

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2120

To prevent international violence against women, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 14, 2017

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. MENENDEZ)
introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the
Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To prevent international violence against women, and for
other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.—This Act
5 may be cited as the “International Violence Against
6 Women Act of 2017”.

7 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for
8 this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title.
- Sec. 2. Findings.
- Sec. 3. Statement of policy.

TITLE I—UNITED STATES STRATEGY TO PREVENT AND
RESPOND TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE GLOBALLY

- Sec. 101. Global strategy requirement.
Sec. 102. Country plans.
Sec. 103. Report on priority country selection and country plans.
Sec. 104. Rule of construction.

TITLE II—OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Sec. 201. Definitions.
Sec. 202. Office of Global Women’s Issues.
Sec. 203. Senior Coordinator for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment.
Sec. 204. Briefing.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress makes the following findings:

3 (1) An estimated one out of every three women
4 throughout the world will be beaten, coerced into
5 sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime.

6 (2) Up to 70 percent of women in some coun-
7 tries report experiencing gender-based violence at
8 some point in their lives.

9 (3) Intimate partner violence is the most preva-
10 lent form of violence against women, preventing
11 them from playing more active roles in the social,
12 economic, and political development of their commu-
13 nities.

14 (4) Sexual violence among adolescents and pre-
15 adolescents is alarmingly high. National surveys in
16 Swaziland, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Kenya, and Haiti
17 have found that between 28 and 38 percent of girls
18 and between 9 and 18 percent of boys report experi-

1 encing sexual violence before reaching 18 years of
2 age.

3 (5) Adult male respondents in 6 countries who
4 had experienced violence as children were signifi-
5 cantly more likely to report perpetrating intimate
6 partner violence themselves according to the Inter-
7 national Men and Gender Equality Survey dataset.

8 (6) Gender-based violence harms economies and
9 the workers that fuel them. Despite underreporting,
10 striking statistics document prevalent forms of gen-
11 der-based violence globally that affect the world of
12 work. Worldwide, women are concentrated in low-
13 wage, insecure jobs in workplaces where they lack
14 bargaining power, protections against gender-based
15 violence, safe and confidential reporting systems, re-
16 course to justice, or access to legal, medical, and
17 psychosocial services.

18 (7) Women living in poverty are particularly
19 vulnerable to gender-based violence. Lack of eco-
20 nomic opportunities often compels women to use
21 desperate and dangerous means to provide for them-
22 selves and their families, risking significant exposure
23 to sexual exploitation and abuse for both women and
24 their children.

1 (8) Country studies indicate that the risk of
2 HIV among women who have experienced violence
3 may be up to three times higher than among those
4 who have not experience violence. The World Health
5 Organization found that women who experience inti-
6 mate partner violence are at more than 50 percent
7 greater risk of HIV infection, and in some instances
8 their risk of HIV infection increases four-fold.
9 Women living with HIV are more likely to experi-
10 ence violence than other women, and fear of violence
11 can prevent women from accessing HIV/AIDS infor-
12 mation and receiving treatment and counseling.

13 (9) Addressing gender inequality and gender-
14 based violence is essential to reducing HIV risk and
15 increasing access to HIV prevention, care and treat-
16 ment services for women and men. The President's
17 Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) sup-
18 ports significant work in the field to incorporate ef-
19 forts to prevent and respond to gender-based vio-
20 lence into existing HIV treatment and prevention
21 programs.

22 (10) Prevalence of sexual and physical violence
23 is higher among persons with disabilities, particu-
24 larly for adolescents and intimate partners with dis-
25 abilities, and for men and women with intellectual

1 impairments living in institutions. The World Health
2 Organization reports that rates of gender-based vio-
3 lence are between 4 and 10 times greater among
4 persons with disabilities compared to non-disabled
5 persons.

6 (11) Displaced, refugee, and stateless women
7 and girls in humanitarian emergencies, conflict set-
8 tings, and natural disasters face extreme violence
9 and threats, including—

10 (A) being forced to exchange sex for food
11 and humanitarian supplies; and

12 (B) being at increased risk of rape, sexual
13 exploitation, and abuse.

