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"Violence Against Women: Global Costs and Consequences"
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I am honored to appear before you this afternoon, in this groundbreaking hearing in full Committee, to address one of the most serious global challenges of our time: violence against women. Thank you Chairman Kerry, Ranking Member Lugar, and Distinguished Members of the Committee for taking the time to address this important issue and for holding this hearing that builds on the May 13 Subcommittee hearing, chaired by Senators Boxer and Feingold, on rape as a weapon of the conflict in the DRC and Sudan. The momentum is building for us to be able to make a clear and concrete difference in the lives of women and girls who are affected by gender-based violence or who are at risk of violence. The President, Vice President, and Secretary of State are committed to incorporating women's issues into all aspects of our foreign policy. Just yesterday, Secretary Clinton spoke about this topic in the UN Security Council, where a U.S.-sponsored resolution that will more effectively address sexual violence against women in armed conflicts was adopted by unanimous consent. The unprecedented creation of the "Ambassador-at-Large" position to head the State Department's Office of Global Women's Issues demonstrates the Administration's deep commitment to women's issues, and preventing and combating violence against women is a top priority for my office. We have before us a new opportunity to intensify our efforts and to make effective progress against this global pandemic.

Violence against women cannot be relegated to the margins of foreign policy. It cannot be treated solely as a "women's issue," as something that can wait until "more pressing" issues are solved. The scale and the scope of the problem make it simultaneously one of the largest and most entrenched humanitarian and development issues before us; they also make it a security issue. When women are attacked as part of a deliberate and coordinated strategy, as they are in Sudan, the DRC, and Burma, and as they have been in Bosnia, Sri Lanka, and elsewhere around the world, the glue that holds together communities dissolves. Large populations become not only displaced, but destabilized. Around the world, the places that are the most dangerous for women also pose the greatest threats to international peace and security. The correlation is clear: where women are oppressed, governance is weak and terrorists are more likely to take hold. As the Secretary has said, you cannot have vibrant civil societies if half the population is left behind. Women's participation is a prerequisite for good governance, for rule of law, and for economic prosperity – and gender-based violence and the ever-present threat of violence prevents women's participation in these sectors of society.

The violence against women and girls that we're currently seeing is a global pandemic. It cuts across ethnicity, race, class, religion, education level, and international borders. It affects girls and women at every point in their life, from sex-selective abortion, which has culled as many as 100 million girls, to inadequate healthcare and nutrition given to girls, to genital mutilation, child marriage, rape as a weapon of war, trafficking, so-called "honor" killings, dowry -related murder, and the neglect and ostracism of widows – and this is not an exhaustive list. This violence is not "cultural," it is criminal. It is every nation's problem and it is the cause of mass destruction around the globe. We need a response that is commensurate with the seriousness of these crimes.

The statistics that tell the extent of this humanitarian tragedy are well-known. One in three women worldwide will experience gender-based violence in her lifetime, and in some countries, this is true for 70 percent of women. A 2006 United Nations report found that at least 102 member states had no specific laws on domestic violence; others that do have laws too often fail to fully implement or enforce them. The United Nations estimates that at least 5,000 so-called "honor" killings take place each year around the world and two to three million girls and women each year are subjected to genital mutilation. Working from normative projections of sex ratios, we know that there are millions – some estimate as many as 100 million – girls who are missing from the world because of sex-selective abortion, infanticide, or because they're denied the nutrition and healthcare they need to survive past the age of five. In some parts of the world, girls are subject to having acid thrown in their faces when they try to go to school or when they reject suitors. Millions of girls and women are bought and sold as commodities and trafficked into prostitution or purchased as indentured servants or sweatshop workers. The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that there are at least 12.3 million adults and children in forced labor and commercial sexual servitude, and the majority of forced labor victims are women and girls. Around the world, they are the worst-affected by HIV/AIDS, with rape and the fear of relationship violence adding fuel to women's rising infection rate.

The problem of violence against women and girls is particularly acute in conflict zones, where legal and social norms fall away and armies and militias act without fear of accountability or judicial penalty. This is especially apparent in places such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where, by some estimates, more than five million people have died since 1998 because of the ongoing conflict. Women and girls have been particularly brutalized, as rapes are perpetrated by security forces and rebel groups and have become pervasive throughout society. Some 1,100 rapes are reported each month in the DRC's eastern provinces, with an average of 36 women and girls raped every day. In Burma, which has long-standing internal conflicts with ethnic minorities, women and girls are subject to sexual violence and other forms of assault, including rape by members of the armed forces that targets rural ethnic minority women. The displaced women in Sudan's Darfur region risk rape when they leave camps to collect firewood – rape by some of the same perpetrators that caused their displacement and by other militia and bandits. In refugee camps in eastern Chad and in Kenya, women risk attack by local people protecting their

resources as well as by armed groups. Rape is used in conflict situations as a purposeful strategy to subdue and destroy communities, and an atmosphere of impunity prevails.

