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UNITED STATES STRATEGY TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE GLOBALLY

2022 UPDATE





We must recommit ourselves to ending violence against women and girls in all their diversity—wherever and whenever it occurs. Ending this scourge is a moral imperative, and it is in our strategic interest to strengthen security and stability for us all. When women are safe and fully integrated into their societies, everyone does better.”

President Joseph R. Biden, Statement on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women 2022

“No one should have to endure abuse just because they are attempting to participate in society.”

Vice President Kamala Harris, Launch of the White House Task Force to Address Online Harassment and Abuse

“We have to address gender inequities that often relegate women to the sidelines and combat the violence that women and girls around the world endure every single day.”

Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken, 16th Annual International Women of Courage (IWOC) Awards Ceremony

“As with other human rights abuses, gender-based violence slows economic growth, undermines national security, and constitutes a breach of that most sacred of moral contracts: that everyone has the right to feel safe and secure.”

USAID Administrator Samantha Power, Statement for the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence 2022



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INTRODUCTION

The United States believes that preventing and responding to gender-based violence around the world is a matter of human rights, justice, equity, and equality. In 2012, the U.S. Congress first requested a “multi-year strategy to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls,” which led to the development of the first *U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally*. This strategy, and the subsequent update in 2016, elevated the human rights of women and girls globally as a U.S. national security, diplomatic, and foreign assistance priority. Ten years later, our commitment to this issue remains steadfast and our knowledge of best and promising practices has grown. Nonetheless, gender-based violence remains all too common around the world, including in the United States.

The global context in which we find ourselves today is different from a decade ago. New challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, have exacerbated the “shadow pandemic” of gender-based violence around the world. At the same time, the growing role of technology in daily life has led women, girl, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) human rights defenders to face targeted violence. Climate-related migration and displacement has led to exacerbated risks of gender-based violence, and conflict-related sexual violence remains persistently high. As women, girls, and LGBTQI+ individuals around the world face new risks, we need to reassess our policy and diplomatic and programmatic strategies to address these challenges. At the same time, many challenges identified in the 2012 version of this strategy continue to require attention. The prevalence of gender-based violence remains high, justice and healing for survivors and accountability for perpetrators are often lacking, and the grassroots organizations working to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in their communities too often lack sufficient funding to do so.

With this third iteration of the *U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally*, we seek to: **advance equity and inclusivity** and address the factors that increase the risks of gender-based violence and undermine access to services and safety, particularly for the most marginalized groups; **support comprehensive approaches** for addressing gender-based violence priorities across a range of thematic areas; and **strengthen the commitment and work of the U.S. government** to scale what works, enhance our partnerships, and improve our capacity to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

THE STRATEGIC CHALLENGE

Defining Gender-Based Violence

Gender-Based Violence is any harmful threat or act directed at an individual or group based on actual or perceived sex, gender, gender identity or expression, sex characteristics, sexual orientation, and/or lack of adherence to varying socially constructed norms around masculinity and femininity. Although individuals of all gender identities may experience gender-based violence, women, girls, and gender non-conforming individuals face a disproportionate risk of gender-based violence across every context due to their unequal status in society.

Drivers and Contexts

Gender-based violence is a human rights abuse, a form of discrimination, a manifestation of unequal power, and a public health crisis in the United States and globally. Gender-based violence is rooted in structural gender inequalities, patriarchy, and power imbalances. It has direct and indirect costs to individuals; families; communities; economies; global public health; development; and human, national, and regional security. Gender-based violence is a systemic global problem: it occurs in every country and level of society. It happens in public and private settings, including the home, work environments, transit, educational settings, and schools; criminal justice settings, including correctional facilities; the military and security sector; and digital and online spaces. Members of some populations face overlapping forms of discrimination that put them at an even higher risk of experiencing gender-based violence, including Indigenous peoples; historically marginalized racial and ethnic populations; religious minority populations; LGBTQI+ persons; persons with disabilities; older persons and widows; children and youth; low-wage and informal sector workers; migrants, refugees, and internally displaced peoples; and persons in fragile and conflict-affected states.

Types of Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence is characterized by the use or threat of physical, psychological, sexual, economic, legal, political, social, and other forms of control, coercion, and/or violence. It can occur across the life course and is perpetrated by a diverse array of actors, including intimate partners; family members; persons in positions of power, authority, or trust; friends; acquaintances; or strangers. Types of gender-based violence include: child, early, and forced marriage; child sexual abuse; female genital mutilation/cutting; gender-related killing of women and girls, including “femicide” and female infanticide; so-called “honor”-based violence, including acid attacks and killings; some forms of human trafficking; intimate partner violence, including domestic and dating violence; reproductive coercion, including forced sterilization; sexual exploitation and abuse; sexual harassment; stalking; all forms of sexual violence, including sexual coercion, conflict-related sexual violence, rape (including marital rape; so-called “corrective” rape related to actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression; and rape as a weapon of war), and forced or coerced physical examinations (including virginity testing); and all forms of technology-facilitated gender-based violence, including gendered online harassment and abuse. Other types of violence that can be gender-based include: abandonment; bias-motivated violence or hate crimes; bullying; child abuse, including corporal punishment; elder abuse; and so-called “conversion” therapy practices that seek to change or suppress a person’s gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or sex characteristics. The prevalence of different types of gender-based violence varies across contexts and over time.

Setting the Scene

Promoting gender equity and equality is a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy and our commitment to advancing human rights globally. The advancement of women and girls in particular is a moral imperative and is in the strategic national interest of the United States and our global partners. This prioritization increases the likelihood that we will be effective stewards in achieving international peace, economic prosperity, stability, and sustainable development. The prevalence of gender-based violence around the world remains one of the primary barriers to achieving these goals.

Language

Historically, diplomatic activities, programming, and research on gender-based violence have focused largely on women and girls. Indeed, prevalence data consistently indicates that women and girls around the world experience disproportionately high rates of gender-based violence throughout the life course. Women and girls are not equally represented or included in political processes and other foreign policy and development objectives. Additionally, emerging knowledge suggests that members of additional groups or sub-groups may also be at acute risk of experiencing gender-based violence. We recognize that gender-based violence affects people of all genders: women and girls, including transgender women and girls; gender nonbinary and gender nonconforming people; as well as men and boys.

Prevalence of Gender-Based Violence

The global prevalence of gender-based violence is vast, and estimates of global gender-based violence widely acknowledge a systematic underreporting. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that approximately 1 in 3 women worldwide has been subjected to intimate partner violence and/or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.¹ Over 650 million women alive today were married before the age of 18, and every year an additional 12 million girls are married before their 18th birthday.² At least 200 million women and girls in the world today have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting across 30 different countries,³ including in the United States.⁴ Global prevalence data is limited for other types of gender-based violence, such as forced sterilization, technology facilitated gender-based violence, or gender-based violence against members of specifically targeted groups, such as LGBTQI+ persons. However, growing research indicates that these forms of gender-based violence are also pervasive and harmful in their impacts.

