



HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN 2018



**Don't
Force
Me**

2 Samuel 13:12

Don't Force Me

2 Samuel 13:12



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Poster for
UEM Human Rights
Campaign 2018

INTRODUCTION

CALLING OUT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN – ENFORCING WOMEN’S RIGHTS



Irene Girsang Officer for Interregional Women’s Programmes
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Isn’t advocating for human rights enough? Why do we need to commit to women’s rights in particular? The »Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen«, during the French Revolution of 1789, states that« men are born and remain free and equal in rights«. Women were not necessarily included in this statement, since they were not considered full-fledged citizens. In those days, women like Olympe de Gouges advocated for women to be recognized and treated equally. Her »Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Citizen«, published in 1791, contains the addendum to the »Declaration on the Rights of Man« that woman is born free and remains equal to man in all rights.

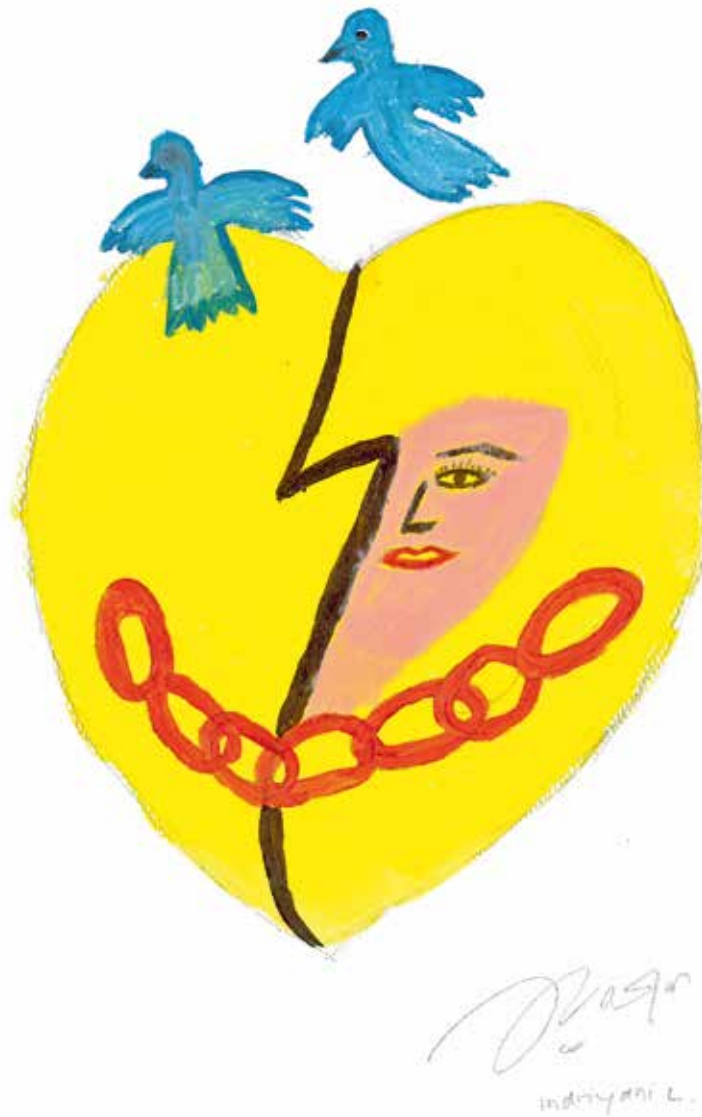
**»Woman is born free
and remains equal to man
in all rights.«**

Olympe de Gouges (1748–1793)

The struggle for equal rights continues. Women are still being denied full equal rights in many regions of the world. They face discrimination and great risk of suffering sexual abuse or other forms of violence. We can see various manifestations of this in all of the countries where the UEM supports its members. In Sri Lanka or the Democratic Republic of Congo, where war and military conflicts between armed groups have been prevalent or continue to be, women still need protection from violence and exploitation. Estimates indicate that some 90,000 »war widows« are living in Sri Lanka, driven from their homes by the conflict. They are defenceless against sexual exploitation and abuse.

»Don’t force me«. These are the words Tamar uses to say no to her brother Amnon’s request to sleep with her, in the second book of Samuel (13:12). Her no – like that of millions of women like her – is not respected: he rapes her. For women in the Democratic Republic of Congo, rape means physical violence, social ostracism, and the loss of their dignity, identity, and prospects in life. The Bible account also testifies to how women like Tamar are aware of their rights and their dignity; they expect and demand respect.

Since the international UEM was founded in 1996, women from churches in Asia, Africa, and Germany have repeatedly campaigned for an end to the discrimination against women in the church and in society and have provided support for women living with domestic abuse or armed conflicts. Violence comes in numerous forms. Many of the UEM member churches in Asia report that women are being victimised in human trafficking. In African countries, women whose husbands have died are ostracised as widows and subject to violence.



► Indriyani Lesussiawati painted the picture »Invisible Strength of a Woman« during a UEM workshop.

There are women everywhere who need special protection as victims of domestic violence. Women's rights must also be strengthened within churches and ecclesiastical communities, and instruments and mechanisms developed within these entities to disclose and prosecute cases of sexual violence. The UEM has introduced a Code of Conduct and supports projects for the prevention of sexual harassment and violence, such as that of the theological college of Ndoungue in Cameroon.

