

INTERNATIONAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

Preventing violence against women and girls overseas



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Why I-VAWA matters

Around the world, one in three women experience physical, sexual and psychological abuse in their lifetime. Women and girls in developing countries experience particularly high rates of gender-based violence.

In addition to the trauma experienced by individuals, gender-based violence harms economies and the workers that fuel them. Conservative estimates of lost productivity as a result of gender-based violence range between 1.2 and 2 percent of GDP in Brazil, Tanzania and Bangladesh. Families are likely to experience increased food insecurity as a result of reduced productivity, including farming. Furthermore, gender-based violence exposes those affected to illness and injuries, making it difficult for them to work and care for their families. Consequently, gender-based violence hampers women's ability to participate in the political, social and economic spheres of society.

Our faith response

The ELCA continues to speak out on issues of gender-based violence in many ways. From the Women of the ELCA's efforts to combat human trafficking and domestic violence through education, to the many Lutheran organizations' support for victims, the ELCA and Lutheran partners are committed to seeking justice for women who face gender-based violence.

As Lutherans, we are called to "[create the conditions in our families, our schools, our workplaces, our churches and our city streets in which people are genuinely safe.](#)" The ELCA is currently working toward achieving this goal by creating a [social message on gender-based violence](#). Additionally, we recognize the passage of the International Violence Against Women Act as an important opportunity for our nation to collectively take steps toward creating safe conditions for women throughout the world.

We urge members of Congress to co-sponsor the International Violence Against Women Act (I-VAWA).

This legislation will:

- ◆ **Make permanent the Office of Global Women's Issues in the State Department, as well as the position of ambassador-at-large for global women's issues, responsible for coordinating policies, programs and funding related to gender integration and women's empowerment across various U.S. government agencies and internationally.**
- ◆ **Enable the U.S. government to develop faster and more efficient responses to violence against women in humanitarian emergencies, conflict situations and development programs. Since this legislation is aimed at coordinating and integrating existing programs, it does not require additional funding.**
- ◆ **Increase legal and judicial protections to prevent and respond to all forms of gender-based violence and increase health sector capacity to assess the impact of violence on one's health.**
- ◆ **Focus on reducing the vulnerability of women and girls to violence by improving their economic status and educational opportunities.**
- ◆ **Support public awareness programs to change attitudes.**

Take action now! www.ELCA.org/advocacy  [ELCA Advocacy](https://www.facebook.com/ELCAAdvocacy)  [@ELCAadvocacy](https://twitter.com/ELCAadvocacy)

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Learn more:

ELCA Justice for Women: <http://www.elca.org/justiceforwomen>

Women of the ELCA: www.womenoftheelca.org