Children in these war-torn areas are especially vulnerable. While boys may be pressed into service as child soldiers and trained to kill, girls are often raped and may be forced to become sex slaves. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a Ugandan rebel group, operates in the DRC and Central African Republic and is among the perpetrators of these vicious acts. As the Secretary said before in her opening remarks to the UN Security Council on September 30, "Even though women and children are rarely responsible for initiating armed conflict, they are often war's most vulnerable and violated victims."

Behind all these statistics are stories of actual people: girls such as Nhkum Hkawn Din, a 15-year old student in Burma who was allegedly raped and murdered by one or more Burmese soldiers last year. According to Burmese news reports, she was bringing food to her brother in the paddy field where he worked when the soldiers saw her and started following her. Three days later, her clothes and shoes were found alongside the basket she had been carrying. Her body, naked and mutilated, was found 200 meters away from a Burmese Army checkpoint.

Or the story of 13-year-old Shan girl, Nang Ung, who was detained by Burmese troops on false charges of being a rebel. According to a 2004 report by the Women's League of Burma (WLB), she was tied up in a tent and raped for 10 days by five to six troops each day. The injuries she sustained from the repeated rapes were so severe that she never recovered. She died a few weeks after she was freed.

Or story after story of the rape of women and girls in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In August, I traveled with Secretary Clinton to Goma. The residents of the camp we visited talked about how difficult their lives were each and every day, because the camp provides no real security. If you venture out, as too many of the girls told us, for water or firewood, you put your life at risk.

In a Goma hospital, we met a woman who told us that she was eight months' pregnant when she was attacked. She was at home when a group of men broke in. They took her husband and two of their children and shot them in the front yard, before returning into the house to shoot her other two children. Then they beat and gang-raped her and left her for dead. But she was not dead. She fought for her life and her neighbors managed to get her to the hospital which was 85 kilometers away.

In so many of these cases, especially when security forces themselves are involved, no serious legal action is taken against these criminals.

These stories represent a humanitarian tragedy. The abuses not only destroy the lives of individual girls and women, families, and communities, but also rob the world of the talent it urgently needs. There is a powerful connection between violence against women and the unending cycle of women in poverty. Women who are abused or who fear violence are unable to realize their full potential and contribute to their countries' development. There are enormous economic costs that come with violence against women. In the United States alone, an estimated loss of $1.8 billion in productivity and earnings is associated with gender based-violence on an annual basis. These types of losses are repeated around the world. Ending violence against women is a prerequisite for their social, economic, and political participation and progress. Girls in Afghanistan cannot get an equal education if they are subject to acid attacks and their schools are burned down. Women can't succeed in the workplace if they are abused and traumatized, nor can they advance if legal systems continue to treat them as less than full citizens. And female politicians can't compete for office on an equal playing field when they receive threatening "night letters" or fear for their families' safety. Beyond the tragedy of actual violence, countless other women constrain their lives and withdraw from civil society because of the even larger problem of the ever-present *threat* of violence. In this way, even beyond the victims, violence controls women's lives.

Preventing violence against women isn't just the right thing to do; it's also the smart thing to do. Multiple studies from economists, corporations, institutes and foundations have demonstrated again and again that women are key drivers of economic growth and that investing in women yields enormous dividends. We know from these studies that women reinvest up to 90 percent of their income in their families and communities. And yet none of these benefits are possible unless girls are able to learn without fear and women are able to have autonomy and decision-making over their own lives, and those are the very things that violence and the fear of violence take away.

The global and entrenched nature of gender-based violence presents enormous challenges. And yet, we know that progress is possible. In the four months since Senators Boxer and Feingold chaired a hearing on gender-based violence in the DRC and Sudan, we've been able to take substantial steps toward addressing some of the most urgent crises. In August, the Secretary announced $17 million in funding to assist survivors of Sexual and Gender Based Violence in the Eastern provinces of the DRC. This assistance will be distributed to organizations across Eastern Congo, and will respond to the crisis in a comprehensive manner. It includes training for health care workers in complex fistula repair, the provision of medical care, counseling, economic assistance, and legal support to women living in North and South Kivu, and other areas. The USG is also dedicating an additional $3 million to recruiting additional police officers, particularly women, and to training them to recognize the protection needs of women and girls and to investigate sexual violence.