With this year's human rights campaign, the UEM asks for your support for projects in Africa, Asia, and Germany. Here are three example projects:

- **In Indonesia**, the Simalungun Church has opened a women's crisis centre where women are protected from domestic violence and receive legal aid. Through education and further training, these women develop their own earning prospects in order to be able to live an independent life as they choose.

- **In the Democratic Republic of Congo**, women are becoming active who themselves were victims of sexual assault. They are taking measures to prevent violence against women. What's more, they are calling for perpetrators to be investigated and brought to justice to end the climate of impunity.
- **In Germany**, the United Evangelical Mission is collaborating with Amnesty International on a project in which women who have fled to Germany to escape discrimination and violence can receive legal advice during asylum proceedings.

»Men are born
and remain free
and equal in rights.«

Declaration on the Rights of Man and of the Citizen,
from the French Revolution of 1789

PROJECTS



Young girls attend the Simalungun Church seminar on domestic violence.

Indonesia – Women's Crisis Centre

The women's crisis centre known as »Sopou Damei« (»House of Peace«) opened on 5 April 2008 – the fiftieth anniversary of the Women's Committee of the Christian-Protestant Simalungun Church (GKPS). Sopou Damei represents the dream of women in the Simalungun region of a life without violence, a life that every person should be able to lead, especially women and children.

The crisis centre team provides support in three areas: education, legal advice, and economic empowerment. The aim of the educational activities is to sensitise the society towards violence against women and children. Teams visit congregations and informational events, and often the broadcast media as well. Other customary activities include training courses, seminars, workshops, campaigns, and radio broadcasts.

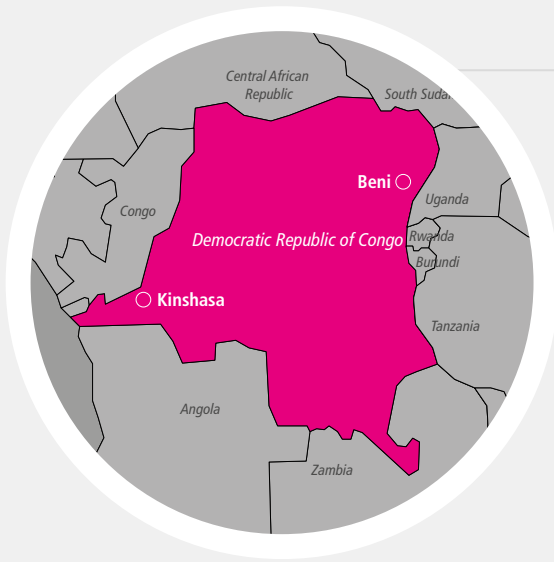
The advocacy work is done through counselling and legal aid: victims of assault receive legal advice and are also given support with court cases. Sopou Damei receives an average of fifteen women each year who need legal assistance. The psychological counselling utilises appropriate methods of trauma treatment. The training courses are expected to empower women economically who have been victims of violence. As part of the training, women acquire skills such as sewing, hairdressing, and cooking, and they receive start-up capital in order to become economically independent. The work of the crisis centre is interfaith and intercultural. ■



»... My married life was not free of domestic violence in its myriad forms. Since I was the only one earning money to support the family, I worked hard during the week as an advisor at a state university, and also had a special job with the church at weekends. ... Caring for our family financially was the smartest decision I made during the years we lived together. But despite all my efforts, my daughter and I experienced countless sleepless nights in which we were threatened and beaten by my husband... At the time, I thought that this was simply a phase of adaptation and adjustment... But seven years went by, and the situation got worse and worse... I was the one to finally decide to separate myself from him, along with my daughter. This was really a very difficult decision. My overriding thought was to assert my right to be respected as a woman. It was a breakthrough for me – away from my conservative ideas that I had to »save the marriage« for the sake of the child. I began to counter this belief with the argument that it was far better for my daughter and myself to live apart from my husband than to stay together in such a situation of domestic violence, where love and respect were no longer felt. People who condemn my decision will probably disapprove of the fact that I work in the church. But I only did what was best for us. I have realised that we women must defend themselves whenever the situation requires it. We cannot expect other people to fight for us and make decisions for us when we experience domestic violence.«

Pastor Irma Salvador Mepico is a member of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines.





► The Baptist Community in Central Africa (CBCA) supports women with children born of rape, by registering their babies as Congolese nationals and citizens. This woman holds her child's birth certificate in her hand.

Democratic Republic of Congo – Education on Women's Rights

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the years of war have created a climate of violence. The state has not succeeded in adequately protecting the population. Cases of massive use of force are reported almost daily, especially in the provinces of North and South Kivu. The frequency of sexual assault against women and girls is dramatic. Often the perpetrators are soldiers or armed militias, who attack villages in broad daylight and assault women and girls. The injuries and shame drive many women to despair. They are left alone and are often abandoned by their husbands and family. They do not know who to turn to in their distress, or how to go on with their lives. Many of these crimes remain hidden or go unpunished, but their consequences have a massive effect on the victims.

The church looks after these women and girls, providing them with medical and psychosocial care. Advisors from the church provide legal assistance to women who wish to bring their case to court or lodge a legal claim to obtain a birth certificate for children born of rape. The victimised women and girls often lack the courage or the financial resources to assert their rights.