Consequences of Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence exists in the Global North and the Global South; in high-, middle-, and low-income countries; and across different religions, ethnicities, and social classes. Research shows that countries with higher rates of gender-based violence suffer more frequently from conflict, instability, lack of adherence to the rule of law, low educational attainment, economic underdevelopment, and health crises, among other challenges. In 2016, the global cost of violence against women was estimated at 2% of global GDP, or \$1.5 trillion.⁵ Unfortunately, no groups

¹ [World Health Organization, Violence Against Women](#)

² [UNICEF, Child Marriage](#)

³ [WHO, Female Genital Mutilation](#)

⁴ [CDC, Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting](#)

⁵ [UN Women, The Economic Costs of Violence Against Women](#)

are immune to this scourge. Moreover, gender-based violence negatively impacts even those individuals who are not immediately targeted, including children, other family members, and broader communities, and its impacts reverberate over time, causing intergenerational trauma and related adverse consequences. It creates constraints and chilling effects for women, girls, and gender non-conforming individuals, hindering their full inclusion in society, including private, civic, market, and digital spheres.

Gender-based violence reflects and reinforces structural inequalities at global, regional, national, and local levels. Members of marginalized populations,⁶ especially women and girls, are disproportionately targeted with gender-based violence. In turn, other forms of marginalization are exacerbated by gender-based violence, in part due to negative physical and mental health consequences; disrupted education; lost wages and barriers to advancement in formal and informal economies; familial or community ostracization; barriers to accessing services; and lack of access to justice.

Impunity for perpetrators of gender-based violence remains all too common. In many contexts, gender-based violence is normalized and seen as an intractable part of life. Moreover, social institutions including families, workplaces, the digital arena, public spaces, educational settings, and religious institutions can create the conditions in which acts of gender-based violence are either tolerated or sanctioned. Despite these formidable challenges, over the last several decades the global community and grassroots advocates have advanced efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence so that all people can live peaceful lives free from such violence. The United States continues to be a key partner in advancing these efforts.

Current Context

In the decade since the first *U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally* was released, there have been profound changes in the world. The #MeToo movement generated a renewed global recognition of how widespread and normalized gender-based violence is in the lives of women, girls, and gender non-conforming individuals globally. Brave survivors, journalists, and media outlets have helped foster a reckoning within the global community about gender-based violence, including sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by aid workers within both humanitarian and development contexts. Furthermore, a renewed global recognition of the enduring impacts of racism and colonialism has reinvigorated public discussions about violence and ongoing discrimination against members of racial and ethnic minority communities, including some by law enforcement agencies, which undermines access to justice for survivors from these communities. Even as public awareness of gender-based violence has increased, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing barriers and forms of inequality that many people around the world face because of their gender, created conditions that increase the risk of gender-based violence for members of many populations, and simultaneously decreased access to lifesaving response services. The second-order impacts of this global shock will be felt for years to come. Nations and communities are also facing increasing violent conflicts, humanitarian crises, food security crises, and natural disasters that exacerbate gender inequalities and gender-based violence risks, often in connection with climate change. Finally, many nations are also facing increasing levels of political polarization and extremism, authoritarianism, and related rollbacks of rights for women, LGBTQI+ persons, and other marginalized communities. These and other trends, including online harassment, abuse, and disinformation (including gendered disinformation) circulating in the digital sphere, shrink

⁶Marginalized groups/populations: Groups and communities that experience discrimination and exclusion (economic, political, social, and cultural) because of unequal power relationships across economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions. Some individuals identify with multiple marginalized groups and may experience deeper marginalization and lack of representation as a result of their intersecting identities.

the space for civic and political discourse and participation. Together and apart, these conditions create formidable obstacles to preventing and responding to gender-based violence and serve as a stark reminder of the urgent need to act.

The United States continues to advance efforts domestically to prevent and address gender-based violence. While progress has been made after more than four decades of federal and state legislation and investments, especially in efforts to address sexual violence and intimate partner violence, our own rates of gender-based violence remain high. Thus, we recognize that our global anti-violence efforts must work in tandem with those on the domestic front. The United States will soon release the first *U.S. National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence*. These policies reflect our ongoing commitment to advance this work across both U.S. foreign and domestic policy. These policies build on the key priorities established in the *U.S. National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality* and outline a plan to fully integrate gender-based violence throughout foreign policy, development, and national security decision-making.

Building on an Existing Foundation

Policy Framework

Over the past three decades, the United States has substantially increased its diplomatic focus on foreign assistance programming directed toward addressing gender-based violence. This whole-of-government mobilization builds on the legacies of women's grassroots movements, LGBTQI+ advocates, and anti-violence activism. In addition to the momentum for women's human rights that was generated with the passage of the *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women* and at the 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women, several other contemporary events have sparked a broader recognition of the importance of addressing gender-based violence. The technical capacity of civil society organizations has improved substantially, yielding a more knowledgeable and dynamic global field of gender-based violence prevention and response. In addition, during the 1990s recognition grew of the prevalence and role of rape in mass atrocities



Photo Credit: USAID/Michael Duff

and war, including in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, and of the importance of holding those responsible for sexual violence accountable.⁷ Today, it is recognized that gender-based violence, including sexual violence, may constitute an atrocity crime, and that increases in gender-based violence can serve as early warning indicators of mass atrocities and state fragility that the United States has a moral responsibility to address. The landmark United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security specifically calls for the protection of women and girls from gender-based violence, including in emergency and humanitarian situations. Additional UNSCRs have laid the groundwork for addressing gender-based violence, particularly in conflict and post-conflict settings.

With that foundation, and since our initial 2012 strategy, the United States has reiterated its commitment to gender equity and equality as part of its foreign policy and assistance efforts. Our current efforts are guided by a number of legal frameworks and policies, including the *U.S. National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality*; the *Women, Peace, and Security Act* of 2017 and the *U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security* of 2019; the *Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act* of 2018 and the *U.S. Strategy to Anticipate, Prevent, and Respond to Atrocities* of 2022; the *Global Fragility Act* of 2019 and the *U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability* of 2020; the *Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act* of 2018; Executive Order 14020 on Gender Equity and Equality; and Presidential Memorandum to Promote Accountability for Conflict-Related Sexual Violence. A full list of policies guiding our work can be found in Annex B.