In addition, the Secretary has raised the issue of impunity at the highest levels of the government, including during her meetings with President Kabila and Prime Minister Muzito. She pressed the DRC government to bring to justice five high-level officers of the DRC military who have either themselves been implicated in violent crimes against women or allowed soldiers within their commands to perpetrate them. All have now been removed from active operational command, and two are in prison, though complete accountability has not yet been achieved.

We are also committed to international efforts to regularize the Congolese minerals trade. For too long, armed groups and the DRC military itself have controlled mining operations and illegally exported minerals for their own financial benefit rather than allowing those resources to benefit the Congolese state and its people. More critically, these mining operations have exacerbated the conflict by funding arms and thus further destabilizing the security environment that allows rapes to be committed unchecked. In some cases, those in control of the mines have also directly abused women through forced labor or prostitution.

We have also taken a number of steps in Afghanistan over a short period of time. At the request of Secretary Clinton and Ambassador Holbrooke, I traveled to Afghanistan in June to underscore our support and commitment to women's rights. The trip provided an opportunity to deliver the message that the United States understands that progress in Afghanistan must be measured not just in military terms, but also in terms of social, political, and economic participation of women in rebuilding Afghanistan and in the safeguarding of their human rights. Peace, stability, and a better life for the Afghan people cannot and will not occur without the active involvement of women.

During this trip, Ambassador Eikenberry and I announced the start of the Ambassador's small grants program to support gender equality in Afghanistan. The three-year, $26.3 million program will provide technical assistance and small grants to women-focused Afghan NGOs in accordance with the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan. The program will offer flexible, rapid response grants to NGOs that address the needs of Afghan women in the areas of education, health, skills training, counseling on family issues, and public advocacy. My office is working closely with our Embassy in Kabul and colleagues at USAID to ensure that our assistance is well-coordinated, addresses the major issues confronted by women and girls, and is sustainable. We are also committed to ensuring that the $150 million allocated for Afghan women and girls in the FY2009 budget addresses their specific needs at the grassroots level, and are working to ensure that the programs are implemented with specific outcomes to ensure the most impact.

We've carried this kind of regional momentum forward at this year's United Nations meetings, where we worked within the Security Council to strengthen international political will to address violence against women and to enact UN Security Council Resolution 1888.

When governments convened in 2000 to adopt Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, they recognized the critical need not only to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, but also the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, including their equal and full participation in peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction. Resolution 1325 provides an important foundation for addressing the empowerment and role of women in peace and security, including peace building.

In 2008, building upon the scope of Resolution 1325, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1820. This U.S.-drafted resolution established a clear link between maintaining international peace and security and preventing and responding to sexual violence used as a tactic of war. With the adoption of these two resolutions, the international community recognized that sexual violence is a strategic weapon of armed conflict and, as such, is an urgent matter of international peace and security. As a result, many UN peacekeeping mandates – in Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Sudan, for example – now include requests for strengthened efforts to prevent and respond to sexual violence. However, despite these accomplishments, significant challenges remain. Women are seldom part of peace negotiations and peace-building efforts, including post-conflict transitional governments, truth and reconciliation commissions, transitional justice mechanisms and human rights commissions.

This year, the Security Council has taken additional steps to improve the UN's response to sexual violence committed during armed conflict. Yesterday, Secretary Clinton spoke on behalf of a U.S.-sponsored resolution focused on sexual violence in armed conflict, which the Council unanimously adopted. The resolution requests, among other provisions, that the Secretary-General appoint a Special Representative to lead, coordinate, and advocate for efforts to end sexual violence in armed conflict. The resolution also requests that the Secretary-General identify and deploy a team of experts to conflict situations where sexual violence is likely to occur, in order to help governments strengthen the rule of law, improve accountability, and end impunity. The resolution seeks to ensure that future resolutions that establish or renew peacekeeping mandates contain provisions on the prevention of, and response to, sexual violence, and contain reporting requirements to the Security Council.

Taken together, these bilateral and multilateral efforts represent significant and encouraging progress since May. However, they are only a beginning.

As we look ahead toward a comprehensive international campaign to end violence against women, we must ensure that all of the following are a part of our strategies:

(1) First and foremost, we must define this violence not as a women's issue but as one of international human rights and national security. This means that our efforts to prevent and combat violence must go beyond current campaigns aimed primarily at women. Our efforts

must recognize that men and women at all levels of society and of all ages have roles to play. Crucially, it also means that our strategies cannot exist purely at the grassroots level. Policymakers and decision-makers must recognize and take up this issue not only as one that touches on their interests, but as one that is at the heart of their interests and for which they have responsibility.