The activities of the church go far beyond this. In a wide-ranging campaign, the church is turning to leaders in politics, churches, and congregations to increase awareness of women's rights. Through regular radio broadcasts and informational events in villages and schools, the church is shedding light on women's rights and encouraging those who have been victimised to defend themselves and claim their rights. ■



»I am a married mother of four children. One day I went to work in a field that was five kilometres from my home. I headed back at five in the afternoon. After walking a while, I came upon a strange man who forced me to stop. I was scared, and the man attacked me and raped me. I returned home with a feeling of shame. I told my husband what had happened, but he threw me out of the house straight away and declared that I had no business there. So I went to my parents, because my husband had said he would kill me if I insisted on staying in his house. I experienced many painful moments in my family, and no one helped me. But thanks to the project that supports women who have been victims of sexual violence, I came into contact with a counsellor who has done a lot of work with me. She finally mediated between my husband and me. Little by little, my life is going back to normal. But even if I could forgive the perpetrator with the help of the church, I still believe that justice must be served.«

Name withheld



✦ Maria-Teresa Amarante, officer for political refugees at Amnesty International Bergisches Land, speaks with a woman affected by violence.



Germany – Supporting Victims of Sexual Assault

VEM supports AI with counselling for women refugees

Protection for women fleeing gender-based violence and seeking asylum in Germany – that's the purpose of the collaboration between Amnesty International (AI) and the United Evangelical Mission. For the last year, AI has been offering legal advice and assistance with asylum proceedings in protected areas of the UEM. Networking with other women's organisations ensures further support – even after the asylum proceedings have ended.

For many women who come seeking advice, it takes a long time to build up the necessary trust. Like men, they have fled war, violence, and poverty – as well as gender-based persecution. Reasons they have fled to Germany include female genital mutilation, forced marriage, and the threat of stoning.

Many of these women do not know their rights and are surprised to learn that in Germany, they are equal to men before the law. Others have always fought for the equal rights of women and faced persecution as a result. Some just want to forget. They are strong women intent on continuing their lives, finding peace, and building a better future for themselves and their families. They are struggling to be seen as human beings. ■

The story of a young woman from Afghanistan

The story of Ms S. from Afghanistan exemplifies how difficult women's lives are in other parts of the world. Fleeing their own country is often the only way to lead a life of self-determination and peace.

Ms S.* is 23 years old, with short, dark-brown hair. She has a fighter's gaze and wears a T-shirt, tight jeans, and flat sneakers. She had to flee Afghanistan because she wanted to attend school. Every time she went to school, her father would beat her legs with a stick to punish her. He had hammered a nail into the stick. Another time, he poured boiling water on her foot. Her scars are still visible today. Her school wanted to help, but gave up because threats from her father, an influential self-proclaimed local warlord. She got more beatings in retaliation.

When one of her sisters was to be forcibly married, Ms S. stood up for her, only to be beaten once again. The young woman called the police and asked for help. The police informed her father, who then beat her so badly that she ended up in hospital. She asked for help there, too, and again she was refused. Ms S. did not give up; she kept on trying. No one could or would help her. Later, facing a forced marriage, she fled. She received refugee status in Germany.

* Name withheld

INFORMATION



Dr Theodor Rathgeber
Journalist and
human rights expert

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: DEGRADATION WORLDWIDE

»Enough is enough. Let's stand together to stop the violence against women. Violence against women is not the answer. Respecting them is.«

Pastor Annah Nguvauva, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Botswana



Violence against women: Degradation worldwide

Regardless of all the differences between countries, violence against women is a widespread phenomenon. The World Health Organization (WHO) identifies violence against women as one of the greatest risks to the physical, mental, and emotional health of women worldwide. Women experience psychological violence from intimidation, defamation, threats, or psychological terrorism, among others, with subsequent complications such as sleep disorders, depression, and increased anxiety. Women facing physical violence often must seek medical help or are even killed to keep the abuse a secret.

Violence against women is predominantly committed in the home, by partners or former partners. Moreover, violence against women marks a break with normal relationships and realities, such as when one is forced to move house, leading to a humiliating return to one's own family or the termination of one's employment. Those affected find it difficult to talk about the experience of violence and humiliation. They feel helpless, experiencing shame as well as fear about how the neighbours will talk, or if other attacks will happen.

In many countries, the issue is not only taboo, but the victims are generally blamed. This is especially true if the offender is the current or former husband or relationship partner. The corresponding social patterns of language and thought have been particularly evident in India for several years now, following the rape and murder of a young woman in Delhi in 2012 that made headlines and garnered international condemnation. In Germany, government officials in several states have put the responsibility onto young women, calling for them to dress more modestly and avoid walking on the streets or going to bars alone after dark. India's Cabinet Minister for Women and Child Development, Maneka Gandhi, complained in November 2016 that the media was exaggerating the issue of rape and called India safer in this respect than Sweden; tourists, she said, were being driven away without cause (The Guardian, 23 November 2016). In March 2015, India's Ministry of Information banned a BBC documentary that detailed the social environment of the perpetrators of the 2012 rape from being broadcast on Indian television (The Independent, 5 March 2015). Such are the ways in which officials in many countries deal with this issue and its victims.

♥ Kavira Nganza (in front), former head of the women's section of the CBCA, shows traumatised women in her church how to make baskets and bags. Selling the woven work gives them a small and dependable income.



