

introduction

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chapter 15 — turning the tide

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A self-help group of women in Sierra Leone — all survivors of sexual violence and torture. They posed for this photo - wanting the world to know of their needs and the abuse they suffered. Thousands of women like these struggle to find a future after living through years of brutal conflict.





"The day will come when men will recognize woman as his peer, not only at the fireside, but in councils of the nation. Then, and not until then, will there be the perfect comradeship, the ideal union between the sexes that shall result in the highest development of the race."

Susan B. Anthony

"When you are a mother ... left behind with children who are boys, there is one amongst your children ... he wants to sleep with you and wants that you not talk about it ... You are afraid because you do not have the strength. He does that thing as he pleases." Older woman victim the victim of sexual abuse perpetrated by her son, South Africa

"Women are the victims of this patriarchal culture, but they are also its carriers. Let us keep in mind that every oppressive man was raised in the confines of his mother's home." Shirin Ebadi

"The delivery of the child I have just lost lasted three days. It was during the delivery that the fistula occurred. ... I wept and wept. ... "

Sixteen-year-old girl, forced into marriage at the age of 14, Niger

"We have to stop this violence. We have to make the political nature of the violence clear, that the violence we experience in our own homes is not a personal family matter, it's a public and political problem. It's a way that women are kept in line, kept in our places." Patricia Ireland

"He pulled me from the bed to the floor and started trampling on me. ... He used his hands to beat me, his fists and his feet. ... He took a piece of wood and hit me on the head and in the lower stomach. It broke in two pieces." Twenty-two-year-old survivor of intimate-partner violence, Democratic Republic of Congo

"Crosscultural research demonstrates that gender inequality is the most significant cause of men's violence against women. The policy implications for reducing gendered violence seem clear from this research. We need to reduce the gender power inequality between men and women if we are going to effectively address the problem of men's violence". Bob Pease

"He used to tell me, 'You're an animal, an idiot, you're worthless.' That made me feel even more stupid. I couldn't raise my head. I think I still have scars from this ... I accepted it, because after a point, he had destroyed me by blows and psychologically." Survivor of intimate-partner violence, Nicaragua

"We must acknowledge that violence is not the same as anger. While anger is an emotion, violence is a behaviour. We must also acknowledge that violence is always a choice, noting that most men who are violent towards their partners do not usually display similarly violent or abusive behaviour towards others." Danny Blay



"There must be no impunity for gender based violence. Let me be clear. What we are talking about is not a side issue. It is not a special interest group of concern to only a few. What we are talking about are not only women's rights but also the human rights of over one half of this globe's population ... Violence against women concerns not only women but above all the rest of us." Sergio Vieira de Mello

"There are so many girls where I come from who have been raped and are living a life like I did. If anyone wants to help, we desperately need a shelter for these children to escape to — a shelter that can offer vocational skills training and give them a chance for a better life." Fourteen-year-old girl, who had worked as a child prostitute, Kenya

"There is nothing nobler or more admirable than when two people who see eye to eye keep house as man and wife, confounding their enemies and delighting their friends." Homer

"You want to have a liking for a man to have sex, not to have someone force you. But I had no choice, knowing the whole village was against me." An older woman, forced to undergo a widow cleansing ritual, Malawi

"Whenever women protest and ask for their rights, they are silenced with the argument that the laws are justified under Islam. It is an unfounded argument. It is not Islam at fault, but rather the patriarchal culture that uses its own interpretations to justify whatever it wants." Shirin Ebadi

"We are going to shout about bride price across Africa and we are going to say 'No' to the sale of women!" Atuki Turner, the director of a nongovernmental organization in Uganda that helps victims of intimate-partner violence

"As a human rights issue, the effort to end violence against women becomes a government's obligation, not just a good idea." Charlotte Bunch

"My master treated me so badly and often raped me. He used to tell me that his traditional doctor said that if he slept with a slave he would be cured from illness." Female slave, Niger

"A great many people think they are thinking when they are just rearranging their prejudices." William James

"The boys never meant any harm against the girls. They just wanted to rape." Deputy principal describing a gang of male students at her school who killed 19 schoolgirls and raped 71 others. Kenya

"Do not wait for leaders; do it alone, person to person. Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies." Mother Teresa