

OVC NEWS & PROGRAM UPDATES

GLOBAL VICTIMIZATION



November 2013

OVC Hosts Stakeholder Forum for Victims of International Sexual Assault

By Anne Hamilton, Office on Violence Against Women

You are an American citizen traveling abroad. Maybe you are in another country as a volunteer or a student, or stationed at a military base; maybe you are on vacation, on a cruise, or visiting the Eiffel Tower. You are away from your family, friends, and all of the recognizable comforts of home. You don't speak the language, and you are completely unfamiliar with your surroundings. Now envision that a stranger, an acquaintance, or a friend sexually assaults you. You feel scared, angry, hurt, and alone. You have no idea who to call or what your next step should be. You think about calling the police, but worry they will not understand you. The laws are different in this foreign place. You are afraid to tell anyone about the assault. There is no one you can trust. You could be hours away from help. You may not know of or be able to find a safe place to go. All you want to do is go home immediately. But home is days away...

This illustration barely scratches the surface of what a sexual assault victim may encounter while abroad or on a cruise ship. The victim can also endure inadequate DNA collection and health care facilities, a lack of trained staff and responders, and the absence of local resources. Another level of unique difficulties and jurisdictional issues may occur if a victim decides to press charges.

After meeting an American who was a victim of sexual assault while abroad and who experienced many of the barriers listed above, the Office for Victims of Crime's (OVC's) Director, Joye E. Frost, was motivated to address this emerging topic. The voices of victims deserve to be heard, and the issues and challenges represented by this population need to be addressed.

As a first step, OVC held a forum on May 3, 2013, to initiate dialogue and coordination among federal agencies and stakeholders. The main goal was clear—a candid conversation was necessary to formulate pragmatic solutions for people who become victims of sexual assault while abroad and on cruise ships. Several key staff and policymakers from the FBI, the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), the U.S. Department of State, the Peace Corps, non-profit agencies, survivors, and other allied professionals came to the table.

To kick off the meeting, Joye Frost, Bea Hanson (OVW's Acting Director), and Lynn Rosenthal (the White House Advisor on Violence Against Women) spoke about the challenges sexual assault victims may endure and the federal government's obligation to expand current efforts to serve them. Several survivors from

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

This issue of *OVC News and Program Updates* focuses on an emerging challenge of increasing concern to the victim services field: how to ensure that international victims of crime are afforded their rights and receive appropriate services. The Vision 21 strategic initiative identified the need to serve Americans who are victimized abroad, but most victim-serving organizations are unable to assist crime victims overseas.



Changing demographics and increased globalization have magnified the impact of crime that may originate in other countries, such as human trafficking and crimes committed against Americans in foreign countries or on cruise ships in international waters. Greater numbers of Americans are traveling and working abroad—a phenomenon that is expected to increase throughout this century. More than 6 million U.S. citizens currently live overseas,¹ in addition to millions more U.S. military service members.

The first step toward closing this major gap in meeting the needs of international victims is awareness, and this newsletter provides a number of articles designed to educate, inform, and inspire greater efforts on behalf of these victims, from a global overview of recent progress in victims' rights laws to an intensely personal account of one victim's precedent-setting effort to seek justice in a foreign land. Other articles describe OVC's international terrorism and mass violence programs; how we are working with Kosovo, after decades of political upheaval, to help establish victims' services; and the results of an OVC-sponsored international forum on sexual assault.

We can no longer confine our mission of ensuring justice and healing for victims to our national borders. I hope that you find the information on these pages informative and inspirational, and I welcome your ideas on how to address the challenge of meeting crime victims' needs at home and abroad.

—Joye Frost, Director
Office for Victims of Crime

¹ Association of Americans Resident Overseas, "6.32 Americans Abroad Map," www.aaro.org/about-aaro/6m-americans-abroad.

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[Click here](#) to access previous issues of *OVC News & Program Updates* on topics such as responding to mass casualties, elder abuse, and serving children exposed to violence.

varying situations shared their compelling stories of not only personal trauma, but also their ongoing fight for justice. They served as a voice for all survivors of sexual assault occurring abroad to expose this issue and to improve the response for future victims of this crime. Their accounts and comments identified and expanded several systematic concerns, such as lack of training and resources, organizational breakdowns, and deficient followup counseling services.