»I could never have imagined that I would already be a single mother at the age of 33. But ten years of hell have driven me to this step. I met a friendly and polite man. After we got married, first he forced me to give up my work. Later he beat me and berated me in the worst way. Even in front of the children.«

Dita (not her real name) from Indonesia, in a joint study by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection and the United Nations Population Fund 2017
(UNFPA – until 1987 the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, now the United Nations Population Fund.)

In Indonesia, violence against women is part of everyday life

Indonesia's Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection is well aware of these facts, even though the analyses and studies paint a similar picture of the social milieu and the stereotypes. The data collected in 2016 together with the UNFPA was based on a survey of 9,000 households in 83 districts¹ (out of 508) in 24 provinces (out of 34). The representative survey found that more than 40 percent of women were affected by violence. Around 42 percent of women had been prevented from taking up employment, meeting with friends or family, or looking after their own health independently. The authors concluded that violence against women in Indonesia was obviously part of everyday life. The Philippines Commission on Women has arrived at similar statistical results.

Shoddy police work

In their 2016 Human Rights Report, the Legal and Human Rights Center (LHRC) in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and the Zanzibar Legal Services Centre (ZLSC) in Zanzibar conclude that one in four women in both countries has been the victim of violence in one form or another. What makes it even worse is that most of the crimes displayed and reported in the media were never even prosecuted in court.

The police had done such a shoddy job with their research that the charges were not allowed before the

courts because the facts of the case were insufficient. Conversely, there was much evidence that those who had been affected were afraid to go to court themselves, since the consensus in their families and in society forced them to suffer the violence in secret, especially domestic violence. Tradition demands that a married woman first seek compensation from her husband's family. Only if no solution can be found in this internal network is seeking outside support even tolerated, so this generally does not happen. And if the intervention does not turn out well, she will still have substantial fear of vindictiveness from her husband, the de facto loss of her children, and the revocation of the social and economic benefits of the family unit.

A long struggle

Violence against women was a subject of public discussion in the 1970s in Europe and in countries like Germany. Even so, women's organisations had to assert themselves against the worst kinds of defamation. Marital rape has been against the law in Germany since 1997. The Protection Against Violence Act went into effect in 2002, adopted with the votes of all parties then in power in the Bundestag. It stipulates that a perpetrator can be evicted from a house for six months by court order, even if the house belongs to him. Police can also temporarily expel violent offenders from the home and impose a ban on contact if they consider the situation dangerous for the victim, regardless of the victim's wishes.

At the same time, international institutions such as the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights stated back in 2014 that in Germany some 25 percent of all women between the ages of 16 and 85 had expe-

¹ More precisely: regencies and cities.

»25. [...] The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The prevalence of domestic violence against women and the absence of a comprehensive strategy of prevention and early intervention, along with the prevailing attitudes among judicial authorities that cases of domestic violence are a private matter;
- (b) Underreporting of gender-based violence to the police, and low prosecution and conviction rates;
- (...)«
- (f) Gender-based stereotypes and myths surrounding rape within society and among legal professionals.«

Concluding observations on the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Germany, 2017; Document CEDAW/C/DEU/CO/7-8

rienced physical or sexual violence at least once in their lives. The excerpt from the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (see above) suggests that stereotypes may have largely disappeared from public discourse in Germany, but deeply rooted behavioural attitudes, even in state institutions, are still an obstacle to administrative action.

Unreported acts of violence in families are estimated to be higher than the number of reported crimes

Furthermore, there is speculation that the number of unreported acts of violence in families – violence against men, women, and children – is even higher than the number of reported crimes. Shame and fear must also be overcome in Germany. What happens behind closed doors, behind walls and drawn curtains, does not necessarily get through to the outside world if family members, acquaintances, and neighbours keep silent. Domestic violence is still defined as a family dispute. Public and penal processing of the experience of violence is complicated not least by the threat of losing the economic and social benefits of the family or even slipping into poverty. After all, in countries such as Germany, the extent of the state's responsibility to make certain guarantees to women victims of violence, such as the financing of women's shelters, is still up for public debate.

International legal fundamentals for protection against violence

Protecting women from violence is a matter of human rights and of guaranteed fundamental rights. The right to sexual self-determination enjoys a high level of protection as a constitutional and human right. The state's responsibility to guarantee such rights indicates that there is a public interest in criminalizing violence against women and providing education about it. This does not exclude private law arrangements in the family, among acquaintances, or through women's shelters and initiatives. Victims of violence, however, have a claim on the right to physical, mental, and psychological integrity, as well as the prospect of a fair way to cope with their experience of violence through the legal process.

UN conventions

With regard to violence against women, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women² (CEDAW) provides the internationally applicable and binding basis for the protection of women. In addition, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) specifically addresses the concerns of women with disabilities among its provisions. With regard to armed conflicts, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted UN Resolution 1325 in October 2000, calling on all parties to a conflict to »take special measures« to protect the rights of women and girls in war zones. The resolution holds out the prospect of prosecuting those who commit war crimes against women. Moreover, the resolution stresses the equal participation of women in peace negotiations, conflict mediation, and reconstruction. Even though the focus on armed conflicts was very welcome, Resolution 1325 has so far failed to develop any institutional force. There are no complaint mechanisms, no institutional review procedures for implementation, and no deadlines.

A very active civil society will be needed in order to translate the requirements of resolution 1325 into national policy, for example in the form of a national action plan. The UN Women's Rights Convention, on the other hand, adopted in 1979 (and entering into force in 1981), is formulated as an international treaty and therefore directly binding on the State party. In ratifying the Convention, the State party undertakes

² Short form: UN Women's Convention.