Programmatic Interventions

U.S. efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence have evolved as knowledge, technical capacity, partnerships, and internal processes have been strengthened. Points of intervention have expanded from a primary focus on criminal justice responses and service provisions for survivors, to more comprehensive efforts that also focus on prevention and education, social norms change, health and social services, economic security, access to housing assistance, and legal reform and accountability mechanisms. Engaging men and boys in gender-based violence prevention alongside women, girls, and gender non-conforming community advocates has also emerged as an important priority. The value of locally led development and the amplification of diverse community voices are both recognized as integral components of success. Finally, another pivotal development has been the recognition of the importance of integrating gender-based violence policy and programming across U.S. foreign policy priorities in addition to standalone efforts. The relationship between, for instance, gender-based violence and economic growth, education, or women's political participation is now well-documented. Within this evolution, gender-based violence has also emerged as a standalone field that requires technical expertise and targeted staffing.

Research and Data

The evidence base for understanding the scope, scale, and consequences of gender-based violence has improved over the past three decades. Many countries around the world have invested in collecting more robust national data on gender-based violence. In addition, the United States has invested in collecting population-level data on the prevalence of violence globally,⁸ in particular intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and increasingly,

⁷ The Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court, which entered into force in 2002, recognizes that certain forms of sexual violence may constitute a war crime, crime against humanity, or genocide. The United States is not a state party to the Rome Statute.

⁸ [The DHS Program](#)

violence against children and youth.⁹ Complementing prevalence surveys, the U.S. government has also supported research to gather insights into the lived experiences of gender-based violence survivors to help demonstrate the global magnitude and root causes of the problem. Moving forward, it is crucial that we continue to reduce barriers for survivors to make disclosures of violence in both formal and informal contexts. It is also crucial to ensure that accurate, comprehensive, and recent data are collected in all countries and regions in a confidential and trauma-informed manner.

Global Consultation Process

The first step in the review and update process for the 2022 update of the *U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally* was a six-month period of consultations with key stakeholders from around the world. Virtual consultations were organized with representatives from a variety of sectors, organizations, and geographic locations. Consultations were hosted both through external partners and with internal contractors and U.S. government teams. Topics included the intersections of gender-based violence and conflict, climate, health, economic security, and technology, as well as population-specific considerations, such as those related to race and ethnicity, girls and youth, men and boys, LGBTQI+ persons, and persons with disabilities. Consultations included 450+ participants representing 200+ organizations. They included representatives from civil society, bilateral and multilateral partners, faith networks, the private sector, academia, implementing partners, and federal departments and agencies. Issues discussed at the consultations included: a) opportunities for innovation; b) macro-level trends that shape the prevalence and patterns of gender-based violence globally; c) impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on individual experiences of gender-based violence; d) recommendations on strategic vision, priority areas of focus, and key considerations; and e) ways that the strategy can be used to inform policies, programs, and funding. All components of the 2022 strategy are directly informed by the input from these generous partners.

The Vision

The ultimate vision of this strategy is to build a future free from gender-based violence for all people.

To truly understand and eliminate gender-based violence around the world, we must recognize and address the intersecting forms of discrimination, marginalization, and oppression that too many individuals and communities still face. Acts of gender-based violence are rooted in social identity, status, and power. At its core, gender-based violence is an abuse of power and is a reflection and manifestation of power imbalances across different groups of people, especially related to sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and sex characteristics; race and ethnicity; age; socioeconomic status; nationality; disability; religion; and citizenship or refugee status. The importance of moving beyond engaging survivors and their communities in perfunctory or paternalistic ways has become clearer than ever before. We must strive for meaningful partnerships; engage in consistent and comprehensive consultations locally, regionally, and globally; and serve as a leader on the provision of financial and political support for organizations and networks, including those representing different marginalized and disadvantaged populations. These advocates and organizations are the heart of this work, and we must support them as they lead the way toward change.

⁹ [CDC, Violence Against Children and Youth Surveys](#)



Theory of Change

If gender-based violence prevention and response is integrated across U.S. government international programs, policies, and diplomatic engagements; is focused on empowering and respecting all survivors, including those from marginalized populations; and increases accountability to survivors' needs, **then** gender-based violence will decrease, thereby increasing security, stability, and well-being for individuals, families, and communities worldwide.

The successful implementation of this theory of change must be done in partnership with survivors, survivor-centered organizations, civil society, faith leaders and institutions, local and national governments, the private sector, academic institutions, bilateral partners, and multilateral partners. At the core of this theory of change is the understanding that our work to prevent and respond to gender-based violence must strive to be sustainable, holistic, and evidence-informed. The success of this strategy must be undergirded by respectful partnerships; address socioeconomic and political systems that ignore, perpetuate, or enable gender-based violence; and will depend on the successful implementation of our guiding principles and each pillar of this strategy.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO OUR APPROACH

The following principles will guide our approach as the U.S. government to prevent and respond to gender-based violence globally.



**HUMAN RIGHTS-
INFORMED**



INTERSECTIONAL



INCLUSIVE



**LIFE COURSE
LENS**



**SURVIVOR-
CENTERED**



LOCALLY LED

Human Rights-Informed: We will implement an approach that respects and promotes human rights and that recognizes gender-based violence as a human rights abuse. We will include the prevention of and response to gender-based violence as part of our human rights policy priorities. We will incorporate international human rights considerations into policies, programming, services, and processes related to gender-based violence prevention and response.¹⁰ This approach reflects values of respect, compassion, and human dignity for all and prioritizes transparency, accountability, empowerment, consultations, and participation.

Intersectional: In line with the *U.S. National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality*, this strategy aims to address intersecting forms of discrimination to advance equity and equality. We will apply an intersectional framework to identify those who experience the harshest effects of inequality and violence based on interconnected and layered systems of oppression and discrimination (e.g., systems based on factors such as sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics; race and ethnicity; nationality; religion; disability status; age; socioeconomic status; caste; widowhood; or indigeneity). We recognize how these intersecting forms of oppression and discrimination can increase vulnerability to experiencing gender-based violence, while also increasing barriers to accessing safety, services, and justice. We recognize that a person's individual experience of violence and oppression is shaped by these intersecting and layered identities, as well as by societal norms.

Inclusive: We will implement an inclusive approach that takes into consideration the historic, structural, sociocultural, and systemic disadvantages and power imbalances members of different groups face, as well as their strength, resilience, and leadership in developing tailored solutions; this will enable their equitable participation in, access to, and benefit from gender-based violence prevention and response efforts, including their participation in policy and program design, implementation, and evaluation. We will promote accessibility of policies, programs, services, and resources for survivors and communities from different country contexts, as well as for those working both within and outside of the direct gender-based violence technical sector.

Life Course Lens: We will address the continuum of gender-based violence across the life course, recognizing that individuals of all ages – from infants to older adults – can experience gender-based violence and that specific types of gender-based violence are more prevalent at different life stages. This includes a recognition of intergenerational trauma, including how experiencing or witnessing violence and exposure to other traumatic events experienced in childhood, known as adverse childhood experiences,¹¹ can have long-lasting health, social, and economic effects, including increasing a child's likelihood of being a perpetrator or victim later in life. This also includes a recognition of the cumulative, lifetime impact of gender inequality and trauma on older adults, particularly older women, that exacerbates the risk for continuing to experience gender-based violence in older age. This approach supports policies and programs to improve prevention efforts and provide more comprehensive support for families, children, youth, adults, and older adults who may experience or be impacted by gender-based violence over the course of their lives.