The stakeholders took this opportunity to listen to victim recommendations, issues, and challenges; many of them contributed other attainable goals to serve this unique victim population. Through this forum, several participant organizations shared promising practices that would be of interest to other federal agencies. For example, the Peace Corps is mandated to train response liaisons in their volunteer countries to serve volunteers who may experience sexual assault. Additionally, it is creating a 40-hour training program on sexual assault for members of the community who may respond to these calls. In January 2013, the Air Force initiated the Special Victims' Counsel Program, which is designed to provide any Airman who

reports being a victim of sexual assault with a personal attorney to represent the individual's interests during the military justice process. The attorney's role may include advocacy to those in the military justice system; attending interviews with investigators, trial counsel, and defense counsel; representation in court as permitted by military judges; advocacy to other Air Force and Department of Defense agencies, as appropriate; and advocacy to civilian prosecutors and agencies.

No one agency can address this issue alone. It is essential to replicate effective responses while using the strengths and knowledge of survivors, the sexual assault field, and allied professionals. Although OVC recognizes that this is a very complex topic, the forum was a valuable first step in understanding its scope, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. In the future, OVC anticipates that it will be able to focus on fostering better communication and innovative partnerships to strengthen the response to those who are victims of sexual assault while traveling abroad.

Victims' Voices The Challenges Facing U.S. Victims of Sexual Assault Overseas

By Erin Helfert

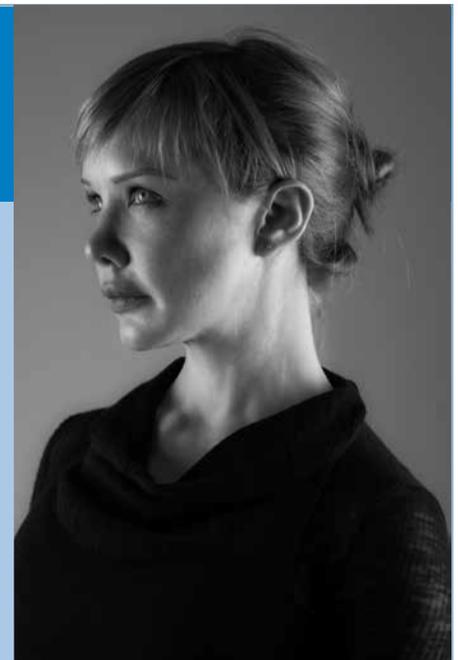
The Kingdom of Morocco is the most northwestern country in Africa. It has been a strong U.S. ally in the Middle East and North Africa since its independence in 1955. Morocco has a long track record of being a progressive Muslim country with a strong and active women's rights movement. As an American citizen, my relationship with the country began at a young age, and I regularly enjoyed travelling, researching, and working there.

In 2008, I moved to Casablanca to take a job. My life in Casablanca was the culmination of everything I had worked so hard to achieve. I moved up quickly in my career. I soaked up the local culture and made friends easily. That New Year's Eve, I attended a party in the city. In the early hours of 2009, I was sexually assaulted by a Moroccan citizen. Since that morning, I have engaged in an international legal and personal struggle that connected me to the broader, global struggle against sexual gender-based violence.

In the process, my case set precedent on both sides of the Atlantic. I am the first U.S. citizen on available record¹ to succeed in taking a sexual assault case to trial and gaining a conviction in a Moroccan court. The conviction of the perpetrator in my case is particularly significant because the rate of conviction in sexual assault cases in Morocco is about 6 percent.² Mine is also the first sexual assault case

in Morocco in which DNA evidence was accepted by the courts. The magistrate's cooperation and acceptance of the DNA evidence was a crucial turning point in my case, shifting it from one of a hearsay accusation to that of a legitimate criminal charge.

The process was difficult. I reported the sexual assault to the local Moroccan authorities, complete with a typed account of the incident in French. I also provided authorities with the clothing I wore that evening, separated in bags. The individual responsible for recording my verbal report did not speak French well enough to understand me. The police officers in the room asked that I reenact the rape in order to write the



Erin Helfert
Photo by David Lawrence Byrd

¹ According to the U.S. Department of State and the American Citizen Services Department of the U.S. Consulate in Casablanca, Morocco, there are no other cases on record of an American citizen who pressed criminal charges of sexual assault against a Moroccan citizen in Morocco.

² Linda Harris, March 21, 2012, "Reforming Rape: Begin with Yourself..." *Morocco World News*, <http://moroccoworldnews.com/2012/03/reforming-rape-begin-with-yourself2/32207>.

report in Arabic. Unaware of what to do with the clothing, the police did not take the bags.

I visited a gynecologist in Casablanca for an exam. I asked him to record any evidence of the assault, as I planned to use the evidence in court. Since I had some knowledge of the American medical examiner process for forensic evidence collection, I guided the doctor on the types of evidence he should note. The experience was frightening and retraumatizing, but I understood that it was necessary to pursue my case.