► Unreported acts of violence in families are estimated to be higher than the number of reported crimes.

»Break the silence! Fight taboos and violence against women!«

Esther Ngalle, Cameroon



an obligation to eliminate and prevent any form of discrimination against women. This extends to all areas of women's lives.

The Convention, however, literally covers only one excerpt of the issue of violence against women, in Article 6 (»traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women«). As early as 1992, however, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) had identified gender-based violence as a form of discrimination, through its General Recommendation No. 19,³ so the issue of violence against women does apply directly through the Convention. What's more, the Optional Protocol to the UN Women's Rights Convention⁴ provides individual protection (Article 2), which, for example, also allows a woman submitting a complaint to be assisted by women's associations. In the majority of the cases submitted, the CEDAW Committee found that the State party in question had violated the Convention.

The UN committee periodically reviews the extent to which a State party is implementing the requirements of the UN Women's Rights Convention through a country report, supplemented by shadow reports from civil society.

The CEDAW committee attaches great importance to the critical findings of civil society. Their assessments and recommendations have frequently been included in the later recommendations and rebukes from the CEDAW committee to governments. At the end of such a review process, the CEDAW expert committee comments on government action and recommends measures in the case that Convention provisions or

earlier Committee recommendations have been implemented unsatisfactorily or not at all. In cases of serious and systematic violations of women's rights, the expert committee may also investigate a government personally. In the complaint procedure, the committee recommends that rights violations cease and, as in the observations cited for Germany, may recommend that structures be changed where necessary.

The expert committee has no direct means of enforcing its case assessment. The States parties are required to implement the provisions of the Convention and the recommendations of the expert committee in good faith. Most states perceive critical comments on

Ratification of the UN Women's Rights Convention by states where the UEM is active.

CEDAW Year of Ratification	Convention	Optional Protocol:
Botswana	1996	2007
Democratic Republic of Congo	1986	Not ratified, not signed
Germany	1985	2002
Indonesia	1984	Not ratified, signed in 2000
Cameroon	1994	2005
Namibia	1992	2000
Philippines	1981	2003
Rwanda	1981	2008
Sri Lanka	1981	2002
Tanzania	1985	2006

³ A kind of legal commentary.

⁴ Adopted in 1999, in force since 2000.

the situation of women's rights in a country as detrimental to their image, that they do not conform to the standard of the rule of law. Almost all governments attempt to avoid such statements and to take at least symbolic or rudimentary measures.

The UN Women's Rights Convention, together with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, has the highest number of ratifications by member states of the United Nations. So far, 189 states have ratified the UN Women's Rights Convention. Two states – Palau and the United States – have signed the agreement, expressing their political will to translate women's rights into legal regulations. The states and UN special territories of the Vatican, Iran, Niue, Somalia, Sudan, and Tonga have so far not articulated any political intentions. The Optional Protocol (with the right to an individual complaint procedure) has been ratified by 109 states so far. Among those states (75 in total) that have made no moves of any kind on the Optional Protocol are China, Estonia, India, Israel, Japan, Latvia, Pakistan, Uganda, the United States, and the Vatican. Contrary to first appearances, the UN Women's Rights Convention was not an instant success, but had to be stubbornly enforced against reservations on the part of the states as well as some international lawyers.

European convention

In Europe, the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) of 1950 and the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence

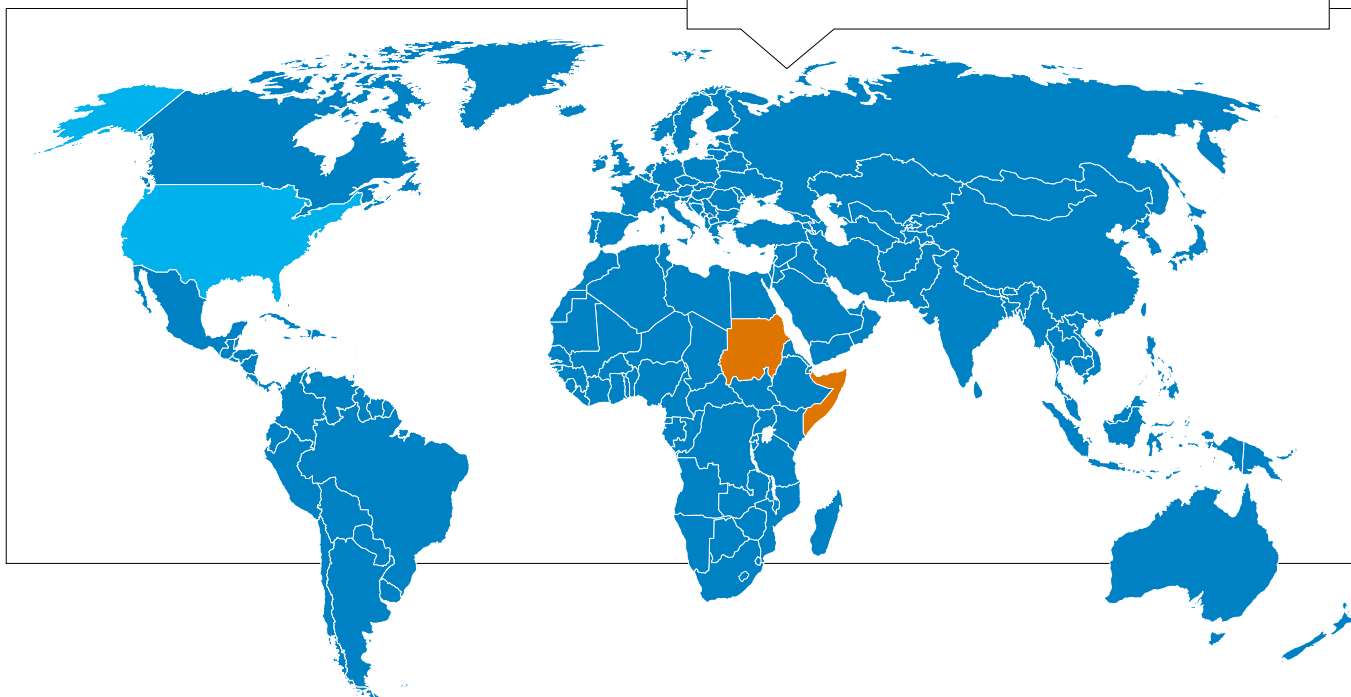
against Women and Domestic Violence of 2011 (Istanbul Convention) are also relevant in the area of violence against women. Comparable to the UN Women's Rights Convention, the ECHR does not contain a standard explicitly addressing violence against women and gender-based violence. However, the European Court of Human Rights has, through its case law, equated human trafficking with forced labour (Article 4 of the ECHR) and therefore has authorised applying cases of violence in reference to Article 4. In addition, in a series of judgments since 1985 the Court has expanded the scope of gender-specific violence in relation to Article 3 (prohibition of torture, inhuman and degrading punishment) and Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) of the ECHR.

