

HOSTED BY THE AMERICAN GRADUATE SCHOOL IN PARIS



VIOLENCE
— AGAINST —
WOMEN

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
28 NOVEMBER, 2014 – 2.30-7.00 PM
THÉÂTRE DES CULTURES DU MONDE
101 BD RASPAIL, 75006 PARIS

#violenceagainstwomen



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Millions of women and girls around the world are assaulted, beaten, raped, mutilated or even murdered in what constitutes appalling violations of their human rights. We must fundamentally challenge the culture of discrimination that allows violence to continue. On this International Day, I call on all governments to make good on their pledges to end all forms of violence against women and girls in all parts of the world, and I urge all people to support this important goal.

”

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

Message for the International Day
for the Elimination of Violence against Women
25 November 2012

Dear Conference Presenters and Attendees,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to this important conference on Violence Against Women.

A recent analysis by the World Health Organization has estimated that 35% of women worldwide experience physical and/or sexual violence. 64 million girls are child brides and around 140 million girls and women are submitted to female genital mutilation.

An estimated 20,000 to 50,000 of women were raped during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina while around 250,000 to 500,000 were victims in Rwanda. So that we, girls and women, have become the missiles, the drones, the arsenal that would defeat the adversary. No longer human beings, but weapons of war.

We are treated as we are only because we are women. No other consideration is taken into account. No other reason. There is a deep-rooted belief in many societies that women are not equal to men. A belief, often shared by men and women, that leads to the stereotyped roles that both sexes play. As the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence states, this inequality is both a "cause and consequence of violence against women". It must be fought at every level of society.

Women and men together must now eliminate the customs and traditions that reinforce this discrimination. We, the faculty, students, and administrators of the American Graduate School in Paris, men and women, are committed to this goal.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Servidio'.

Dr. Eileen Servidio

President, American Graduate School in Paris



PROGRAM

- 2:30 pm** Doors open for participants
- 3.00 pm** **Opening Session**
Moderator : **Lorraine Koonce Farahmand, Esq.**
Opening speech
Linda Weil-Curiel (Lawyer)
Introduction to the Istanbul Convention as an instrument of change
Carolina Lasén Diaz (Programme Officer, Gender Equality Unit, Equality Division, Council of Europe)
- 3.30 pm** **Session 1: Crimes Against Women in Concept & Law**
Prosecution of gender-based violence
Nazir Afzal (Chief Crown Prosecutor, UK Crown Prosecution Service)
State monitoring and reporting obligations under the CEDAW Convention
Violeta Neubauer (Member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, CEDAW)
Defense of women seeking asylum based on gender violence
Jennifer Obaseki (Senior Partner, Obaseki Solicitors)
- 4.10 pm** **Session 2: Crimes Against Women in Times of Conflict**
An overview of Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 2122
H.E. Ursula Plassnik (Austrian Ambassador to France)
The role of international courts in exposing mass rape in conflict
Marlise Simons (Journalist, The New York Times)
- 4:35 pm** Break

4.50 pm **Session 3: Crimes Against Women Deriving from Religion, Custom and Tradition**

How culture operates to control and subordinate women
Dr. Ruchi Anand (Professor, American Graduate School in Paris)

The causes, consequences and the eradication of FGM
Dr. Tobe Levin (Vice-President, FORWARD)

The role of honor killings in culture
Navroop K. Sahdev (Graduate student, Université Paris 13 and University of Turin)

5:20 pm **Session 4: Seeds of Hope, Winds of Change**

Testimony: **Erin Helfert** (Advocate & gender specialist)

Issues of gender violence on the internet directed at today's girls, tomorrow's women
Dr. Elizabeth Milovidov, Esq. (In-house eSafety Consultant for European Schoolnet)
Dr. Susanna Greijer (Project Coordinator, ECPAT)

Empowering women coming from vulnerable situations
Chiara Condi (President and Founder, HERA France)

6:20 pm **Closing Session**

Angela Melo (Director, Division of Ethics, Youth and Sport, Sector for Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO, France)

6:30 pm Closing Remarks
Lorraine Koonce Farahmand, Esq.

Moment of silence in remembrance of the victims of gender violence.

Message from the President – **Dr. Eileen Servidio**



CONFERENCE BIOS

Nazir Afzal is Chief Crown Prosecutor of the UK Crown Prosecution Service. He is the first Muslim to be appointed to such a position, and is responsible for over 100,000 prosecutions a year. He has campaigned for women's rights, and against forced marriage, FGM and honor killings.