Survivor-Centered: We will promote a survivor-centered approach that is trauma-informed;¹² non-stigmatizing; empowers the survivor; puts the rights and choices of each survivor at the forefront of all actions; ensures that each

¹⁰ [UN Women, Rights-Based Approach](#)

¹¹ [CDC, Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\)](#)

¹² Trauma-informed: A program, policy, or system that realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery; recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system; and responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices, and seeks to actively resist re-traumatization; [SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach](#)

survivor is treated with dignity and respect regardless of their real or perceived identity; and includes survivors in policy and programming processes, including in high-level decision-making roles. This approach includes implementing the Do No Harm principles of safety, respect, confidentiality, and non-discrimination in all our work to take care not to put survivors, program participants, staff, and community members at physical or emotional risk. By putting the survivor at the center of our work, this approach promotes their recovery and healing, reduces the risk of further harm and revictimization, and reinforces their agency and self-determination. Practicing a survivor-centered approach means establishing a relationship with the survivor that promotes their emotional and physical safety, builds trust, and helps them restore some control over their life. A survivor-centered approach also focuses on accessibility and adaptability of appropriate, inclusive, and high-quality prevention and response services that include different options for safety and support (e.g., including for survivors who decide that they do not want to engage with the criminal justice system). Applying a survivor-centered approach extends beyond programming and direct services and should also be applied to policy design and implementation.

Locally Led: We will advance partnerships with other governments, multilateral organizations, civil society, and the private sector to collectively work toward a world free from gender-based violence. Our partnership approach acknowledges that gender-based violence is an issue that every country in the world faces, including our own, and that local individuals and communities who dedicate their careers and lives to preventing and responding to gender-based violence, including survivors, are the experts on how to prevent and respond to it in their own communities. We will seek to build partnerships with local partners, individuals, and communities, including faith communities, and enable them to take the lead as experts in gender-based violence prevention and response-related efforts in their countries and communities by providing them with resources and tools. We will work with local partners as a means of ensuring individuals, survivors, families, schools, communities, and national-level governments are all involved in and accountable for gender-based violence prevention and response, including by increasing political will, resource allocation, and prioritization. Advancing partnerships is key to the sustainability of our approach, enhances the efficacy of our work, and embodies our democratic ideals.

PILLAR I: FOCUSING ON GENDER AND AT-RISK POPULATIONS

Pillar I puts our guiding principles, particularly on intersectionality and inclusivity, into action. As the United States' definition of gender-based violence is inclusive of diverse populations, we are committed to understanding the depth and breadth of how gender-based violence impacts different groups. While there is a substantial evidence base about women and girls' disproportionate risk of gender-based violence, we are still building the evidence base to better understand the risks facing other marginalized communities. This pillar includes a focus on specific population groups – girls and young women; LGBTQI+ persons; and boys and men – that are often overlooked and under-researched in gender-based violence. Of course, each of these groups is itself diverse and dynamic, and we recognize that other groups also face disproportionate rates of gender-based violence as detailed in Objective 1.4. We highlight these groups because advocates from these communities are important partners in our collective work to prevent and respond to gender-based violence globally.



Photo Credit: Crystal Stafford/USAID

Women and Intimate Partner Violence: Intimate partner violence remains one of the most common forms of gender-based violence, with high percentages of women experiencing intimate partner violence at some point in their lives. In some cases, violence continues in a relationship for many years. Women who experience intimate partner violence are more likely to experience reproductive coercion, whereby their autonomous decision-making related to contraception and pregnancy is restricted. Rates of intimate partner violence increase in the wake of crises, including natural disasters, humanitarian emergencies, and conflict. The costs to individual women, their communities, and their nations is shockingly high and has long-lasting, intergenerational effects. While it is crucial to recognize the impact of gender-based violence across a variety of populations, we will also continue to commit foreign assistance and diplomacy to addressing and eliminating violence against all women, inclusive of their diverse identities and across their life course. Research on what works to prevent gender-based violence and to mitigate its harmful effects when it does occur includes involving community leaders in interventions and intergenerational dialogues about violence prevention; engaging men and boys in prevention; increasing women's economic security; empowering girls and other marginalized groups; and addressing structural drivers, including climate change, crisis, and conflict.

It is important to note that the examples discussed in Pillar I are neither mutually exclusive nor exhaustive, but rather illuminate how gender-based violence impacts members of specific populations.

Objective 1.1: Girls and Young Women

Action: Expand opportunities for all girls and young women to achieve their full potential by addressing their unique needs and risks to gender-based violence and uplifting their voices as leaders, agents of change, and advocates in their communities.

Problem: Gender equality and girls' empowerment are not achievable without addressing the unique forms of gender-based violence that girls, including adolescent girls and young women, around the world disproportionately face, including sexual violence; sexual exploitation and abuse; intimate partner violence, including dating violence; female genital mutilation/cutting; child, early, and forced marriage; reproductive coercion; gender-related killing of women and girls; human trafficking; stalking; and technology-facilitated gender-based violence. These forms of gender-based violence, as well as witnessing gender-based violence in the household or community as children, have lifelong health, education, and economic consequences and can fuel an intergenerational cycle of violence. Global health, economic, and climate crises, among other emergencies, disproportionately put girls and young women at further risk of experiencing gender-based violence. School closures, economic strain, and other consequences of these emergencies have contributed to increased reports of child sexual abuse and exploitation; female genital mutilation/cutting; child, early, and forced marriage; adolescent pregnancy; ¹³ online harassment and abuse; and mental distress among youth globally. ¹⁴ For example, an estimated 10 million additional girls are at risk of child marriage due to the COVID-19 pandemic. ¹⁵

All girls and young women need targeted and effective information, respectful and age-appropriate services, opportunities to develop life skills, and safe and supportive environments to address the multitude of challenges they face. Girls and young women in conflict or humanitarian settings; who are members of historically marginalized racial and ethnic or Indigenous communities; with disabilities; who are migrants or refugees; who are impacted by child, early, or forced marriage; or who identify as LGBTQI+ must be uniquely considered and included in all policy and program design and implementation. Importantly, girls and young women are and can be leaders in their own right, though their voices are too often overlooked in decision-making about policies and programs that affect their daily lives.

¹³ [UNEPA, Millions more cases of violence, child marriage, female genital mutilation, unintended pregnancy expected due to the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

¹⁴ [UNICEF, The impact of COVID-19 on the mental health of adolescents and youth](#)

¹⁵ [UNICEF, 10 million additional girls at risk of child marriage due to COVID-19](#)

Forms of Gender-Based Violence

The below forms of gender-based violence disproportionately, though not exclusively, affect girls and young women.