I went to the American Citizen Services (ACS) of the U.S. Consulate. I requested information regarding in-country victims' services and the general process of a criminal case in Morocco. The ACS staff were not aware of the local procedures for a sexual assault case. The staff handed me two sheets of paper; one was a list of lawyers and the other was a list of translators. These lists were the extent of the assistance they had to offer.

The same day, I approached three major women's advocacy groups via phone and in person. I requested information from them about the Moroccan criminal justice system and what a victim of sexual assault should expect when pursuing her case. They did not know what I should expect or about any resources that could help. I walked away with the realization that I had to pursue this on my own, without adequate background information.

A few days after I made the report, the local authorities arrested the perpetrator. In the Moroccan legal system, there is a direct relationship between the number of formal accusations and the perceived credibility of the victim's account. These formal accusations often take place behind closed doors, where the victim is only a few feet away from the perpetrator. I had to encounter the man who assaulted me on several occasions before the chief of police and several magistrates. In these formal accusations, I was required to tell the perpetrator the details of what he did to me, and why I was pressing charges. Prior to the first encounter, the police chief urged me to "cry... act hysterical. It will make you seem more believable."

Although I was terrified, all emotions dissipated within me. I told the perpetrator what I was accusing him of doing. In response, he spat on me and hurled various insults, including "whore" or "prostitute," in both French and Arabic. Two days after the first encounter, the police released the perpetrator from jail.

In March 2009, I convinced the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security (BDS) to take my clothing to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) crime laboratories in Washington, DC. In May 2011, at my insistence via the BDS, the Moroccan authorities allowed the local Moroccan forensics team to compare the results found in the FBI crime laboratory to their own findings. The local team collected DNA from the perpetrator for comparison.

The local forensics team found a match between the accused perpetrator's DNA and that found on my clothing. The magistrate³ explained the results of the DNA comparison to the perpetrator, and told the perpetrator that the DNA results proved his story was false. The man was then released.⁴

Between 2009 and 2012, BDS connected me with a victim's advocate. She pointed me toward resources (such as crime victims' treatment centers in my city) and offered general encouragement on my case.

Between 2011 and 2012, I attended five hearings in Morocco. Many of my trips to Morocco were supported graciously by a number of groups in the United States, including the It Happened to Alexa Foundation and the Texas Crime Victims' Compensation Board. The Office for Victims of Crime supported my final trip. My presence at each of these hearings was crucial to the outcome of my case. The perpetrator was tried and convicted in absentia on December 10, 2012. He remains free to this day.

Throughout this case, I remember the isolation and insecurity that I felt in light of navigating a foreign justice system. No one individual or group could tell me what to expect in the Moroccan court system, and I felt blindsided by each procedure and hearing. Alone, I encountered the Moroccan criminal justice system. Alone, I negotiated the attitudes and perceptions not only among those who enforce and implement Moroccan law, but also among those who represent the U.S. government abroad.

In hindsight, I also realize that I was not alone. There is a network of allies in both countries—those who support victims of crime through grant giving, guidance and encouragement, and opportunity. The Office for Victims of Crime, the Office on Violence Against Women, and the FBI continue to support my mission to form a more victim-centered, culturally aware, and educated response to U.S. victims of violent crime committed abroad.

The Victims' Voices column is a recurring feature of OVC News & Program Updates. Let us know if you or someone you know would like to share a story with the field about the journey from crime victimization. Our hope is that hearing directly from victims themselves will educate and inspire others. Victims' Voices contributors may choose to remain anonymous. Contact William Petty at William.Petty@usdoj.gov for more information.

³ "Professionals of the law who either render decisions in justice (les magistrats du siège, the judiciary) or request justice on behalf of the State (les magistrats du parquet, the State prosecution service)." See the definition of "Magistrat" in the French Trial Process. The Moroccan trial system, and all titles therein, are derived from the French legal system. See http://legal1.cit.cornell.edu/court_trials/glossary.htm.

⁴ I verified this account on September 21, 2011, during my third deposition. The magistrate who questioned me also informed the perpetrator of the match between his DNA and the forensic evidence found on my clothing. The magistrate also confirmed that, after he provided the perpetrator with this information, the perpetrator was not detained.

The 2013 Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act

By Anne Hamilton, Office on Violence Against Women

"Today is about all the survivors, all the advocates who are standing on this stage. But it's also about the millions more they represent—that you represent. It's about our commitment as a country to address this problem—in every corner of America, every community, every town, every big city—as long as it takes."

—President Barack Obama

With these words, President Barack Obama signed the reauthorization of the landmark Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) on March 7, 2013. Originally enacted in 1994, VAWA created a federal response to enhance and improve criminal justice and community-based programs to combat domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking in the United States. This legislation provides needed funding for victim assistance services and for prosecuting offenders. Subsequently reauthorized in 2000, 2005, and 2013, VAWA is continuously updated to reflect our evolving understanding of this problem, to build on past successes, and to adjust effective strategies.

