

June 13, 2007, Vol. 13, Issue 7

SIGN THE I-VAWA PETITION

The *International Violence Against Women Act (I-VAWA)* will be introduced later this year. Drafted in consultation with more than 150 groups – including U.S. based non-governmental organizations, United Nations agencies and 40 women's groups around the world – this groundbreaking legislation will address the needs of millions of women suffering from violence and abuse. The United Nations Development Fund for Women estimates that one in three women around the world will be beaten or abused in her lifetime.

The *I-VAWA* petition will be presented to Congress in September by the International Rescue Committee, the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, Amnesty International USA, the Family Violence Prevention Fund, and the Women's Edge Coalition. It calls on Congress to make the fight against sexual violence a top priority for U.S. foreign policy and foreign assistance funding. During most conflicts around the world, women and girls are targeted for sexual violence. Women and girls who live in conflict-affected regions are especially vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation.

The petition urges Congress to: fund programs that prevent violence, save lives, and respond effectively to the needs of women and girls who have faced violence; support initiatives that allow survivors of sexual violence to recover their dignity, health, livelihood, and families; promote greater access for women and girls to education and training so they can support themselves, sustain a livelihood, and contribute to their communities; support community awareness and education programs that also target men and boys so that they can begin to break the cycle of sexual violence; provide technical assistance to countries in developing political, legal, and institutional structures required to address violence against women and girls; and support international health programs and justice initiatives that are respectful and responsive to the needs of victims of sexual violence.

Add your voice to the millions of Americans who are taking a stand to end violence against women and girls! Sign the petition at www.democracyinaction.org/dia/organizations/edge/petition.jsp?petition_KEY=617.