The 2011 Istanbul Convention (in force since 2014) is a summary of the experience and case law of CEDAW and the European Court of Human Rights.

The Istanbul Convention contains a detailed list of comprehensive measures to prevent and combat violence against women and to protect victims. Specifically, the Convention envisages anchoring gender equality in the constitutions and legal systems of the States parties and abolishing all discriminatory rules. The Convention obliges the State party to provide such services as legal advice, psychological support,

Overview of States that have ratified the UN Women's Convention (pages 14–15) and the Optional Protocol (page 15):

● blue = ratified ● light blue = signed
● orange = no reaction



»Violence against women is one of the toughest and most frightening facts in the Philippines. One in every five Filipinas between the ages of 15 and 49 is estimated to have been the victim of sexual violence. The figures for 2013 show this to be the most abysmal year since statistical record-keeping began.«

National Statistics Office of the Philippines 2008 and
Philippine Commission on Women 2016

financial advice, and access to housing, for instance in women's shelters. In addition, the States parties pledge to take action against all forms of physical, sexual and psychological violence, forced marriages, genital mutilation, compulsory abortion, and forced sterilisation. Any nonconsensual sexual act shall be punishable under Article 36. Individual legal protection is weaker compared to CEDAW or ECHR. However, the State party is subject to review by the expert body known as GREVIO (Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence).

The GREVIO committee currently consists of ten experts from the States parties. Germany ratified the Istanbul Convention in June 2017.

African Charter for Human and Peoples' Rights

Africa's 1981 Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights⁵ (in force since 1986) was supplemented in 2003 by the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa.⁶ The pro-

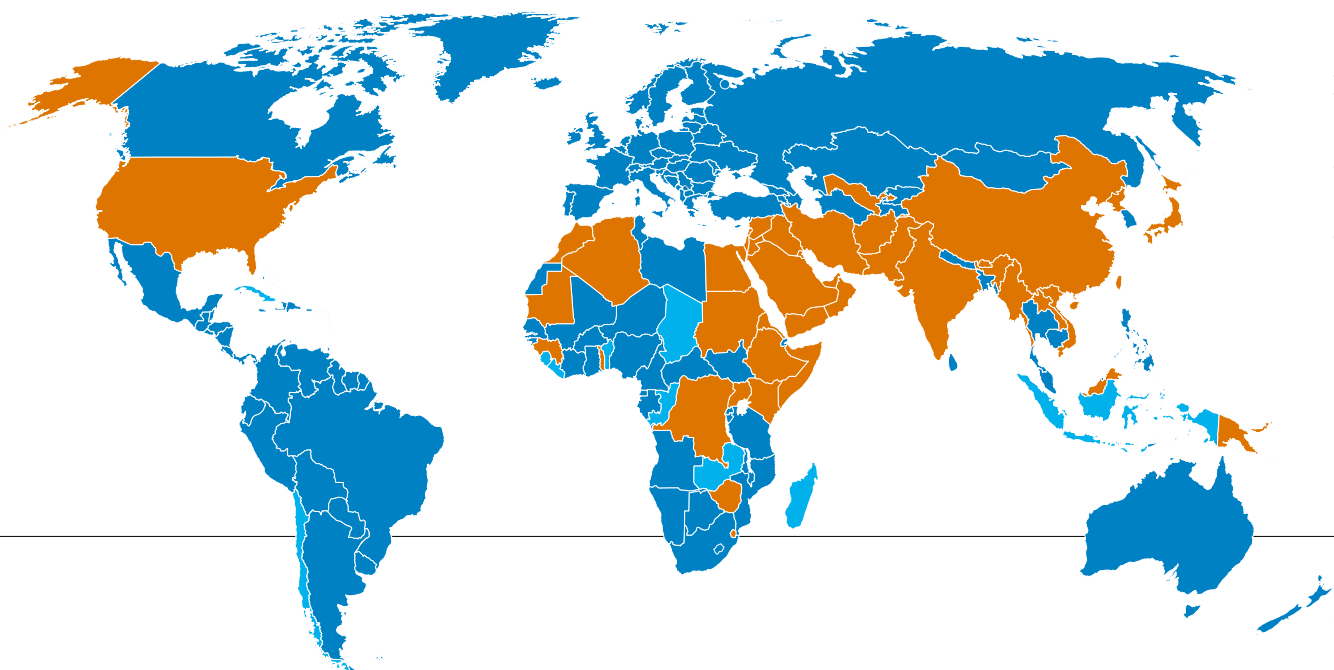
ocol is intended to guarantee the rights of women and girls, such as the right to equality in political processes and to economic equality in land and property rights, and it calls on States parties to prohibit any form of female genital mutilation. Another protocol to the Charter created the African Court of Human and Peoples' Rights in 1998, which began work in 2005. Case law from the Court on the protocol is not yet available, and future case law will not be easy. The pattern of governments or local authority figures using »African traditions« as an argument is frequently argumentation often turned directly against women's rights in the understanding of the UN Convention. All of the African countries with UEM member churches have ratified the protocol, with the exception of Botswana: the Democratic Republic of Congo (2008), Cameroon (2012), Namibia (2004), Rwanda (2004), Tanzania (2007).