VAWA 2013 Reauthorization

Overall, VAWA 2013 strengthens several federal laws; establishes new programs to assist victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking and their families; and reauthorizes many critical grant programs that allow states, local governments, and organizations to provide services for victims, train allied professionals, and properly prosecute these crimes. Key areas of focus include Native American and Alaska Native victims, victims of sexual assault, underserved victims, and culturally specific services.

Tribal Jurisdiction Over Crimes of Domestic Violence

American Indian and Alaska Native populations experience alarmingly high rates of domestic violence and sexual victimization. National annual incidence rates and lifetime prevalence rates for physical assaults are also higher for American Indian and Alaska

Native women compared to other women.¹ Prior to the passage of VAWA 2013, tribal courts lacked jurisdiction to prosecute a non-native offender who assaulted an American Indian spouse or dating partner while on a reservation. This reauthorization creates a three-pronged strategy for Indian Country to respond to domestic violence by (1) recognizing tribes' concurrent criminal jurisdiction to investigate, prosecute, convict, and sentence both Indians and non-Indians who assault Indian spouses, intimate partners, or dating partners, or who violate protection orders in Indian Country; (2) clarifying that tribal courts have full civil jurisdiction to issue and enforce certain protection orders against both Indian and non-Indian offenders; and (3) amending the Federal Criminal Code to include stricter penalties for domestic violence-related assault offenses. These strategies will assist tribal courts in holding offenders accountable for domestic violence crimes on tribal land. Although tribes can issue and enforce protection orders now, generally tribes cannot criminally prosecute non-Indian abusers until at least March 7, 2015. The U.S. Department of Justice published a notice in the Federal Register on June 14, 2013, proposing procedures for a pilot project to allow some tribes to begin exercising jurisdiction sooner. More information and a link to the notice are available at www.justice.gov/tribal/docs/wava-tribal-pilot-project-faqs.pdf.

Sexual Assault and VAWA

A prevailing element of this reauthorization focuses on reducing sexual assault. Statistically, 1 in 5 women and 1 in 71 men will be raped in their lifetime.² To improve the response to this issue, several new purpose areas were added to existing Office

on Violence Against Women (OVW) grant programs, including enhancing best practices and protocols, developing Sexual Assault Response Teams or similar coordinated community responses, increasing access to training, improving investigation and prosecution, and responding to the backlog of DNA evidence.

Campus and the Clery Act

The reauthorization also amends the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act, which requires colleges and universities across the United States to disclose information about crime on and around their campuses. With this revision, institutions of higher education must now include statistics on domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking crimes, along with sexual assault data, in their annual security reports. Additionally, it establishes new mandates regarding handling of these crimes to incorporate (1) the development and distribution of detailed policies regarding prevention programs and reported incident procedures, (2) the requirement to provide students or employees who report such offenses with written explanations of their nondiscriminatory rights and options, and (3) the expansion of campus policies to address several additional programs and procedures to increase prevention and victim services.

Trafficking

The reauthorization expands victim services and legal services to include victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking who are also victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons. It further stresses the importance of trafficking prevention and intervention by reauthorizing the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA)—the foundation of legal protection for victims of trafficking at the federal level—and sets a standard for state courts around the country. Under TVPA, the Office for Victims of Crime will continue to use discretionary funds to support the development and enhancement of services for victims of severe forms of trafficking. These funds

¹ Ronet Bachman, Heather Zaykowski, Rachel Kallmyer, Margarita Poteyeva, and Christina Lanier, 2008, *Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women and the Criminal Justice Response: What is Known*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice.

² http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs_report2010-a.pdf.

support a wide array of services for minor and adult victims of sex trafficking that include shelter, medical care, legal services, counseling, and coordination of a collaborative model of assistance.

Underserved Populations

Recognizing that the United States is an ever-growing, diverse country, this reauthorization clarifies existing statutory language regarding culturally specific services and underserved populations. It revises the definition of “culturally specific” to focus on particular racial and ethnic minority groups and expands the term “underserved” to include populations identified by sexual orientation, gender identity, and religion. This will allow communities to develop specific services and effective outreach approaches for these distinct groups.

STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program

The STOP Program, the largest grant program within OVW, distributes funds to states and territories to support a coordinated and multidisciplinary approach to enhance advocacy and improve the criminal justice system’s response to violent crimes against women. This reauthorization ensures that domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking are included in all purpose areas. New mandates require state implementation plans to involve a broader list of people to consult, to document this consultation, and to coordinate the plans with the Federal Victims of Crime Act, Family Violence Prevention and Services Act, and Rape Prevention and Education Program. Additionally, the STOP Program enhances sexual assault response by setting aside 20 percent of funding for projects to meaningfully address sexual assault across

at least two of the allocations, such as victim services, law enforcement, prosecution, or courts.

