpa.org

World Health Organisation (WHO)

www.who.org

Human Rights Watch

www.hrw.org

Organisation Mondiale Contre la Torture

www.omct.org

Lobby Européen des Femmes

www.womenlobby.org

Conseil de l'Europe

<http://Assembly.coe.int/>

Inter – African Committee

www.iac-ciaf.ch

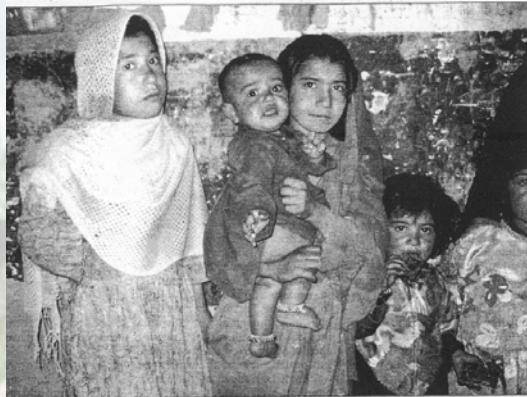
International Council of Women

www.icw-cif.org



Tribe

The Mursi Tribe, Southern Ethiopia,



Zarlaska, 10, left, and her sister, Nabas Gul, 9, have been sold as brides for about \$400, Washington Post, March 6-12 2003



The Pa Dong village of Nai Soi,
14 May 2001



**Introducing a dilator under the scar,
A Teacher's Guide, WHO**