

Violence Against Women and Children



IJM

Key Facts

- More than 570,000,000 women are estimated to be subject to gender-based violence annually. (World Justice Project)
- Every 10 minutes, somewhere in the world, an adolescent girl dies as a result of violence. (UNICEF)
- The coronavirus pandemic has increased poverty and economic stress, increasing violence, including increases in gender-based violence in at least 27 countries. (UNHCR)
- The Northern Triangle countries have the highest rates of femicides in Latin America: El Salvador 6.8 femicides per 100,000 people, Honduras 5.1/100,000 and Guatemala 2/100,000. (ECLAC Gender Equality Observatory)

The Challenge

Because women and children around the world are often not effectively protected by the law, they are particularly vulnerable to violent abuse. In the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, vulnerable women and children suffer especially high rates of violence. For many of these victims, justice is often out of reach. A comprehensive review of sexual violence made to Guatemalan authorities between 2008 and 2012 found that 94.1% had not reached a verdict.¹ And today, in the COVID-19 pandemic, domestic violence is on the rise.²

The Opportunity

The good news is that it is possible to combat these crimes successfully. There are proven models that effectively deter violence against women and children by rescuing victims, bringing perpetrators to justice, restoring survivors, and reducing the prevalence of violence.

In 2005, IJM opened an office in Guatemala to address a well-documented epidemic of sexual violence against children there. Over a period of ten years, IJM partnered with local authorities to provide relief to more than 262 child survivors of sexual assault and helped secure the convictions of more than 217 rapists and sexual predators.³ While improvements have been made, much work remains to be done to strengthen the ability of public justice systems in the Northern Triangle to effectively respond to sexual and gender-based violence.

What the U.S. Government is doing:

IJM requests **\$25M** in FY22 appropriations for programs to combat sexual and gender-based violence in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. In FY21, Congress appropriated \$25M for sexual and gender-based violence programming in the Northern Triangle to create and expand school-based and community based violence prevention programming, enhance the capacity of police, judicial systems, and child protection systems to identify, investigate, and prosecute cases of violence and protect survivors through increased personnel, equipment, geographic coverage, and training; and to create and expand locally available medical, mental health, legal services, and shelters for sexual and gender-based violence survivors in rural and urban areas.

¹ <https://www.ijm.org/studies/guatemalan-criminal-justice-system-performance-study-2008-2012>

² <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/06/brief-domestic-violence-in-the-world-of-work>

³ <https://www.ijm.org/documents/studies/IJM-Guatemala-External-Evaluation-Report.pdf>