For Further Information

This is a brief glimpse into the various adjustments and clarifications included in the VAWA 2013 Act. Along with previous iterations of the Act, the inclusions and enhancements exemplify the Administration’s ongoing promise to provide needed services to all men and women who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

If you would like to review the full text of the VAWA 2013 Act to see how the reauthorization may apply to you, please visit www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-113publ4/pdf/PLAW-113publ4.pdf.

For a more detailed summary of the changes included in VAWA 2013, please visit www.usdoj.gov/docs/vawa-2013-sum.pdf.

Rebalancing Justice: Recent Developments in Victims’ Rights Outside the United States

By Irvin Waller, President, International Organization for Victim Assistance

In recent years, a number of countries have made significant advances to ensure the basic rights of crime victims, including access to appropriate assistance. From Europe to Japan, progress continues to be made through new laws as well as innovative practices. Readers may find the major developments summarized in this article both informative and inspiring as the victim services field works to ensure justice and healing for victims throughout the Nation.

“Putting Victims First”: New Directive Advances Victims’ Rights In European Union

The 27 countries of the European Union (EU) represent a population of 500 million. Each year, an estimated 15 percent of this population is victimized by crime. In 2012, the EU

adopted a new directive to strengthen victims’ rights that was hailed as a historic achievement by the EU’s Justice Commissioner. The directive focuses on affording the same basic rights to crime victims throughout the EU and sets minimum standards to ensure that (1) victims are treated with respect and that police, prosecutors, and judges are properly trained to work with them; (2) victims receive clear information about their rights and their case; (3) victim support exists in every EU member state; (4) victims can participate in proceedings and receive help to attend them; (5) vulnerable victims are identified and protected; and (6) victims are protected during police investigations and court proceedings.¹

The EU directive promotes mechanisms for achieving justice that some crime victims may prefer to the traditional courtroom experience, including restitution, restorative justice, and reconciliation. The provision for victim participation in criminal proceedings includes the

right to review a decision *not* to prosecute an offender. The standards support one-stop shops for service delivery. Special protections apply to victims who are not always covered, including victims of human trafficking and terrorism.

The standards set forth in the new law include actions on training, sharing best practices, cooperation between countries, and data designed to strengthen implementation. Perhaps most important, the directive includes a commitment to evaluate (every 5 years) the extent to which implementation achieves the goals of supporting and protecting victims. The data and the evaluation will focus on referrals by the police to ensure that victim assistance services are being made available throughout all 27 countries.

The directive does not change the provisions for victims’ standing in criminal trials, which vary from one country to another. France

¹ “Putting victims first: New European law improving rights of victims of crime has been adopted,” European Commission press release, Luxembourg, October 4, 2012.

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continues to provide victims with standing in the criminal court through their own lawyer, who may be paid with legal aid funds. The French system also ensures that many offenders pay restitution instead of being incarcerated. Some member states are continuing with more limited provisions, similar to those of Canada and the United States. However, in 2012, the government of England and Wales gave unique priority to advancing rights for victims by appointing both a Minister for Victims (and the Courts) and a Victims' Commissioner.

Developments in Other Countries Worldwide

Developments in many other countries—Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa among them—include the wider use of restorative justice, more adequate state compensation, and the creation of independent ombudspersons to pursue better implementation of principles in current legislation.

An inquiry in the Province of Ontario in Canada, chaired by its retiring Chief Justice, recommended much greater responsibility for police to put victims at the zenith of law enforcement. It also stressed the need to use scientific surveys to measure outcomes such as whether victims' needs were being met.

In 2004, Japan adopted the Basic Act on Crime Victims, which provides a comprehensive model of victim policy. However, the essential victimization surveys needed to assess the model's impact and success have not yet been performed.

Realizing the Promise of the United Nations' "Victim Magna Carta"

In 1985, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, representing the nations of the world, adopted the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power. Often referred to as the "victim magna carta" in reference to the 13th-century document whose principles of justice still resonate worldwide, the declaration is the cornerstone of the UN's efforts to recognize the needs and interests of victims. It identified who victims of crime were and called for social, health (including mental health), educational,

economic, and specific crime prevention policies to reduce victimization. In successive years, some countries made progress toward implementation of the principles, but the overall impact of the declaration was less than originally anticipated.