14 (12) Rape and sexual assault against women
15 and girls are used to torture, intimidate, and ter-
16 rorize communities. Rape and sexual assault are
17 used as tools of war in conflict zones, including the
18 Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Syria, Afghani-
19 stan, Colombia, and South Sudan.

20 (13) Child and forced marriage of girls—

21 (A) is a harmful practice that deprives
22 girls of their dignity and rights and creates bar-
23 riers to development for communities and coun-
24 tries;

1 (B) is projected to affect more than
2 140,000,000 girls who will become brides be-
3 tween 2011 and 2020;

4 (C) can prematurely end girls' education,
5 increase vulnerability to gender-based violence,
6 and significantly raise the risk of maternal and
7 infant morbidity or mortality, including the risk
8 of obstetric fistula and sexually transmitted dis-
9 eases, including HIV/AIDS; and

10 (D) is perpetuated by poverty, a lack of
11 educational or employment opportunities for
12 girls, a lack of legal policies and enforcement of
13 laws, and religious, cultural, and social factors
14 related to girls' perceived lack of value, factors
15 which become particularly acute in conflict and
16 disaster settings where fears of sexual violence
17 and overstretched coping mechanisms often
18 drive child and forced marriage.

19 (14) Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/
20 C) is carried out most often on girls between infancy
21 and 15 years of age and has impacted more than
22 125,000,000 girls and women who are alive today.
23 FGM/C can cause long-term health problems, includ-
24 ing infertility, complications in childbirth, and in-
25 creased risk of newborn deaths.

1 (15) World Bank data shows that gender in-
2 equality directly corresponds to increased levels of
3 political and economic instability within states. Gen-
4 der-based violence impedes women’s meaningful par-
5 ticipation in social, political, and economic spheres,
6 which is essential to the stability and democratiza-
7 tion of a country. Since women disproportionately
8 experience gender-based violence during conflict and
9 post-conflict reconstruction, they can play a pivotal
10 role in preventing, mitigating, and resolving conflict,
11 and countering extremism.

12 (16) Gender-based violence is a contributing
13 factor to human trafficking. Experts in the field
14 have reported that women and girls who have experi-
15 enced gender-based violence and live in societies that
16 tolerate severe gender discrimination appear to be
17 more vulnerable to being trafficked. Comprehensive
18 efforts to reduce human trafficking must include ef-
19 forts to prevent and respond to gender-based vio-
20 lence due to the intertwined relationship of the two
21 crimes.

22 (17) Faith-based organizations and faith lead-
23 ers are key partners in the ongoing efforts to pre-
24 vent and respond to gender-based violence. When
25 properly engaged and equipped with knowledge and

1 resources, such organizations and leaders can play a
2 significant part in changing behaviors and norms
3 and reducing gender-based violence. Particularly in
4 countries that lack effective legal frameworks to ad-
5 dress gender-based violence, such faith-based organi-
6 zations and faith leaders have the standing and au-
7 thority to address harmful practices, such as child
8 marriage, intimate partner abuses, and acid throw-
9 ing.

10 **SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

11 It is the policy of the United States—

12 (1) to take effective action to prevent and re-
13 spond to violence against women and girls around
14 the world as a matter of basic human rights and to
15 promote gender equality, economic growth, and im-
16 proved public health;

17 (2) to systematically integrate and coordinate
18 efforts to prevent and respond to violence against
19 women and girls internationally into United States
20 foreign policy and foreign assistance programs, in-
21 cluding peace-building efforts and humanitarian re-
22 lief and recovery;

23 (3) to support and build local capacity in devel-
24 oping countries, including the capacity of govern-
25 ments at all levels, nongovernmental organizations,

1 especially women-led organizations, to prevent and
2 respond to violence against women and girls;

3 (4) to consult, cooperate, coordinate, and col-
4 laborate with a wide variety of nongovernmental
5 partners with demonstrated experience in preventing
6 and responding to violence against women and girls,
7 including faith-based organizations and women-led
8 organizations;

9 (5) to employ a multisectoral approach to pre-
10 venting and responding to violence against women
11 and girls internationally, including activities in the
12 economic, education, health, nutrition, legal, and ju-
13 dicial sectors;