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: All procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. Female genital mutilation/cutting is typically carried out on young girls between infancy and adolescence, and occasionally on adult women. Female genital mutilation/cutting is a human rights abuse and form of gender-based violence.

Child, Early, and Forced Marriage: Child or early marriage includes any formal marriage or informal union where one or both parties is under the age of 18. Forced marriage is a marriage at any age that occurs without the free and full consent of both parties, including anyone under the age of 18 who is not able to give full consent. Child, early, and forced marriage is a human rights abuse and form of gender-based violence.



Photo Credit: Kashish Das Shrestha for USAID

Approach: We will employ a comprehensive and empowering approach that emphasizes gender-based violence prevention and addresses harmful social norms; ensures services are comprehensive, welcoming to, and inclusive of adolescents' needs; and meaningfully engages with diverse girl- and youth-led organizations and networks. Examples of our approach include:

Policy and Diplomacy

- Elevating the voices and needs of girls and young women in multilateral forums and donor working groups, and advancing political commitments that promote the health, well-being, and human rights of all girls and young women. This includes support for advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights and age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education, and for ending female genital mutilation/cutting and child, early, and forced marriage.
- Leveraging public diplomacy opportunities, such as the International Day of the Girl, 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, and the International Day of Zero Tolerance on Female Genital Mutilation, to advance the human rights of girls and young women and to amplify their voices.

- Ensuring the integration of gender-based violence prevention and response specific to girls and young women across U.S. government policy efforts, including the *U.S. Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls*, *U.S. Government Strategy on International Basic Education*, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) *Youth in Development Policy*, and *U.S. Strategy for Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity*.

Programming

- Continuing to fund global programming that specifically addresses child, early, and forced marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting, including through contributions to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)-United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Joint Program to End Female Genital Mutilation and to UNFPA.
- Investing in comprehensive, multi-sectoral programming that addresses the unique vulnerabilities of girls and young women, including their experiences of gender-based violence, through efforts such as the Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-Free, Mentored and Safe (DREAMS) Partnership through the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).
- Prioritizing the ethical and systematic collection of age- and sex-disaggregated data in our programs, including growing efforts to support data collection on online forms of violence and exploitation; supporting the Violence Against Children and Youth Surveys (VACS) and Demographic and Health Surveys; and centering the lived experiences of all girls and young women.
- Strengthening the capacity of our partners to provide adolescent-friendly and girl-friendly gender-based violence and health services that are non-judgmental, non-stigmatizing, and survivor-centered.

Objective 1.2: LGBTQI+ Persons

Action: Increase the inclusion of LGBTQI+ persons, advance recognition of LGBTQI+ human rights, and create conditions in which all LGBTQI+ individuals can live free from violence, stigma, harassment, discrimination, marginalization, and criminalization.

Problem: Gender-based violence can occur within LGBTQI+ populations or against members of LGBTQI+ populations. This violence is often rooted in or linked to discrimination against those who do not conform with traditional social expectations. LGBTQI+ persons face a disproportionate risk of gender-based violence, as well as violence, stigma, harassment, discrimination, marginalization, and criminalization based on their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, sex characteristics, or some combination thereof. Non-LGBTQI+ persons may also experience gender-based violence if they are perceived by others to be LGBTQI+. These harms, including gender-based violence as well as other forms of violence against LGBTQI+ persons, result in a variety of adverse outcomes, including familial estrangement, exclusion from educational and economic opportunities, legal and political disenfranchisement, and poor physical and mental health and psychosocial outcomes. LGBTQI+ persons can be harmed by various forms of gender-based violence, including dating violence, stalking, sexual assault, or family violence, and often experience significant barriers to safety and justice. These harms may be exacerbated because LGBTQI+ survivors may not be believed, and the general social stigma they experience may reduce viable exit pathways from harmful situations. LGBTQI+ survivors may face additional barriers to accessing legal, health, and mental health and psychosocial support services.

Although many research gaps remain about how gender-based violence and other forms of targeted violence impact LGBTQI+ persons, there are reports of: intimate partner violence; gender-related killings; hate crimes and hate speech; extrajudicial killings and so-called “honor” killings; so-called “corrective rape”; forced marriage; mutilation of genitalia of intersex infants and adolescents; so-called “conversion therapy” practices; and blackmail, extortion, and other forms of intimidation to “out” LGBTQI+ persons without consent. These and other acts of gender-based violence may also take place in online spaces or be facilitated by technologies. Collectively, such acts of violence against LGBTQI+ persons lead to societal exclusion and oppression.

Historically, most research on and advocacy for addressing gender-based violence has focused on women and girls, given the high global prevalence of violence against women and girls and the patriarchal roots of such violence. There has been less focus to date on those who are also targeted with violence based on their real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, sex characteristics, or some combination thereof. Globally, LGBTQI+ persons frequently experience high levels of gender-based violence compared to their heterosexual and cisgender counterparts.

Approach: We will work to ensure that LGBTQI+ persons are able to achieve their greatest potential and live lives free from gender-based violence, and that the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons are not violated or abused. We will increase research, diplomatic efforts, and programmatic investments to prevent and respond to forms of gender-based violence that disproportionately affect LGBTQI+ persons. We will work to decrease silos that have historically maintained boundaries between LGBTQI+ advocacy and gender-based violence prevention and response efforts. Examples of our approach include:

Policy and Diplomacy

- Advancing recognition of the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons in multilateral forums and as part of our multi-stakeholder bilateral relationships, including supporting the mandate of the United Nations Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity as well as the continued renewal of the mandate.
- Amplifying and respecting the voices of LGBTQI+ persons by leveraging public diplomacy opportunities like Women’s History Month; International Transgender Day of Visibility; International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia; Pride Month; LGBTQI+ History Month; 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence; Intersex Awareness Day; and Transgender Day of Remembrance to raise awareness of the U.S. government’s efforts to support all LGBTQI+ persons in living lives free from gender-based violence.
- Shedding light on the gender-based violence experienced by LGBTQI+ persons through the Department of State’s Country Reports on Human Rights Practices (Human Rights Reports), which include a subsection in each report summarizing “Acts of Violence, Criminalization, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.” To further critical data collection, Executive Order 14075 requires all United States embassies and missions worldwide to submit information on the practice and incidence of so-called “conversion” therapy as part of the Human Rights Reports.