In 2006, a number of leading victim policy experts came together at the International Victimology Institute Tilburg (INTERVICT) to develop a cogent draft for a new UN Convention that would launch a comprehensive plan to prevent victimization and to implement the victim magna carta. INTERVICT is hosted by Tilburg University as an institute dedicated to interdisciplinary research that contributes to a comprehensive, evidence-based body of knowledge on the empowerment and support of victims of crime. The draft developed by the policy specialists includes a set of proposals that integrate the best information and practices from North America and Europe.²

International Criminal Court: An Example for National Justice Systems

In 1998, the governments of Canada and France, together with a number of other countries, adopted the Statute of Rome, which established the International Criminal Court (ICC). The Netherlands hosts the court, which focuses on the prosecution of those who commit abuses of power such as genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

The statute enacts provisions to provide support, protection, reparation, and supervision to victims that extend beyond those of previous international courts and creates (by example) a standard for national jurisdictions. Among other provisions, the statute created a victims and witnesses unit to ensure support throughout a trial; its staff must include specialists with expertise in trauma, including trauma resulting from sexual violence.

The ICC is achieving rights, services, and protections for victims of human rights violence that were unimaginable 30 years ago. Many of the legislated sections are taken from the UN's victim magna carta. More than 100 governments agreed to this respect for victims of crime in the ICC. Unfortunately, none of them provide the same rights, services, protections, and reparation within their domestic courts. It is hoped that this will change in the future.

The Right to Effective Violence Prevention

An important change in criminal policy in the past 50 years is the realization that criminal victimization can be reduced significantly if governments organize nationally and locally to use what works. For example, in several UN forums the world governments have agreed to invest in crime prevention because it is more cost effective, sustainable, and fair than punishment or cure.

"I believe the most important recent development in victims' rights is the shift to embrace the prevention of violence as a fundamental victim right."

—Irvin Waller

In England and Wales, the Prime Minister stated that the most effective way to deal with crime is prevention. Many countries now have national crime prevention strategies. England and Wales recently reorganized crime and policing policy to focus on crime reduction. Their moderate budgets for policing and incarceration are being cut by 20 percent as crime continues to fall. Several politicians with oversight in this area, including the Mayor of London, are committed to putting victims first by investing more in prevention and improving efforts to reduce violence against women.

Final Thoughts

These impressive developments in victims' rights in other countries offer much food for thought among members of the victims' rights movement in the United States. They provide additional ways to ensure that victims get the assistance they need and the justice they deserve. The new focus on prevention, in particular, opens up new ways of thinking about what the basic rights of victims, protection, and services truly mean. Readers are encouraged to continue to explore international laws and practices through other resources, including those provided at the end of this article.

Additional Resources

Victims' rights in the EU: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/criminal/victims/index_en.htm.

The UN victim magna carta: <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/40/a40r034.htm>.

Waller, Irvin. 2010. *Rights for Victims of Crime: Rebalancing Justice*, New York, NY: Rowman and Littlefield.

² In *Rights for Victims of Crime: Rebalancing Justice*, Irvin Waller adapted the substance of the draft convention into a model law that could serve as the next phase of rebalancing justice in many countries. The model covers nine areas, including assistance to victims, restitution, protection, and the right to representation, with sections on implementation, wider use of surveys to measure results, and use of ombudspersons.

Past Events

The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) continues to develop and expand its international relationship with Kosovo. In August 2012, at the invitation of the U.S. Embassy in Kosovo and under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development Assistance and Training, Visiting Fellows Bethany Case (OVC) and Shania Kapoor (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention) traveled to Kosovo to provide training on child victimization to nearly 40 Kosovar professionals. Read [DOJ Fellows Provide Child Victimization Training in Kosovo](#) to learn more about—

- Child victimization in Kosovo.
- The Kosovar effort to improve responses to child victims.
- The training event.
- The commonalities and differences between the United States' and Kosovo's approaches to victimization.



Visiting Fellows Bethany Case and Shania Kapoor

OVC Expands Outreach Through Web Site To Enhance Assistance to Victims of Terrorism and Mass Violence

By Barbara Robertson, Victim Justice Program Specialist, and Chandria Slaughter, Program Manager, OVC

The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) is increasingly called upon to provide funding and other support to those who assist victims of terrorism and mass violence in the United States and abroad; these incidents leave scores of victims, survivors, and communities in their wake. OVC collaborates with federal, state, and local partners to ensure that victims and survivors of these horrific crimes receive the physical, emotional, and financial support they need to rebuild their shattered lives. A critical aspect of this work is expanding public outreach to ensure that victims are aware of their rights and available services supported by OVC and its partners.