14 (6) to work at all levels, from the individual to
15 the family, community, local, national, and inter-
16 national levels, to prevent and respond to violence
17 against women and girls around the world;

18 (7) to enhance training by United States per-
19 sonnel of professional foreign military and police
20 forces and judicial officials, including specific and
21 thorough instruction on preventing and responding
22 to violence against women and girls around the
23 world;

1 (8) to engage men and boys as partners, as an
2 essential element of making sustained reductions in
3 violence against women and girls;

4 (9) to include the prevention of child and forced
5 marriage as an important part of United States
6 Government efforts to prevent violence against girls
7 and promote gender equality and global health;

8 (10) to require that all United States contrac-
9 tors and grantees establish appropriate policies and
10 take effective measures to prevent violence against
11 women and girls and sexual exploitation and abuse
12 within their workforce;

13 (11) to exert sustained international leadership
14 to prevent and respond to violence against women
15 and girls, including in bilateral and multilateral fora;
16 and

17 (12) to implement a strategy to prevent and re-
18 spond to gender-based violence globally.

19 **TITLE I—UNITED STATES STRAT-**
20 **EGY TO PREVENT AND RE-**
21 **SPOND TO GENDER-BASED VI-**
22 **OLENCE GLOBALLY**

23 **SEC. 101. GLOBAL STRATEGY REQUIREMENT.**

24 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
25 date of the enactment of this Act, and every 4 years there-

1 after, the Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women’s
2 Issues at the Department of State appointed pursuant to
3 section 201 (referred to in this title as the “Ambassador-
4 at-Large”), in consultation with the Senior Coordinator
5 for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment at the
6 United States Agency for International Development ap-
7 pointed pursuant to section 202 (referred to in this title
8 as the “Senior Coordinator”), shall—

9 (1) develop or update, in consultation with civil
10 society, including service providers, a United States
11 global strategy to prevent and respond to violence
12 against women and girls, using evidence-based inter-
13 ventions and standards that address the root causes
14 of, and provide comprehensive responses to, violence
15 against women and girls;

16 (2) submit the strategy under paragraph (1) to
17 the appropriate congressional committees for com-
18 ment and review; and

19 (3) make the strategy publicly available on the
20 Internet.

21 (b) INITIAL STRATEGY.—For the purposes of this
22 section, an existing United States strategy to prevent and
23 respond to violence against women and girls may be
24 deemed to fulfill the initial requirement under subsection
25 (a).

1 (c) COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION.—In devel-
2 oping the strategy under subsection (a), the Ambassador-
3 at-Large and the Senior Coordinator shall consult with—

4 (1) the heads of relevant Federal agencies;

5 (2) the Senior Policy Operating Group on Traf-
6 ficking in Persons; and

7 (3) representatives of civil society, including
8 nongovernmental organizations, faith-based organi-
9 zations, multilateral organizations, local and inter-
10 national civil society groups, and local service pro-
11 viders and beneficiaries with demonstrated experi-
12 ence in addressing violence against women and girls
13 or promoting gender equality internationally.

14 (d) USE OF FUNDS.—Amounts appropriated or oth-
15 erwise made available to carry out the activities under this
16 section shall be subject to all applicable restrictions under
17 Federal law.

18 **SEC. 102. COUNTRY PLANS.**

19 (a) PRIORITY COUNTRY SELECTION.—To further the
20 objectives of the strategy developed under section 101, the
21 Ambassador-at-Large and the Senior Coordinator shall
22 identify not fewer than 4 eligible low-income and lower-
23 middle income countries that—

1 (1) have significant levels of violence against
2 women and girls, including violence within displaced
3 communities;

4 (2) have the governmental or nongovernmental
5 organizational capacity to manage and implement
6 gender-based violence prevention and response pro-
7 gram activities; and

8 (3) to the extent possible, are geographically,
9 ethnically, and culturally diverse from each other.