(2) Involvement by international religious leaders of all faiths is critical. In Afghanistan, the United States is supporting a project through local partners working with 844 religious leaders, government officials, media representatives, and civil society members and training them in concepts of human rights within the context of Islam. One local Mullah who attended the first training had initially declared his belief that human rights were a western ideal, going against the teachings of Islam. After participating in the training, he declared that his views had changed. Since the event, he has often spoken about rights-based issues during Friday prayers. He has a regular one-hour program on Sharq Television, and has spoken on-air about the rights of women, children and families.

(3) Men can and must be a part of the effort to end violence against women. In India, the Father and Daughter Alliance is establishing fathers' associations in slum areas to promote young girls' education through the critical concept of close involvement of the fathers.

In the United States, we've had groups such as the "Man Up Campaign," which reaches out to young men to educate and create a discussion about gender-based violence through the use of hip-hop music and sports. On November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Man Up will enlist young people at the World Cup in South Africa to commit to being long-term partners of the initiative. A similar U.S.-based organization, "Men Can Stop Rape," has worked for a dozen years with boys and young men to change attitudes about gender roles. This group's well-known publicity campaign "My Strength Is Not For Hurting" has featured actors, athletes and U.S. military personnel (in uniform) to send the explicit message that a soldier's role is to protect fellow citizens, not abuse them. The success of these efforts can be replicated elsewhere.

(4) Continuing to work towards women's economic empowerment is essential. Beyond the development gains that accrue to countries in which women are active economic participants, women who control their own resources are better-positioned to escape situations of violence. Achieving this goal means identifying and working to remove institutional obstacles to women's economic success, including inequitable land tenure laws and customs as well as those that constrain equal property rights and inheritance.

(5) Access to high-quality education is fundamentally important, for both girls and boys. We must ensure that girls not only have access to the same education as boys, but that they are safe as they travel to and from school and while they learn.

Education is the only tool we have available that can reliably change entrenched attitudes. When Mukhtar Mai was gang-raped in Pakistan in 2002, on the orders of the tribal council in her rural Pakistani village, her village expected her to commit suicide. But Mukhtar Mai was not an ordinary victim. Instead, this illiterate, brutalized, and shunned woman found the strength to take her case to court. She used the money from her small settlement to build two schools – one for boys and one for girls, in which she enrolled herself. She said nothing in her village would ever change without education.

(6) In areas of conflict, the best outcome is a rapid end to strife. We must recognize the collateral damage inflicted on civilian women in regions of protracted conflict, and improve protection for women, prevention of further atrocities, and we must ensure the prosecution of perpetrators, be they soldiers or top commanders. The recent passage of U.S.-sponsored UN Security Resolution 1888 is progress, but we must ensure that the new resolution itself is effectively and expeditiously implemented.

(7) We must recognize that violence against women flourishes where impunity is the norm. Regions in conflict are particularly vulnerable to judicial breakdown, but impunity can also reign long after conflicts are resolved. In countries such as Guatemala and elsewhere, women are targeted for murder and mutilation because of their sex, and the perpetrators are seldom brought to justice. We know that good laws alone won't ensure that women will be protected. We must work with governments around the world to focus on the implementation of laws and on judicial training in order to ensure an end to impunity.

(8) Where programs are working well, we should take them to scale. Tostan, an NGO in Africa, has worked effectively to reduce the practice of FGM – a deeply ingrained practice – by working with both men and women at the village level to confront the harmful effects to the health and well-being of women. Since 1997, Tostan has helped convince 3,792 communities in Senegal, 364 in Guinea, 23 in Burkina Faso, and some in other African countries, to abandon this devastating practice. The effective methods of Tostan are a lesson without borders and can and should be introduced elsewhere.

(9) Finally, we need to understand that violence against women is a policy imperative that deserves to be our highest priority. We need to recognize that this problem of violence is, at root, a manifestation of the low status of women and girls around the world. Ending the violence requires elevating their status and freeing their potential to be agents of change in their community.

The State Department's Office of Global Women's Issues is deeply committed to implementing these strategies and to building the kinds of partnerships that will allow us to leverage international progress toward our goals. We will address violence against women by promoting the rule of law, enhancing strong criminal and civil justice programs, encouraging

implementation of laws, and building public awareness of the benefits of educating girls and providing them with economic opportunity and health care as well as changing societal attitudes.

Violence against women is an issue that should concern us all. Women are the key to progress and prosperity in the 21st century. When they are marginalized and mistreated, humanity cannot progress. When they are accorded their rights and afforded equal opportunities in education, health care, employment, and political participation, they lift up their families, their communities, and their nations.