[OVC Launches Antiterrorism and Emergency Assistance Program Microsite](#)

In March 2013, OVC launched a new feature on its Web site—the Antiterrorism and Emergency Assistance Program (AEAP) microsite—to support communities that are eligible to apply for assistance in the aftermath of domestic terrorism and mass violence. The new microsite serves as a hub for information about AEAP, such as who can apply, the types of assistance offered, and examples of how communities have used this type of funding to meet the needs of victims and survivors of domestic incidents.

In addition to developing the user-friendly AEAP microsite, OVC modified related information on its Web site to better identify resources available to communities that are coping with the impact of mass violence incidents as well as affected victims and families. Topical guides and other resources for communities and providers include programs, trainings, and publications. Resources to assist victims include information on crisis counseling, investigations, the criminal justice process, and

compensation. To view the full list of resources, please visit OVC's two new resource pages, Providers/Community Leaders—Domestic Terrorism and Mass Violence (www.ovc.gov/providers/domestic-terrorism.html) and Help for Crime Victims—Domestic Terrorism and Mass Violence (www.ovc.gov/help/domestic-terrorism.html).

Recent recipients of AEAP funding include the communities of Midland City, Alabama, where a gunman killed a school bus driver, kidnapped a 5-year-old boy, and traumatized 20 students on the bus; Pima County (Tucson), Arizona, where a mass shooter killed 6 people and wounded 19 others at an event hosted by Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords; and Aurora, Colorado, where a mass shooting at a movie theater claimed the lives of 12 people and wounded 69 others.

In fiscal years 2011 and 2012, approximately \$2 million in AEAP funds were used to meet a variety of needs for victims, including crisis counseling, temporary housing, emergency transportation, and emergency travel.

What Is Mass Violence?

Antiterrorism and Emergency Assistance Program (AEAP) guidelines define an **act of mass violence** as an intentional violent crime that results in physical, emotional, or psychological injury to a sufficiently large number of people that it significantly increases the burden of victim assistance and compensation for the affected jurisdiction, as determined by the OVC Director. For more information on programs and eligibility, please visit www.ovc.gov/AEAP.

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ITVERP Weblet Redesigned in Response to User Feedback

OVC recently redesigned the International Terrorism Victim Expense Reimbursement Program (ITVERP) weblet on its Web site. Feedback from ITVERP claimants, OVC partner agencies, and OVC staff drove most of the design changes; the resource is now more user friendly, with infographics and visual guides demonstrating the application process. The weblet includes revised resources for victims of terrorism overseas and their families along with information and sample documents to assist claimants in completing their ITVERP applications.

As of April 30, 2013, the program has processed 276 applications and paid more than \$1.5 million to 189 qualifying applicants. Find more information about ITVERP at www.ovc.gov/itverp. Additional resources for providers and victims of terrorism occurring outside the United States can be found at Providers/Community Leaders–International Terrorism (www.ovc.gov/providers/international_terrorism.html) and Help for Crime Victims–International Terrorism (www.ovc.gov/help/international_terrorism.html).

What Is ITVERP?

The International Terrorism Victim Expense Reimbursement Program, or ITVERP, is an expense reimbursement program administered by the federal government. It covers specific out-of-pocket expenses that a victim of international terrorism may have incurred.

ITVERP was created by Congress as an amendment to the Crime Victims Act of 1984. Since 2006, ITVERP has been providing financial support to victims of international terrorism. It is administered by the Office for Victims of Crime.

Connect With OVC Through Social Media

Now you can keep up with the latest information from the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) through the Office's Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube accounts. These social media platforms make it easier to stay current with news from OVC, particularly since you can access these resources from your mobile device. You can—

- Search #NCVRW2013 to read about activities that happened during this year's National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW).
- Like us on Facebook to receive messages from OVC in your News Feed.
- Subscribe to OVC's YouTube channel and watch the *Through Our Eyes: Children, Violence, and Trauma* videos.
- Follow OVC on Twitter and retweet the stories that you think will interest your constituents.

- Use the NCVRW videos on OVC's YouTube channel throughout the year during your public awareness and victims' rights events.

Be the first to hear about upcoming events, new research findings, future funding opportunities, and exciting videos for the crime victims' field. Join hundreds of your colleagues and like, follow, and subscribe to learn more and be a part of the action!



www.twitter.com/OJPOVC



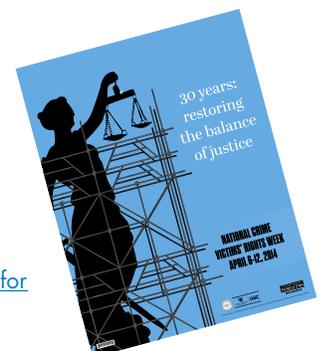
www.facebook.com/OJPOVC



www.youtube.com/OJPOVC

2014 National Crime Victims' Rights Week Theme Poster

OVC is pleased to announce the 2014 theme for National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW)—30 Years: Restoring the Balance of Justice—to be observed from Sunday, April 6, to Saturday, April 12, 2014. The 2014 color palette is cornflower blue (PMS 285) and black. The 2014 NCVRW Resource Guide is anticipated to be mailed to the field in early 2014, while the 2014 NCVRW Theme Poster will be mailed separately to the field this fall. For a free copy of the 2014 NCVRW Resource Guide and 2014 NCVRW Theme Poster, [sign up for the NCVRW mailing list](#).



