



# ENDING IMPUNITY ON SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

A PAN AFRICAN CONFERENCE

21ST — 23RD JULY 2008

VENUE : THE PANAFRIC HOTEL  
NAIROBI, KENYA

## Why This Conference

The extreme violence/poverty/exclusion that women suffer during conflict and emergencies does not arise solely out of these abnormal conditions but are directly related to the unequal power relations between men and women in a normal society. Africa has suffered a high incidence of conflict and emergencies over the last three decades. Many African countries are emerging from civil strife, armed conflict or some form of natural or man made disasters. These different disparate situations have often led to death, disruption of life, and massive violations of women's and girls' human rights.

During conflict, women and girls experience violence at the hands of different groups: armed groups, government officials, aid workers, civilian authorities and their own families. They are physically and economically forced into prostitution in exchange for food, shelter, safe passage. Their bodies are commodified in transactions to acquire necessities of life or at worst they become battle ground over which opposing forces struggle through rape to humiliate the men they are related to.

Violations of women's rights escalate the rate of HIV infections throughout the continent. Women and girls become more vulnerable to violence and HIV/AIDS - at a time where health services and means of preventing infection often become scarce or unavailable. Long term effects of conflict create a culture of violence that renders women and girls vulnerable when institutions of governance are weakened and social fragmentation is pronounced. As state security and legal infrastructure is rebuilt, African women experience the rule of aggression rather than the rule of law.

Even when peace comes, the scars left by conflict such as HIV/AIDS infection continue to impede women's progress. Often, the end of war does not signal the end of violations against women. In the post-conflict period, many women confront discrimination in reconstruction programs, violence in [refugee](#) camps, violence due to their HIV status, and violence when they attempt to return to their homes.

## Participants

Parliamentarians, policy makers, police, legislative officials, Judiciary, Commissioners of TRC's, Gender machineries and civil society organizations who work at a national, regional and pan African level and representatives REC's, AU, NEPAD.

## Time to Move from Establishing Frameworks and Norms on SGBV to Action

There are glaring gaps in women's protection due to lack of political will, resources and oversight capacity by states. This has led to failures of the humanitarian, peace and security community to reach women and girls and address their specific needs particularly in relation to violence, conflict and HIV and AIDS. This also makes processes of transitional justice incapable of effectively addressing women's needs.

A cursory examination of transitional justice processes in Africa suggests that they have been inadequate in addressing the following issues: justice and rehabilitation needs of victims, comprehensively dealing with conflict related violations against women and girls and dealing comprehensively with crimes of a sexual nature as a sui generic category of violations.

These inadequacies might, in part, be related to the mechanism that is agreed for collective evidence and processing it. There are broader systemic issues that might serve to explain why many women and girls do not come forward to report the violations committed against them. But even in those instances where women and girls have been forthcoming there are hardly any institutions or comprehensive systems/processes to attend to their psycho-social needs as well as justice needs. Partly this is because there is still a measure of difficulty in the thinking regarding how we quantify damages of a sexual nature (such as rape). The reality though is that this ambivalence is rife and the accompanying misogyny is on the rise.

## Partners

ACORD in alliance with Action Aid International-Africa, African Women's Development Fund, Amani Forum, The Kenya Human Rights Commission, Coalition on Violence against Women, International Planned Parenthood Federation and Urgent Action Fund - Africa.

## Conference Objectives

- To influence national, regional and Pan African institutions to establish effective mechanisms of prosecuting perpetrators of SGBV.
- To strengthen national legal and judicial mechanisms to provide compensation and protection for survivors of SGBV.
- To reinforce national and regional accountability frameworks to monitor and report sexual violence in conflict and post conflict settings.

## Outcomes

- Proposals on mechanisms for protection and resource mobilization strategies for survivors of SGBV.
- Guidelines on structures, systems and policies on restitution and reparations for survivors .
- The development of key messages and advocacy plans on SGBV survivors in conflict and post conflict societies.
- Re-commitment on the political will and resources to address SGBV based on prior commitments Beijing, AU Protocol and CEDAW. A MOVE TO ACTION

## Key Themes

- Regional and International instruments on SGBV.
- Legal and transitional justice frameworks: Negotiating the terrain
- Parliamentary & CSO interventions
- Lobbying and advocacy; strategies, Opportunities and partnerships
- Strengthening advocacy initiatives: strategies and developing partnerships.

## Key Note Speakers

**Hon. Baleka Mbete** — (TBC)- Speaker South African National Assembly

**Hon. Martha Karua** — Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs (Kenya)- (TBC)

## Invited Speakers

**Prof. Makau Mutua** — Dean, Buffalo Law School at the State University of New York

**Bernadette Lahai** — Member of Parliament Sierra Leone

**Una Thompson** — Women of Liberia Peace Network

**Fatuma Ndingiza** - Executive Secretary - National Unity Reconciliation Commission -Rwanda

## Resource Persons

- **Sarah Mukasa** – African Women’s Development Fund — Ghana
- **Njoki Ndung’u** – Former MP– Kenya/ CLICK
- **Dawn Cavanagh** – FEW — South Africa
- **Kaari B. Murungi** – Urgent Action Fund- Africa

### For More Information

Visit: [www.acordinternational.org](http://www.acordinternational.org)

Email: [awino.okech@acordinternational.org](mailto:awino.okech@acordinternational.org)

Tel: + 254 (02) 2721172, 2721185/6

Fax: + 254 (02) 2721166