

Eliminate and Prevent all Forms of Violence Against Women and Girls

The elimination of violence against women and girls must start where the violence begins—in the womb. Sex selection abortion is violence against girls—a baby girl is killed in the womb simply because she is a baby girl.

In many cultures girls are not as valued as boys, including China and India. Many girls are aborted, abandoned or killed at birth. The United Nations estimates 200 million girls have been killed by sex-selective abortions in the last 30 years.

Forced Sterilization Campaigns

Compulsory sterilization, also known as forced sterilization programs, are government policies which compel women to undergo surgical sterilization. Several countries around the world have at one time or another instituted forced sterilization programs as part of eugenics or population control initiatives.

“Sterilization camps” were sponsored by the government of India in its national campaign to drastically cut population growth. These camps are paid for by tens of millions of dollars in American and British foreign-aid funds. “I tell you they treat them not as human beings, but as cattle or goats. They just cut and take out veins. They were bleeding profusely. It is butchery,” said Devika Biswas, a health-rights activist in Bihar with the Human Rights Law Network.

Forced or Coerced Abortion

In a study issued by Elliot Institute, as many as 64 percent of women who have had abortions felt pressured to abort their child. Most often these women reported coercion from a spouse or partner, but also from parents, friends or employers. David Reardon, director of the Elliot Institute, co-authored this Medical Science Monitor study of American and Russian women. His report, *Forced Abortion in America*, documents cases of violence against women who refused to have an abortion. -

The report also examines how pregnant women who refuse to abort face increasing levels of abuse and violence intended to intimidate or cause miscarriage. This violence against pregnant women has escalated to the point that the leading cause of death among pregnant women today is homicide. Dozens of cases of women who have been shot, stabbed, choked, burned, or bombed for refusing to abort are also included in the report.