Resources

WEB FORUMS

OVC HELP for Victim Service Providers Web Forum

The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) developed this resource as an online tool for victim service providers and allied professionals to share ideas, suggestions, and recommendations concerning promising practices, best practices, and victim issues. Guest hosts lead online discussions on various topics, including [Addressing the Needs of Victims on Cruise Ships \(May 2012\)](#).

PUBLICATIONS

[Resource Guide for Serving U.S. Citizens Victimized Abroad \(April 2008\)](#) features essential information and resources to assist

individuals who are victimized abroad. The guide is divided into six areas: (1) responding to victimization abroad, (2) coordinating victim services, (3) what to do if the victim remains abroad, (4) what to do if the victim returns to the United States, (5) international terrorism, and (6) crime victim compensation. It helps victim service providers develop strategic plans and carry out constructive activities to ensure that key personnel, resources, and protocols are in place for effective assistance.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Visit the [Help for Crime Victims](#) page on the OVC Web site to view other helpful resources for serving international victims. You can find additional resources in the [International Issues](#) section.



To receive *OVC News & Program Updates*, register via the National Criminal Justice Reference Service and select "Victims" as a topic of interest. Once you have registered, you will also receive important information from OVC and other OJP agencies related to—

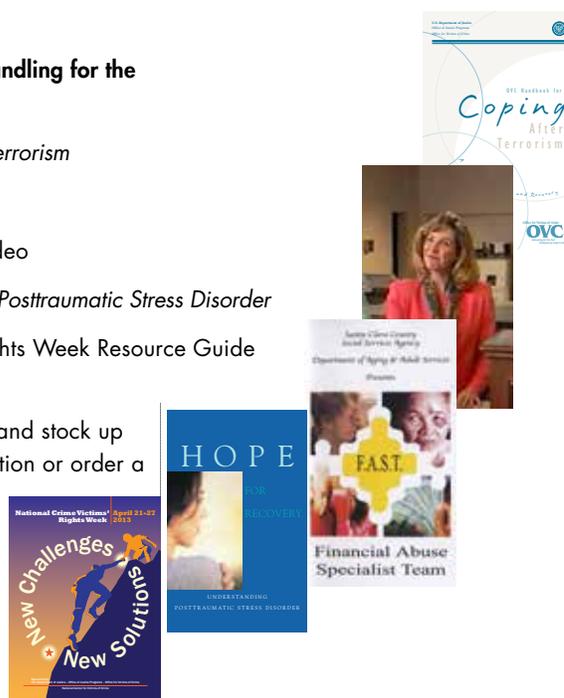
- new funding opportunities,
- recently released publications,
- upcoming trainings and conferences,
- program initiatives, and
- much more!

SPECIAL OFFER

OVC is offering free shipping and handling for the following select publications:

- *OVC Handbook for Coping After Terrorism*
- *After the Robbery Video*
- *Financial Abuse Specialist Team Video*
- *Hope for Recovery: Understanding Posttraumatic Stress Disorder*
- 2013 National Crime Victims' Rights Week Resource Guide & Poster

Take advantage of this [special offer](#) and stock up on materials for your personal collection or order a quantity of an essential publication for distribution to your colleagues and at conferences. Hurry—quantities are limited!



ABOUT THE OFFICE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME

The Office for Victims of Crime is one of six components within the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.

Led by Director Joye E. Frost, OVC is committed to enhancing the Nation's capacity to assist crime victims and to providing leadership in changing attitudes, policies, and practices to promote justice and healing for all victims of crime.

Established in 1988 through an amendment to the Victims of Crime Act of 1984, OVC is charged by Congress with administering the Crime Victims Fund. Through OVC, the Fund supports a broad array of programs and services that focus on helping victims in the immediate aftermath of crime and continuing to support them as they rebuild their lives. Millions of dollars are invested annually in victim compensation and assistance in every U.S. state and territory, as well as for training, technical assistance, and other capacity-building programs designed to enhance service providers' ability to support victims of crime in communities across the Nation.

For more information, visit www.ovc.gov.

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