As with CEDAW and the European Court of Human Rights, individual complaint proceedings must go through the normal channels of the national courts before they can seek relief through the African Court of Human and Peoples' Rights. Asia has neither a regional human rights charter nor a court of law.

In addition to the conventions, complaints procedures, and courts, victims of violence against women also can appeal to the experts on the UN Human Rights Council to prevent or reprimand legal violations and press for redress. The directly applicable mandates of

⁵ Also known as the Banjul Charter.

⁶ Also known as the Maputo Protocol.



Source: <http://indicators.ohchr.org>



Two workers from the Women's Crisis Centre visit a woman who had already fallen victim to violence once before.

Véronique Kavuo Binagha counsels women from the Baptist Church in Goma who have been raped.



the UN Special Procedures comprise the Special Rapporteurs on violence against women and on human trafficking, as well as the UN Working Group on the Issue of Discrimination against Women in Law and in Practice.⁷ These mandates have the advantage that individuals can write to them directly and ask for legal aid and public support without first having to go through national juridical channels. The assessments and recommendations of these mandates on individual cases and country situations may not develop direct normative force, but they have tremendous effectiveness because of the public attention they receive.

In particular, many states are more sensitive in their reactions to the findings of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women than they are to the comments made by the CEDAW committee.

Outlook

Experience with the international conventions on the rights of women, and especially on protection from violence, shows that far-reaching measures are necessary. They are required not only at the state and legislative levels, but in all areas of society, to ensure that women can exercise their human rights fully, effec-

tively, and equally. This includes the recognition of violence against women as a severe human rights violation.

The responsibility for combating violence against women must be broadly interpreted, with a multitude of committed parties on board. This also includes the churches and their contribution to a social change of perspective in the discussion of gender role models, domestic violence, and intervention strategies that focus on perpetrators. It especially includes defending the universality of the rights of women, for example in conflict with the seemingly protected space of the family and the violence committed there.

⁷ The formal titles are: Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences; and Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

Socially powerful institutions such as churches and their individual bodies and congregation members are also urged to think about role models within their own structures. Example measures towards this end could include offering systematic continuing education, rescuing the issue of domestic violence from obscurity, and training church staff and professional groups. Church and secular initiatives could work together to develop guidelines and checklists for use in cases of domestic violence to collect all relevant information and provide guidance. In principle, the churches are familiar with providing counselling for those affected by domestic violence and support for those living in fear or keeping silent out of shame, as well as actively seeking out such victims and helping children and young people who have to live in the context of domestic violence.

Structurally, churches could push for a better and more appropriate response from government institutions. Violence against women and domestic violence in particular should not be regarded as a private matter; rather, it should endow police and public prosecutors with special responsibilities. Finally, those affected by violence need encouragement. At the same time, experts need to make use of criminal court proceedings and international standards to devote themselves to specific cases, to get involved with shadow reports, to facilitate access to Special Rapporteurs, and to implement UN Resolution 1325. For those whose lives have been touched by violence, these discrete steps are not obvious ones, but must be actively pursued.



- The church helps women who have been victims of violence: the women receive medical and psychosocial care, as well as education about their rights.

»Violence against women is part of everyday life. The publicly released numbers alone show that six out of ten women in Tanzania have been the targets of violence, mainly in marriage or in the home. And that's not all: fatalistic attitudes are prevalent here, leading to a view that women must tolerate being targets of violence in these family milieus.«

Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) Tanzania und
Zanzibar Legal Services Centre (ZLSC) 2016

WORSHIP SERVICE AND DEVOTION

»Don't Force Me« 2 Samuel 13:12

In many parts of the world, the patriarchy still reigns. In this form of society, dominated by men, attributes like strength, rationality, and bravery are considered male traits. Women, by contrast, fulfil their role when they perform the ideals of grace, beauty, emotion, and motherhood, and when they appear submissive and reserved in society. This form of society and the gender roles associated with it are regarded as ordained by God, so the patriarchy is considered the natural order of things.