10 (b) COUNTRY PLANS.—In each country identified
11 pursuant to subsection (a) the Ambassador-at-Large and
12 the Senior Coordinator shall develop comprehensive,
13 multisectoral, and holistic individual country plans de-
14 signed to address and respond to violence against women
15 and girls that—

16 (1) assess and describe the current and poten-
17 tial capacity of the government of each identified
18 country and civil society organizations in each such
19 identified country to address and respond to violence
20 against women and girls;

21 (2) identify coordination mechanisms with Fed-
22 eral agencies that—

23 (A) have existing programs relevant to the
24 strategy;

1 (B) will be involved in new program activi-
2 ties; and

3 (C) are engaged in broader United States
4 strategies around development;

5 (3) describe the monitoring and evaluation
6 mechanisms established for each identified country,
7 and their intended use in assessing overall preven-
8 tion and response outcomes;

9 (4) project the general levels of resources need-
10 ed to achieve the stated objectives in each identified
11 country, including an accounting of—

12 (A) activities and funding already ex-
13 pended by the Department of State, the United
14 States Agency for International Development,
15 other Federal agencies, donor country govern-
16 ments, and multilateral institutions; and

17 (B) leveraged private sector resources; and

18 (5) include strategies, as appropriate, designed
19 to accommodate the needs of stateless, disabled, in-
20 ternally displaced, refugee, or religious or ethnic mi-
21 nority women and girls.

22 **SEC. 103. REPORT ON PRIORITY COUNTRY SELECTION AND**
23 **COUNTRY PLANS.**

24 Not later than 90 days after priority countries are
25 identified pursuant to section 102, and annually there-

1 after, the Ambassador-at-Large and the Senior Coordi-
2 nator shall submit a report to the appropriate congres-
3 sional committees that—

4 (1) details the priority country selection process
5 and the development of specific country plans; and

6 (2) includes an overview of—

7 (A) all programming and specific activities
8 being undertaken;

9 (B) the budget resources requested by each
10 executive agency; and

11 (C) the specific activities to be supported
12 by each executive agency under the strategy if
13 such resources are provided.

14 **SEC. 104. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**

15 Nothing in this title may be construed to authorize
16 any additional appropriations to carry out the purposes
17 or initiatives required under this title.

18 **TITLE II—OVERSIGHT AND**
19 **ACCOUNTABILITY**

20 **SEC. 201. DEFINITIONS.**

21 In this title:

22 (1) AGENCY.—The term “Agency” means the
23 United States Agency for International Develop-
24 ment.

1 (2) AMBASSADOR.—The term “Ambassador”
2 means the Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women’s
3 Issues appointed by the President pursuant to sec-
4 tion 202(a).

5 (3) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
6 TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-
7 mittees” means—

8 (A) the Committee on Foreign Relations of
9 the Senate;

10 (B) the Committee on Appropriations of
11 the Senate;

12 (C) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of
13 the House of Representatives; and

14 (D) the Committee on Appropriations of
15 the House of Representatives.

16 (4) GENDER ANALYSIS.—The term “gender
17 analysis” means the examination of the differential
18 impact of policies on different genders.

19 (5) OFFICE.—The term “Office” means the Of-
20 fice of Global Women’s Issues established by the
21 Secretary of State pursuant to section 202(a).

22 (6) SENIOR COORDINATOR.—The term “Senior
23 Coordinator” means the Senior Coordinator for Gen-
24 der Equality and Women’s Empowerment at the
25 Agency.

1 **SEC. 202. OFFICE OF GLOBAL WOMEN'S ISSUES.**

2 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of State shall
3 establish in the Office of the Secretary of the Department
4 of State the Office of Global Women's Issues. The Office
5 shall be headed by an Ambassador-at-Large for Global
6 Women's Issues, who shall be appointed by the President,
7 by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. The
8 Ambassador shall report directly to the Secretary and
9 shall have the rank and status of Ambassador-at-Large.

10 (b) PURPOSE.—In addition to the duties described in
11 subsection (c) and duties determined by the Secretary of
12 State, the Ambassador shall coordinate efforts of the
13 United States Government as directed by the Secretary
14 regarding approaches that promote equality and advance
15 the status of women and girls in United States foreign
16 policy.