Programming

- Developing and implementing programs to end gender-based violence in partnership with and under the leadership of LGBTQI+ civil society that expands recognition of the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons and promotes a world free from violence, stigma, harassment, discrimination, marginalization, and criminalization based on actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics.
- Expanding the research and evidence base to more effectively document the prevalence, scope, and types of gender-based violence experienced by LGBTQI+ persons.
- Identifying and seeking to increase foreign assistance funding for gender-based violence service provision by and for LGBTQI+ communities and service providers, e.g., mental health, medical, and legal.
- Ensuring federal foreign assistance programs include non-discrimination protections and prevent human rights abuses against LGBTQI+ individuals.
- Investing in multi-angle approaches, including economic development, organizational leadership, political and civil society participation, academic research, and advocacy activities that provide effective support and empowerment of LGBTQI+ individuals and organizations.
- Building and increasing the capacity of local organizations and leaders by providing accessible, practical tools and resources to strengthen strategic planning, governance processes, and human resources that support LGBTQI+ communities.
- Developing an action plan to promote an end to the use of so-called “conversion” therapy around the world, as outlined in Executive Order 14075. In developing the action plan, the Secretary of State shall consider the use of foreign assistance programs and the U.S. voice and vote in multilateral development banks and international development institutions, of which the United States is a shareholder or donor, to take appropriate steps to prevent the use of so-called “conversion” therapy, as well as to help ensure that U.S. foreign assistance programs do not use foreign assistance funds for so-called “conversion” therapy.

Objective 1.3: Men and Boys

Action: Engage men and boys in the prevention of gender-based violence by fostering healthy relationships and responding to the needs of male gender-based violence survivors.

Problem: Engaging men and boys in all their diversity as partners in short- and long-term gender-based violence prevention is essential to a future in which all people can live and thrive without the threat of gender-based violence. Engaging men and boys alongside women and girls is critical to reducing violence, but we must better understand the driving factors of violent behavior and which men are more likely to commit gender-based violence. Research shows that the two strongest factors associated with men who perpetrate violence against women are: a) childhood experiences of physical and sexual abuse; witnessing gender-based violence; and exposure to or victimization of other forms of violence; and b) attitudes related to gender-based violence and to gender equity overall. ¹⁶ Additional research and evaluation are needed to improve the development of holistic, trauma-informed efforts that aim to

¹⁶ [UNFPA, International Men & Gender Equality Survey \(IMAGES\)](#)

prevent gender-based violence, reduce impunity and increase accountability, and prevent cycles of violence from continuing among men and boys who have witnessed or experienced violence. Finally, it is critical that research and advocacy against men's perpetration of gender-based violence avoid pathologizing certain groups of men as inherently violent.

Men, and especially boys, experience gender-based violence in a variety of social contexts. Boys are vulnerable to gender-based violence due to their age and correspondingly limited social power, as compared to adults in their communities. Types of gender-based violence that men and boys experience may include: child sexual abuse; conflict-related sexual violence; sexual hazing; intimate partner violence, including dating violence and stalking; some forms of human trafficking; and homophobic and transphobic violence. Many men who have experienced gender-based violence report that it is difficult to make such disclosures because of the stigma against male victimization. In addition, they may face unique barriers in accessing necessary support services because, in many communities, there remains strong disbelief that men can be survivors of gender-based violence. Like other populations, men and boys are not homogenous groups, and the social identity of an individual man or boy influences their respective protective and risk factors. The evidence base documenting gender-based violence against men and boys remains under-developed because research studies to date have largely had smaller samples, and population-level surveys tracking the global prevalence of the types of gender-based violence affecting men and boys have not been completed.

Approach: While we continue to elevate the voices of women and girls who are gender-based violence survivors, advocates, and leaders, we must do more to fully address the root causes of gender-based violence by addressing social norms and engaging more fully with men and boys in their roles as survivors, community leaders, supportive partners, caregivers, and perpetrators. This engagement must also include restorative justice responses that are trauma-informed to reduce recidivism and break cycles of violence. Examples of our approach include:



Photo Credit: Michael Duff, USAID

Policy and Diplomacy

- Seeking out and incorporating perspectives from men as champions, allies, advocates, and survivors in our engagements on gender-based violence topics with civil society and other stakeholders and considering how they can be uniquely engaged as partners in the prevention of different forms of gender-based violence.
- Recognizing and seeking to meet the unique needs of male survivors of gender-based violence, including in conflict settings, for whom stigma, shame, and social norms may serve as barriers to their accessing services or justice.

Programming

- Addressing men and boys as stakeholders, survivors, perpetrators, allies, and agents of change across the life cycle and prioritizing early intervention programs and social norms change programs that promote healthy relationships and healthy masculinities wherever possible.
- Investing in comprehensive, multi-sectoral programming that builds the skills and capacity of men to engage in healthy forms of masculinity, including the Responsible, Engaged, and Loving (REAL) Fathers initiative, as well as data collection efforts through Demographic Health Surveys to better track the attitudes of men related to gender equity, decision-making, violence, and caregiving.
- Implementing programs that empower young girls and boys to be agents of change in challenging harmful gender norms and building a more positive future, in partnership with their schools, families, and communities, and providing access for all students to information about safety, consent, and healthy relationships.
- Ensuring that organizations that deliver gender-based violence services to men and boys are included during the development of referral pathways to meet their specific needs.

Objective 1.4: Marginalized Groups

Action: Ensure safe and respectful gender-based violence prevention and response efforts that address patterns of vulnerability, which place members of some groups at higher risk of experiencing gender-based violence due to structural inequalities, social norms, discrimination, and marginalization.

Problem: Gender-based violence is pervasive, but not evenly perpetuated across populations. Members of some groups have a heightened risk of experiencing or being impacted by gender-based violence. Too often, individuals in the groups most at risk of gender-based violence are those that are already marginalized. Members of marginalized groups are too often at higher risk for experiencing or being negatively impacted by gender-based violence. Thus, it is essential to analyze how social identities and power dynamics impact and compound the prevalence, consequences, and individual experiences of gender-based violence to more effectively identify and address the risk and protective factors related to gender-based violence. Gender-based violence cannot be eliminated until the most marginalized are placed at the center of analysis and intervention, as both partners and leaders.

All people have social identities and status characteristics that shape an individual's likelihood of experiencing violence. These include age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, sex characteristics, nationality and citizenship status, race and ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic class and caste, employment status, and marital status. Status characteristics can also be conferred through factors like geographic location or by membership in a vulnerable group, such as migrants, incarcerated persons, or persons engaged in trafficked or

exploitative labor. For instance, forced migrants and internally displaced persons experience substantially higher rates of gender-based violence than individuals who are displaced, dislocated, or lack stable immigration status. Similarly, incarcerated persons and persons with disabilities living in facilities face disproportionate rates of gender-based violence due to institutional conditions that create vulnerabilities.