Women play a subordinate role in this form of society that is informed by tradition. They are reduced to objects and victims of discrimination, exploitation, and oppression. Even self-determination over their own bodies is denied them. The limits of the sphere of privacy afforded to them by nature is frequently transgressed by men – who often face no consequences. Women who have been violated by men often have to accept the blame for not being better guardians of their honour or virginity. There is no consideration for the fact that a man's physical superiority makes it almost impossible for a woman to protect herself. After a rape, abused and exploited women also have to endure being stigmatised and marginalised by society – while their abusers go unpunished.

The seed of violence against women is inherent in the patriarchy. Anywhere that men define themselves as rulers and are allowed to express their physical superiority, often unhindered, women are placed in a defensive role on principle that they are rarely able to resolve on their own. So they accept their inferior role, only receiving recognition, respect, or self-determination when it is conferred upon them by the male-influenced society. Even in marriage, women are held accountable through their behaviour for upholding the »honour« and reputation of their husband. In many places, for example, a woman who leaves the house at night without her husband is considered unseemly.

In many patriarchal societies, women are considered the legitimate possession of their husband. The right to self-determination and bodily autonomy is all too often denied them. Part of men's claim of ownership over women includes the requirement that the woman must be available to serve them unconditionally at all times, without exception. For example, women in many regions of the world are considered a legitimate part of the spoils of war. To rape women is to express part of the claim to domination and power that men – alone or in groups – desire to make manifest with violence. They do it to make clear to their opponents that they have the power – not only over their enemies' homeland, but over their women. The abused women have little choice but shame and silence: to make their experience public is tantamount to suicide in such societies. A paradox: it is not the abusive man who is ashamed, but the woman he has raped. The man who wields violence does not bring shame on himself, but on the woman he has abused.

Tamar says to Amnon in the Bible, »Don't force me!« She knows that rape will not only bring suffering upon her, but also upon the people of Israel. Amnon forces himself on her nonetheless. After the brutal event, she fights to be heard even though, as a woman, she has limited opportunities to speak up in public. She does not keep silent; she struggles through against all odds. She dusts her head with ashes, tearing the ornate gown that displays her status as a virgin and the daughter of a ruler. She clutches her head, lamenting loudly and publicly. Tamar has no desire to be a helpless, passive woman who shamefacedly conceals the injustice committed against her.

In so doing, Tamar sheds the victimhood meant for her and transcends her fate. She finds healing. Even today, this biblical female figure reminds women that they do not have to accept abuse or maltreatment as ordained by God.



✿ Rosmalia Barus painted this picture, »A Woman's Struggle«, during a UEM workshop.

»Women's rights must also be strengthened within churches and ecclesiastical communities, and instruments and mechanisms developed to disclose and prosecute cases of sexual violence.«

Of course, women are not the only victims of violence. Children and men who are subordinated in some form experience something similar. The churches, in particular, should see it as their special duty to protect the weak and to listen to those who have been permanently allocated a victim role in patriarchal systems. A Christian society that takes the Word of God seriously must be a nonviolent society ■

Irene Girsang, Officer for interregional women's programmes of the United Evangelical Mission and Nicky Widyaningrum, Pastor of the East Java Christian Church (GKJW), Indonesia

Poem

The dirty hands make me shudder
When they have finished their doing
When the machine is switched off
The dirty eyes humiliate me
When the body moves again
The dirty mouths fall
And every word of judging
Bad
good

The victims of violence are not numbers
That continue to be counted, added, recorded, and analysed.

The numbers have already become voices
Victims are ready to fight.

(Poem: »The Number Becomes the Voice«)



Songs for worship service and devotion

- ▶ We're reaching out towards you
(Thuma Mina 25)
- ▶ Kumbaya my Lord
- ▶ In the Lord I'll be ever thankful (Taizé,
Thuma Mina 92)
- ▶ The peace of our God
(Thuma Mina 187)

*Thuma Mina =
ecumenical songbook*

Prayer

You know the struggle of the victims of violence; you also see their incapacity to do anything about it. Forgive us for not lending our ears and hearts to them. So that their complaints and voices fall silent, swallowed by the night wind.

Your church has often kept silent, has not raised its word, in order to preserve the value and order of the church. Your church does not want to hear their screams, does not want to dry their tears, does not want to take up the fight for their rights and for justice. The church often does not offer a safe place to them.

God,
give strength to all victims of violence.
Give your church the courage to manifest truth and justice. May the victims of violence be given protection. May action be taken against their abusers.

God,
hear our hopes and prayers,
make the tears of our grief into water of life
that heals our wounds and quenches the thirst for justice.
Amen.

(Pastor Rosmalia Barus, Karo Batak Protestant Church GBKP, Indonesia)



▲ Irene Girsang painted this picture, »Between Anger and Courage«, during a UEM workshop.

»Women first – they are the first
witnesses to the resurrection.
Women first – their love alone
preserves new human life.
Women first – their wisdom preserves
the family and economic life.«

Pastor Anne Kathrin Kemper, Evangelical Church of Westphalia



Annah Nguvauva painted this picture, »The tears of women from around the world«, during a UEM workshop.



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Materials on the
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- Handbook with projects,
background information on the campaign,
and worship service and devotion materials
- Poster
- Postcard

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