17 (c) DUTIES.—

18 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Ambassador—

19 (A) in consultation with the Senior Coordi-
20 nator, shall direct activities, policies, programs,
21 and funding relating to gender equality and the
22 advancement of women and girls internation-
23 ally, including those intended to prevent and re-
24 spond to violence against women and girls, for
25 all bureaus and offices of the Department of

1 State and in the international programs of all
2 other Federal agencies;

3 (B) shall actively promote and advance the
4 integration of gender analysis into the pro-
5 grams, structures, processes, and capacities of
6 bureaus and offices of the Department of State
7 and in the international programs of other Fed-
8 eral agencies;

9 (C) shall direct United States Government
10 resources, as appropriate, to respond to needs
11 for promoting gender equality and the em-
12 powerment of women in United States Govern-
13 ment foreign policies and international pro-
14 grams, including to prevent and respond to vio-
15 lence against women and girls internationally;

16 (D) may design, support, and implement
17 activities regarding empowerment of women
18 internationally, including for the prevention of
19 and response to violence against women and
20 girls internationally;

21 (E) shall conduct regular consultation with
22 civil society organizations working to prevent
23 and respond to violence against women and
24 girls internationally;

1 (F) shall ensure that programs, projects,
2 and activities designed to prevent and respond
3 to violence against women and girls internation-
4 ally are subject to rigorous monitoring and eval-
5 uation, and that there is a uniform set of indi-
6 cators and standards for such monitoring and
7 evaluation that is used across all Federal agen-
8 cies;

9 (G) shall serve as the principal advisor to
10 the Secretary of State regarding gender equal-
11 ity, women's empowerment, and violence
12 against women and girls as a foreign policy
13 matter; and

14 (H) is authorized to represent the United
15 States in diplomatic and multilateral fora on
16 matters relevant to the status of women and
17 girls, including violence against women and
18 girls internationally.

19 (2) INFORMATION SHARING AND TRANS-
20 PARENCY.—The Office—

21 (A) shall be the central repository of data
22 on all United States programs, projects, and ac-
23 tivities that relate to prevention and response to
24 violence against women and girls; and

1 (B) shall produce a full accounting of
2 United States Government spending on such
3 programs, projects, and activities.

4 **SEC. 203. SENIOR COORDINATOR FOR GENDER EQUALITY**
5 **AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT.**

6 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the
7 Agency the position of Senior Coordinator for Gender
8 Equality and Women's Empowerment. The Senior Coordi-
9 nator shall—

10 (1) report to the Administrator of the Agency;

11 and

12 (2) conduct the activities of the Administrator
13 under this Act.

14 (b) IN GENERAL.—The Senior Coordinator—

15 (1) in consultation with the Ambassador, shall
16 direct activities, policies, programs, and funding of
17 the Agency relating to gender equality and women's
18 empowerment, including those intended to prevent
19 and respond to violence against women and girls;

20 (2) shall actively promote and advance the inte-
21 gration of gender analysis into the programs, struc-
22 tures, processes, and capacities of all bureaus and
23 offices of the Agency as dictated by the Agency's
24 Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy;

1 (3) shall direct Agency resources for gender
2 equality and women’s empowerment, including to
3 prevent and respond to violence against women and
4 girls internationally;

5 (4) may design, support, and implement activi-
6 ties led by the Agency regarding gender equality and
7 women’s empowerment, including for the prevention
8 and response to violence against women and girls
9 internationally;

10 (5) shall conduct regular consultation with civil
11 society organizations working to prevent and re-
12 spond to violence against women and girls inter-
13 nationally;

14 (6) shall serve as the principal advisor to the
15 Administrator regarding gender equality, women’s
16 empowerment, and violence against women and girls;
17 and

18 (7) shall track and analyze monitoring and eval-
19 uation data and findings on international prevention
20 and response programs of the Agency, consistent
21 with Agency-wide monitoring and evaluation activi-
22 ties, to assist in the preparation of the comprehen-
23 sive strategy developed under section 101(a).

1 **SEC. 204. BRIEFING.**

2 Not later than 180 days after the date of the enact-
3 ment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Ambassador
4 and the Senior Coordinator shall provide, to the appro-
5 priate congressional committees—

6 (1) a briefing on international violence against
7 women and girls prevention and response strategies,
8 programming, and associated outcomes; and

9 (2) an assessment of human and financial re-
10 sources necessary to fulfill the purposes and duties
11 under this Act.

○