Approach: We will increase research, policy efforts, and programmatic investments to prevent and respond to forms of gender-based violence that disproportionately impact individuals from marginalized groups. Examples of our approach include:

Policy and Diplomacy

- Amplifying, elevating, and including individuals from marginalized groups in bilateral, multilateral, and public diplomacy efforts related to gender-based violence prevention and response.
- Partnering with survivors and local organizations to ensure that any gender-based violence-related policy is designed with and for survivors and local organizations from different social identities, particularly those traditionally excluded.
- Leading and coordinating the Trilateral Working Group on Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls with the Governments of Mexico and Canada to exchange information about policies, programs, and promising practices to prevent and respond to violence against Indigenous women and girls through increased access to justice and services, with a human rights and culturally responsive approach.
- Promoting that gender-based violence risk, mitigation, and response policies and programs are inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities, as committed to at the 2022 Global Disability Summit.

Programming

- Selecting and targeting interventions based on the stage of development along the lifespan, to include early intervention programs that focus on youth in advancing gender-based violence prevention efforts, and interventions targeted to the unique needs and vulnerabilities of older adults.
- Collaborating with survivors, local organizations representing survivors, and individuals from marginalized groups to conduct assessments and analyses in the local context to determine how services need to be updated and adapted to be responsive to members of these groups' needs (e.g., ensuring services and resources are appropriate to the cultural and linguistic context, and are accessible to persons with disabilities and other marginalized populations).
- Devoting more resources to training cohorts along the gender-based violence referral system (in both humanitarian and development settings and including healthcare and social welfare workers, police, and lawyers) on first-line responses and providing respectful, unbiased, non-judgmental care regardless of social identity. This includes the ability and prioritization of connecting survivors to other services, whether healthcare, legal, children's services, services needed for persons with disabilities, or others.
- Working with survivors and local organizations representing various social identities to implement survivor-led healing and restorative justice work.

PILLAR II: INTEGRATING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE ACROSS SECTORS

Preventing and responding to all forms of gender-based violence is a cornerstone of the U.S. government's commitment to promote democracy, peace, and economic growth; advance health and human rights; and further gender equity and equality. In our work to implement the *U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally* over the last 10 years, we have learned that addressing gender-based violence must be both a dedicated area of focus as well as a priority that is integrated across U.S. foreign policy and assistance. Building on one of the goals of the 2016 iteration of this strategy, "Integrate gender-based violence prevention and response efforts into U.S. government work," Pillar II will outline the implementation of this goal in the 2022 policy context.

Gender-based violence prevention and response are essential and relevant across U.S. foreign assistance and policy priorities. Pillar II emphasizes the need for the integration of gender-based violence across thematic policy priorities, including identifying specific gender-based violence goals and laying out specific policy, programs, and other diplomatic actions the United States is taking or commits to taking to help prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

Gender-Based Violence Interventions

Gender-Based Violence Prevention: Addresses social norms, structures, attitudes, behaviors, and skills at the individual, interpersonal, community, and structural levels to stop gender-based violence before it starts or to reduce the severity and impact of violence that is already happening.

Gender-Based Violence Response: Addresses the short- and long-term consequences of gender-based violence by providing high-quality, accessible, and appropriate support, advocacy, and services for survivors.

Gender-Based Violence Risk Mitigation: Seeks to identify and reduce the risk of gender-based violence by implementing measures to address factors that may increase gender-based violence that results from participation in a program, service, or other initiative. This can also include efforts to reduce the risk of gender-based violence in settings where it is often escalated, such as in conflict settings, humanitarian emergencies, or natural disasters.

The approaches outlined in this strategy aim to address gender-based violence across the spectrum of prevention, mitigation, and response with the ultimate goal of stopping violence before it occurs.

Objective 2.1: Peace, Security, and Democracy

Action: Consider and incorporate gender-based violence risks, prevention, and response as part of our national security and human rights efforts to promote peace, security, and democracy around the world.

Problem: Women and girls bear unique and often disproportionate impacts of conflict, including deliberate targets and attacks with various forms of violence including, but not limited to: physical and sexual violence; torture; mutilation; child, early, and forced marriage; sexual slavery; forced pregnancy; reproductive coercion; non-governmental forced recruitment into or service to armed forces; and some forms of human trafficking. In many contexts, gender-based violence is perpetrated with impunity by security forces, both state and non-state actors, leaving survivors with limited options for reporting their experiences and making it harder to collect comprehensive data on security force abuse. Conflict-related sexual violence may constitute an atrocity crime in certain circumstances and is frequently perpetrated by men against men and boys as well.¹⁷ In post-conflict settings, women, girls, and gender non-conforming individuals frequently experience high levels of violence and insecurity. Gender-based violence is also frequently used by violent extremist organizations to terrorize and control populations, and they often exploit traditional gender roles and norms to recruit and radicalize individuals. Most survivors never receive formal justice, and instead face considerable challenges in gaining access to the medical, psychosocial, legal, and economic support that is necessary to help them heal, recover, and rebuild their lives. This includes challenges faced by survivors of gender-based violence related to reintegration into their families and communities as they often face stigma and rejection as a result of the sexual violence perpetrated against them. The COVID-19 pandemic further diminished humanitarian access and diverted resources away from life-saving services that addressed gender-based violence and supported survivors, for displaced women and girls in particular.

Preventing and responding to all forms of gender-based violence is also essential to building and maintaining strong democracies and preventing atrocities and violent conflict. States with lower rates of gender-based violence are the most secure, peaceful, and democratic.¹⁸ Women politicians, peacebuilders, civil society leaders, and human rights defenders often face disproportionate risks of gender-based violence online and offline, and this violence can cause women and girls to withdraw from public life or deter them from participating in the first place. Authoritarian regimes deliberately seek to perpetuate regressive social norms to increase their own hold on power, often in part by exacerbating gender inequalities and restricting the rights of women and LGBTQI+ persons.

Forms of Gender-Based Violence

Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: Incidents or patterns of sexual violence that occur in conflict or post-conflict situations with a direct or indirect link to conflict. Conflict-related sexual violence may include rape, sexual slavery, sex trafficking, forced pregnancy, forced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity, against individuals of all gender identities. Depending on the circumstances, sexual violence could constitute a war crime, crime against humanity, or constituent act of genocide, and may therefore constitute a crime that is punishable under international law.

¹⁷ [UN, Handbook for United Nations Field Missions on Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence](#)

¹⁸ [Brookings Report: Democracy, gender equality, and security](#)



Photo Credit: Crystal Stafford/USAID

Approach: We will work to prioritize gender-based violence prevention and response across peace, security, and democracy policies; multilateral engagements; and programs. We do not accept conflict-related sexual violence or any other form of gender-based violence as an inevitable byproduct of war; rather, we understand that its prevention is an essential element of peacebuilding. Nor do we accept that gender-based violence, in its online and offline manifestations, should be the cost of participation in political or public life in times of relative peace. Women’s safety and leadership, and the incorporation of a gender perspective are necessary to ensure long-term peace, security, and democracy. Examples of our approach include:

Policy and Diplomacy

- Building on U.S. leadership as the first country in the world with a comprehensive domestic law on Women, Peace, and Security,¹⁹ and subsequent release of the *U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security*, to elevate the protection of the human rights of women and girls and their access to aid and safety from violence, abuse, and exploitation around the world as essential to their ability to meaningfully contribute locally, nationally, and globally and to participate in democracy and public life.
- Enhancing the integration of gender-based violence prevention and response efforts into atrocity prevention and violent conflict prevention and mitigation efforts. This will include efforts related to the implementation of the *Global Fragility Act* through the *U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability*, the *Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act*, and the *U.S. Strategy to Anticipate, Prevent, and Respond to Atrocities*. Through the whole-of-government Atrocity Prevention Task Force, we will ensure that gender issues, particularly conflict-related sexual violence, include monitoring, prevention, response, and accountability, are integrated across conflict and atrocity prevention efforts and internal training.

