

IAWP Resolution #02-2013
Elimination of Violence against Women

*Submitted by:
First VP Margaret Shorter, on behalf of the IAWP Resolutions Committee*

Commentary:

Police are often the first point of contact in situations of domestic or family violence, which can involve spouses, partners, children, and seniors. As these facts show, the recognition of and approach to this global problem is complex and varied.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police Gazette, 2011.

Violence against women and girls affects us all. It destroys lives and weakens the fabric of our society. As a population, it takes a heavy toll on our communities and our economy.

The United Nations *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women* defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life."

The most common forms are:

- physical violence, ranging from slapping and hitting to assault and murder
- emotional or psychological violence involving systematic undermining of an individual's self-confidence, intimidation and verbal abuse
- sexual violence, which encompasses all non-consensual or coerced sexual activity including incest and rape
- financial violence, involving partial or total loss of control of one's finances
- neglect, involving deliberate denial of human rights and the necessities of life.

*In 2005, a **World Health Organization** review of 35 countries found that between 10 and 52 per cent of women reported being physically abused by an intimate partner at some point in their lives. Between 10 and 30 per cent of women said they had suffered sexual violence by an intimate partner.*

*The number of reported cases of spousal violence against women in **Singapore** between 1998 and 2006 has steadily declined from a high of 2,360 in 1990 to 1,135 in 2006. The*

country credits increased public awareness and better access to assistance through referrals from police to Family Service Centres for early intervention.

Statistics Canada found that nearly 40,200 incidents of spousal violence were reported to police in 2007, which represents about 12 per cent of all police-reported violent crime in Canada. However, these incidents have declined, decreasing 15 per cent between 1998 and 2007.

New Zealand Police estimate that one woman is killed by her partner or ex-partner every five weeks and 10 children die every year as a result of family violence. The country's Women's Refuge, an independent community organization run by women, assisted some 20,000 women and children in 2009.

The **United Nations** violence study estimated that between 133 million and 275 million children worldwide witness violence at home each year, with 4.6 to 11.3 million of these children living in developed countries.

In **Europe**, the **European Women's Lobby** estimates that between 20 and 25 per cent of women have been subjected to physical violence by a partner – approximately one in five. Some 12 to 15 per cent of women are estimated to have been in a violent relationship after the age of 16.

A report from the **European Commission** suggests that between 40 and 70 per cent per cent of men who use physical violence against their partners are also violent towards their children and that about half of the female victims also abuse their children.

The **U.K.'s Women and Equality Unit** reports that domestic violence against women has the highest rate of repeat victimization of any crime — 35 per cent of households see a second incident within five weeks of the first.

One incident of domestic violence is reported to the police every minute in the United Kingdom. On average, two women a week are killed by a male partner or former partner.

In 2004, the U.K. estimated its annual total cost of domestic violence at £23 billion. This included the costs of police, the criminal justice system, healthcare, social services, emergency housing, civil legal support, other services and loss to economic output.

Finland estimates the cost of domestic violence to be approximately €91 million a year, Spain €2.4 billion and the Netherlands €151 million.

Statistics from the **United Nations Development Programme** suggest that between 30 and 45 percent of women in Latin America and the Caribbean suffer some form of

physical, sexual or psychological domestic violence. The cost of that violence is equivalent to two percent of that region's Gross Domestic Product.

*The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States** report that women experience about 4.8 million intimate partner-related physical assaults and rapes each year.*

Men are the victims of about 2.9 million intimate partner-related physical assaults.

*According to the **U.S. Department of Justice**, American Indian and Alaska Native women experience the highest rates of intimate partner violence.*

*In collaboration with the **Office on Violence against Women (OVW) of the US Department of Justice**, the **IACP** has developed the National Law Enforcement Leadership Initiative on Violence against Women. This initiative reflects the continued partnership and shared commitment of IACP and OVW in their efforts to bring crimes of violence against women to the forefront of policing.*

***Germany** has no specific penal law on domestic violence, however, laws in the individual Länder, or federal states, allow for removal of an abusive partner in cases of spousal assault. In Berlin alone, there are some 3,600 cases annually of domestic violence resulting in injury.*

*The term "violence against women" is not used in the **Greek** penal code, which considers all people equal under the law. Domestic violence is covered only where there is physical assault or visible injury.*

The **United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW)**, a commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, is the principal global policy-making body at the UN dedicated to gender equality and the advancement of women.

The 57th session of the UNCSW took place from March 4 to 15, 2013 at the UN headquarters in New York City. This year, member states addressed the priority theme, **The elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls**. The review theme was *The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS*. Members also considered an emerging issue, *Key gender equality issues to be reflected in the post-2015 development framework*.

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence -- November 25 – December 10

November 25 is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. It marks the first day of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence, and December 10 – International Human Rights Day – is the final day. This 16 days of activism is recognized internationally.

The International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women was designated in 1999 by the United Nations General Assembly. The date was chosen to commemorate the lives of the Mirabal sisters from the Dominican Republic who were violently assassinated in 1960. The day pays tribute to them, as well as urging global recognition of gender violence. Each year on this day, governments, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are invited to organize activities designed to raise public awareness of the problem.

Gender-based violence affects us all. It destroys families, weakens the fabric of our societies, and takes a heavy toll on our communities and our economy. The members of the International Association of Women Police honour, during the 16 Days of Activism and throughout the year, our resolution to eliminate violence against women and girls in all its forms.

Resolution #02- 2013

TOPIC: Elimination of Violence against Women

Submitted by: IAWP First Vice President Margaret Shorter, *on behalf of the IAWP Resolution Committee*

Whereas: Violence against women is defined as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.

Whereas: The resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, known as 48/104: the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women “Recognizing the urgent need for the universal application to women of the rights and principles with regard to equality, security, liberty, integrity and dignity of all human beings,...Solemnly proclaims the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and urges that every effort be made so that it becomes generally known and respected” (85th plenary meeting, 20 December 1993).

Whereas: Women police, in the execution of their duties, are encumbered with the obligation of the state in exercising “due diligence to prevent, investigate and, in accordance with national legislation, punish acts of violence against women, whether those acts are perpetrated by the State or by private persons” (Article 4.c of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 1993).

Whereas: The guiding mission, vision, and values of the International Association of Women Police support the strength, the unity, and the equality of women worldwide.

Therefore Be It Resolved:

That the International Association of Women Police recommends that the commentary report titled *Elimination of Violence Against Women*, be adopted by all IAWP members, and

That, in consideration of the guiding mission, vision, and values of the IAWP, the recommendations specific to law enforcement be endorsed and implemented.

Be It Further Resolved:

That the International Association of Women Police recommends that all affiliate organisations of the IAWP and all police agencies review this resolution in the context of their organizations and implement changes to policies and procedures accordingly.

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TOPIC: Elimination of Violence against Women

Submitted by:

IAWP 1st Vice President Margaret Shorter on behalf of the Resolutions Committee

Media Lines:

- The International Association of Women Police recognizes the need to eliminate gender-based violence (GBV). GBV affects us all by destroying families, weakening the fabric of our societies, and taking a heavy toll on our communities and our economies.
- There is consensus around the globe that violence against women and girls exploits and victimizes innocent and vulnerable people and has a deleterious effect on communities and nations.
- As leaders of progressive change in law enforcement, the IAWP supports the continuous evolution of laws and strategies designed to eliminate violence against women.
- The IAWP recommends that law enforcement agencies work together within the profession and as partners in their communities in a collaborative effort to eliminate violence against women.
- The IAWP stance on the issue of violence against women aims to strengthen the unity of endeavour and raise awareness around the world.