Dr. Ruchi Anand is an Indian-born academic and author living in France. She has authored or contributed to several books in the field of international relations and environmental politics, and teaches international relations at AGS in Paris and in the JSA summer program at Stanford, Yale and Georgetown.

Chiara Condi is the Founder and President of HERA France, a Paris-based NGO that provides entrepreneurship training and mentorship to women in vulnerable situations, including former victims of trafficking, violence, or sexual exploitation. She is a Harvard University, Sciences Po and LSE graduate.

Dr. Susanna Greijer is an independent expert on children's rights for the Council of Europe, and a Project Coordinator at End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT). She has been researching and working on children's rights since 2006.

Erin Helfert is a gender advocate working on projects with agencies such as USAID, the UN, and the EU. She speaks globally on issues of gender, justice, and women-led economic growth. She also played an integral role in the formation of the US Dept. of Justice "Vision 21" Program.

Lorraine Koonce Farahmand, Esq. is an English Solicitor and New York attorney. She is currently an International Law professor at AGS and in the Anglo American Law degree program at the *Université de Cergy Pontoise*, where she lectures on public international law and human rights.

Carolina Lasén Diaz is a Programme Officer in the Gender Equality Unit (Equality Division) at the Council of Europe. She previously worked at the Secretariat of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

Dr. Tobe Levin is an activist against FGM and the Vice-President of FORWARD Germany, which focuses on fighting FGM around the world. She is most known

for combining this advocacy with academic scholarship in comparative literature, and has published over a hundred articles, edited three books and founded UnCUT/VOICES Press.

Angela Melo is the Director of the Division of Ethics, Youth and Sport at UNESCO. She is a former Criminal Prosecutor and Senior Legal Counsellor for the Mozambican Ministry of Justice. She was previously the Vice-President and Special Rapporteur to the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR).

Dr. Elizabeth Milovidov, Esq. is an American lawyer, children's rights advocate and law professor at AGS. She founded Crossing Guard Consulting, which focuses on Internet safety issues for parents. She is an international consultant and speaker on themes of women's rights and leadership.

Violeta Neubauer is an international expert and member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) where she gives assistance to States parties to the CEDAW Convention. She is a member of the Council of Europe Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men.

Jennifer Obaseki is a senior partner and advocate in London, specializing in Immigration and Family Law. She has over 20 years' experience prosecuting forced marriage, trafficking, and domestic violence cases. Her law firm has a strong record of supporting women seeking asylum based on gender violence.

H.E. Ambassador Ursula Plassnik is a lawyer and career diplomat, and the current Austrian Ambassador to France. She was chief of staff for the Austrian Chancellor from 1997 to 2004, and the country's Foreign Affairs Minister between 2004 and 2008. She often speaks on gender violence issues and gender-related U.N. resolutions.

Navroop K. Sahdev is a graduate student at *Université Paris 13* and University of Turin. She has recently worked at the United Nations Environment Programme in Geneva. She is the co-author of "Honour Killings in North India: An Enquiry into the Causes of the Social Menace".

Dr. Eileen Servidio is a professor of International Law and the President of the School of International Relations and Diplomacy at AGS. She is a specialist in both International Criminal Law and Comparative Law, and has authored several works on violence against women.

Marlise Simons has been a journalist with The New York Times since 1982. She has worked extensively in Latin America, which, along with her experience of having been kidnapped, formed her later work in human rights reporting. In 1991 she was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize for Foreign Reporting.

Linda Weil-Curiel is an internationally-renowned French lawyer and human rights activist, and France's leading crusader against FGM. Thanks to her prosecutorial actions, France became the first nation to bring criminal charges against those who perform FGM, resulting in over one hundred prosecutions.

GUESTS OF HONOR

Charlotte Lyon, a self-taught artist, painted the cover of the book *Crimes Against Women*. Of the painting, she said: "I see the image of a woman kneeling in despair not necessarily from conflicts of war, but from everyday domestic abuse at the hands of simply a gender of greater physical strength." Her early work was dominated by the animal form, depicted in twisted sculptural shapes expressing both power and confinement by filling the canvas. Since 2007, she has moved to more fluid sketches in oil and acrylic depicting different professions and city workers.

Dr. David Wingeate Pike was born in England and educated at Blundell's School, McGill University and Universidad Interamericana Mexico. He received doctorates from the Université de Toulouse and Stanford University, where he served as Assistant Director at the Institute of Hispanic American and Luso-Brazilian Studies. He is now Co-director of Research at the American Graduate School in Paris, and Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Contemporary History and Politics at The American University of Paris. He also edited the book *Crimes Against Women*.

