

December 11  
2000



# **PUBLIC HEARING ON CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN IN RECENT WARS AND CONFLICTS**

## **COORDINATOR**

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*In the last decade of the 20th century, a new page of history was turned as 'comfort women' from Asia broke their 50 years of silence to demand justice and legal recognition of the rape and sexual slavery they suffered as war crimes and crimes against humanity. At the very time the Asian 'comfort women' came forward, thousands of women around the world were suffering rape and other forms of sexual violence in situations of war and conflict.*

*The one-day Public Hearing of Crimes Against Women in Recent Wars and Conflicts immediately following the Tokyo Tribunal is an occasion to demonstrate that the crimes against the former 'comfort women' during WWII were not isolated incidents specific to that war. Battles are increasingly fought over women's bodies and women continue to be used as war weapons as well as war booty. The Public Hearing is an occasion to show how the lack of accountability for crimes already committed results in the unabated continuation of such crimes.*

*At the Public Hearing, women will present testimonies of the crimes committed against them in war and conflict situations in places such as Chiapas, Colombia, Guatemala, Algeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Burma, Burundi and Indonesia.*

*In presenting how the violations have continued and escalated to today, the public hearing aims to clearly identify some of the themes common to many conflicts. Themes include:*

**Extremism:** Many countries are in situations of conflict and unrest as a result of rise to power of states, groups and/or organizations that profess extreme ideologies based on nationalism, ethnicity, religion, race, marginalization, majoritarianism etc. The manifestation of the beliefs of some such groups often takes violent forms against non-conforming populations.

**Militarism:** Aggression, invasion, state repression, military or other kinds of occupation and foreign policy of powerful countries such as the U.S. are the source of conflicts in many countries around the world today. Military action whether by invasion, aggression or by occupation invariably disrupts society and devalues life, persons and property.

**Resource-based conflicts/violations:** Access and dispute over land, borders, territories, water and other natural resources are and have been the root cause of wars and conflicts through the history of humankind. Besides the obvious impact on people of such a dispute, i.e. deprivation of that resource to the parties to the conflict, it also manifests as a violation of basic and fundamental human rights of peoples in the course of waging the war or conflict.

**Violations during post-conflict and lasting impact of non-resolution on peace and reconstruction:** After so-called resolution of the conflicts by signing peace accords or otherwise, begins the reconstruction phase. Women are often ignored or marginalized during the peace process and in the subsequent efforts for reconstruction and rehabilitation. Many forms of violence against women take place as accountability is often not ensured in this process.

*The hearing will not present only the painful experiences of women who have been victimized by war but will also provide a forum to talk about the initiatives in each of these places to rise and fight back to demand justice. The public hearing will highlight the continuing and emerging work of women around the world for genuine justice, peace and end to impunity.*

## **INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

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VIVIAN STROMBERG (USA)

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## **Public Hearing on Crimes Against Women in Recent Wars and Conflicts**

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### **Program\***

- 9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.**      *Opening remarks by the Organizers*  
VAWW-Net, Japan  
ASCENT, The Philippines  
Women's Caucus for Gender Justice, New York
- 10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.**      *Introduction of the Hearing - Moderators*
- 10:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.**      *Presentation of Testimonies*  
Rwanda, E.Timor, Guatemala/USA, Okinawa,  
Vietnam, Burundi, Kosovo etc.
- 12:45 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.**      *Analysis and Commentary on the morning session*
- 1:15 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.**      *Wrap up of the morning session – Moderators*
- 1:45 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.**      *Lunch Break*
- 2:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.**      *Introduction of the afternoon session*
- 3:00 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.**      *Presentation of Testimonies*  
Bangladesh, Chiapas, Algeria, Burma,  
Afghanistan, Somalia, Sierra Leone etc.
- 4:45 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.**      *Analysis and Commentary on the afternoon session*
- 5:15 p.m. – 5:45 p.m.**      *Closing remarks by Special Rapporteur on  
Violence Against Women, Radhika Coomaraswamy*
- 5:45 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.**      *Closing Ceremony - Moderators and Survivors*

*Moderators will briefly introduce each survivor and their testimonies. There will also be short slide shows and video clips on related issues.*

*Out of respect for the survivors who will share their stories, we ask the audience to take their seats promptly at 9:30 a.m. Doors of the hall will be closed at 9:45 a.m..*

*\*Subject to change*

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For more information, contact the Women's Caucus for Gender Justice  
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