

RESTORING DIGNITY: A COMMITMENT TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

A Statement of the International Executive Committee: 24 March 2011

Violence against women is wrong.

Religions recognize the fundamental dignity of every woman and man. We know—each according to her or his respective religious tradition—that the true dignity of every woman is given by and rooted in the Sacred. This dignity is inviolable. It is not given by cultures, states, societies, communities or individuals. It cannot be taken away by them. But the recognition of this dignity must be “restored” whenever it is violated. It must be actively respected, honored and protected.

Violence against women is prevalent. It occurs in public and in the privacy of the home. It is unspeakably hurtful to women. It impacts women in all their roles, including as mothers. It also damages families, communities, and ultimately all of us.

Violence against women includes rape and its use as a weapon of war, the practice of forced marriages of girl children, the bearing of the brunt of extreme poverty and the selective aborting of unborn females.

Some have misinterpreted their religious traditions as supporting patterns of violence against women. We—together with our respective religious leaders—reject this. Honesty calls us all to acknowledge that violence against women is wrong.

Eliminating violence against women is a religious duty. Doing so will also nourish all of us for healthier and more fulfilling lives.

The Religions for Peace Executive Committee commits to:

- Work to engage religious communities to prevent acts of violence against women,
- Mobilize the compassion of religious communities to help care for and heal survivors of violence,
- Engage men and boys in the prevention of violence against women, and
- Advocate for changes in public policy and opinion that contribute to violence against women.

Peace is central to our diverse religious traditions. Violence against women is an assault on peace. All religious people should work to uphold and restore the dignity of women.