Featured book: *Crimes Against Women* A collective work by the AGS Research Center

This conference is a continuation of the work of the American Graduate School in Paris' Research Center on Violence and International Relations, which seeks to bridge academia with policy-makers and practitioners in the field, in order to fight human rights violations internationally. The AGS Research Center produced *Crimes Against Women* (New York, Nova Science, 2010), a collective work edited by David Wingeate Pike, with a foreword by Bangladeshi author and human rights advocate Taslima Nasrin. This book presents a survey of acts of violence, past and present, that women throughout the world have endured, with twenty-nine articles authored by a diverse selection of contributors ranging from scholars, diplomats, and lawyers to journalists, artists, and NGO leaders.

SPONSORS



Alliance Française, founded in 1883, works to promote French language and diffuse French culture around the world. It is comprised of the **Fondation Alliance Française**, a Paris-based nonprofit organization, and over 800 centers in 135 countries, with 8,000 teachers and over half a million students, operating under the coordination of the Foundation.

The American Women's Group in Paris is a secular, non-profit volunteer organization that fosters social, educational, and cultural activities among English-speaking women in France.

Banque Populaire Rives de Paris is a regional and cooperative bank that belongs to the second largest French bank group BPCE. Recognized for its expertise, it provides qualitative offerings and services, particularly to teachers and students for whom it acts as a preferred bank partner.

Maison des Cultures du Monde (World Cultures Institute) was created in 1982 to promote cultural and artistic exchanges between France and other countries. Responsible for protecting France's intangible cultural heritage, it seeks to protect cultural diversity and the expression of cultural identities.

Nova Science Publishers is a New York-based publishing house that produces a wide array of academic books, encyclopedias, handbooks, e-books and journals. Most of its publications are in the fields of science and social sciences.



KEY CONCEPTS

Culture

Culture is the complex summation of the spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features that characterize a society or a social group. It includes not only intellectual and creative products, such as literature, music, drama, and painting, but also modes of life and value systems, traditions and beliefs, and the fundamental rights of the human being. Culture is also used to describe the beliefs and practices of another society, particularly where these are seen as closely linked with tradition or religion. Culture is the very fabric of society. It shapes “the way things are done” and often defines our understanding of why this should be so. Unfortunately the human rights of women often clash with cultural traditions, such as custom and patriarchy, which become a dominant force and institutionalize and promote the debasement of the status of women. Many pervasive forms of gender violence are heavily dependent on cultural practices that often undermine the universality of gender rights.

Armed Conflict

Within the history of mankind, the world has borne witness to an ocean of armed conflicts. These armed conflicts have produced untold victories (depending upon who is talking) and untold tragedies. Lives destroyed. Communities torn apart. Deeply entrenched within the devastations of armed conflict, which in and of itself is horrific, lies another devastation. In times of conflict and wars, women have been raped as an act of violence and as a demonstration of power. Mass rape against women during armed conflict is a tragic manifestation of the general saga of violence towards women due to the historically unequal male and female status. It is intentionally directed against women's most intimate sphere with the purpose of demonstrating power and superiority by humiliating and debasing.

Mass rape, sometimes called ‘genocidal rape’, is gender-specific in nature and gender-specific in result. Not only is mass rape a deliberate weapon of terror, but it is also a deliberate weapon of mass humiliation and degradation. It is an extreme form of violence against women. Women, female children, toddlers and babies are predominantly the victims, and hordes of men are predominantly the perpetrators.

Mass rape does not end with the cessation of armed conflict and not all acts of mass rape against women are committed in the hands of what is perceived to be the enemy. Indeed, women have also been raped in the post-war period by opportunistic civilians and even by those who are part of the peacekeeping operations, including humanitarian workers and peacekeeping forces. This ongoing nature and magnitude of sexual violence against women carries on during post-conflict situations in foreign military bases, in purportedly safe rescue camps, in camps for refugees and the internally displaced. Mass rape against women is a stark reminder that armed conflict often takes its heaviest toll on women.

Legal and Judicial

Changing social norms and the acceptance of the unacceptable is essential in eradicating acts of gender-based violence. Adopting strong laws and clear concise judicial responses, backed by implementation and services for protection and prevention, is vital to guaranteeing respect for the fundamental rights of women and girls, most notably their right to security and to a life free of violence. In this endeavour, the legal and judicial system can make a critical difference. Successful implementation of laws reflects society's awareness of violence against women. The ability of laws and the judicial responses to gender-based violence can shape public opinion and sensitize the public.



CREDITS - Cover painting: Charlotte Lyon, Graphic Design: Tim Francis

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