¹⁹ [U.S. Congress, Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017](#)

- Effectively utilizing multilateral tools and engagements with United Nations Special Representatives, Special Rapporteurs, and Independent Experts to advance the human rights of women, girls, and other at-risk populations to gender-based violence in conflict settings. We will revitalize our leadership as the lead penholder on conflict-related sexual violence in the United Nations Security Council and leverage our re-engagement in the Human Rights Council to work with partners to strengthen the implementation of existing conventions and international agreements on conflict-related sexual violence; proactively speak out against this crime wherever it occurs; strengthen timely documentation that respects the rights and needs of survivors; provide urgent assistance to survivors; and hold those responsible accountable. Through U.S. participation in high-level talks regarding our responses to and prevention of atrocities with allies and partners, including the International Atrocity Prevention Working Group, we will coordinate and advance joint diplomatic efforts that center human rights and address gender-based violence, including all forms of sexual violence, that could constitute atrocity crimes.
- Ensuring robust reporting on gender-based violence as a human rights policy priority through the Department of State's annual Human Rights Reports and the Trafficking in Persons Report.
- Prioritizing the importance of preventing and responding to gender-based violence as a democracy, human rights, and governance issue, including through Summit for Democracy efforts; prioritizing the needs and inclusion of survivors and prevention of gender-based violence as a part of all democracy work; and working to empower women as advocates for democracy and good governance.
- Building the institutional capacity to analyze, mitigate, prevent, and respond to gender-based violence within national and regional security sectors through partnership with U.S. security forces and other nations.

Programming

- Investing in programs that implement the *U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security* to enhance meaningful participation in stabilization, peacebuilding, and countering violent extremism, and that address the ways in which gender-based violence factors into engagement, sustainability, and inclusion of peace, security, and democracy programs.
- Engaging with the security sector to address gender-based violence across implementation of peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, or other security programs to improve the sustainability and inclusion of interventions.
- Strengthening and funding local, grassroots, and women- and survivor-led civil society efforts to investigate and document conflict-related sexual violence using a survivor-centered approach for the purposes of pursuing truth and justice for victims and survivors, and accountability for violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law.

Objective 2.2: Humanitarian Assistance

Action: Support all people to be free from gender-based violence in emergencies and ensure gender-based violence survivors have access to quality services from the onset of emergencies.

Problem: Around the world, women, girls, and gender non-conforming individuals face daily risks to their safety, mental and physical health, and sense of empowerment. During and after emergencies, these threats become more acute. Destruction, flight, and upheaval erode the social protections, support systems, and access to services that are often insufficient even in times of stability. Furthermore, rates of gender-based violence increase in emergencies, and lack of accountability for perpetrators in emergency and non-emergency settings normalizes gender-based violence and further erodes prevention efforts.

Women and children civilians are most severely affected by conflict and environmental disasters, and research shows that gender-based violence, most notably intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and sexual exploitation and abuse, increases in emergencies and occurs during all stages of a humanitarian crisis. Despite this, emergency response efforts addressing the specific risks women and girls face in times of crisis could be better prioritized or resourced from the earliest stages. Moreover, such responses often lack the trained staff and accessible infrastructure needed to ensure holistic gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse prevention, response, and risk mitigation.

Approach: Through continued support for and investment in the *Safe from the Start ReVisioned* initiative, we will work to advance an approach in humanitarian responses that addresses discrimination and gender norms; promotes women's and girl's leadership; prioritizes support and advocacy for gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention, and survivor-centered response programming; and more equitably allocates funding, influence, and decision-making power to women and girls within humanitarian response systems. Examples of our approach include:

Policy and Diplomacy

- Increasing accountability for gender-based violence against women, girls, and gender non-conforming individuals in emergencies. Advocating for and supporting collective action at the country, regional, and global level to ensure humanitarian response leadership prioritizes women and girls and funds gender-based violence, sexual exploitation, and abuse prevention; response programming; and risk mitigation across the entirety of the humanitarian program cycle process, coordination bodies, and interagency engagement.
- Strengthening the broader humanitarian system leadership on gender-based violence, sexual exploitation, and abuse prevention; mitigation; and response, including through enhanced humanitarian interagency coordination, leveraging interagency platforms, as well as strengthening institutionalization, agency and senior management leadership, and policy work.
- Driving increased representation of and leadership by women and girls, specifically women's organizations and organizations led by members of marginalized groups, including LGBTQI+ persons, in decision-making structures and the delivery of humanitarian aid.
- Advocating for all humanitarian actors to prioritize steps to mitigate gender-based violence risks and address the rights and unique needs of women, girls, and gender non-conforming individuals.

- Maintaining a leadership role in multi-stakeholder initiatives, specifically the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies,²⁰ to advance collective action that contributes to humanitarian system reform that prioritizes and resources gender-based violence programming.

Programming

- Bringing to scale effective gender-based violence interventions at the field level; increasing the impact, number, accessibility, and reach of quality, dedicated gender-based violence prevention and response interventions in all types of emergencies.
- Prioritizing, supporting, and resourcing protection from sexual exploitation and abuse efforts – including appropriate tracking mechanisms, coordination, staffing, risk mitigation, prevention, and survivor-centered response programming – as life-saving and essential from the earliest stages of emergency response efforts.
- Improving gender-based violence expertise by bringing to scale the existing capacity of organizations to prioritize, design, staff, implement, and coordinate gender-based violence prevention and response programming and risk mitigation.
- Increasing partnerships with women’s organizations and organizations led by members of marginalized groups to build their capacity and leverage their expertise as first responders and frontline workers to guide rather than simply receive aid.
- Integrating gender-based violence interventions with humanitarian sectors that provide basic services, such as health, water security, sanitation, hygiene, and nutrition.

Objective 2.3: Justice and Accountability

Action: Ensure survivors have access to justice, leadership in restorative justice models, and needed services while strengthening efforts to hold those responsible for all forms of gender-based violence to account and prioritizing accountability as a means to prevention.

Problem: Impunity for acts of gender-based violence remains widespread and serves as a significant barrier to reporting and recovery for survivors and in the prevention of future violence. Survivors can be re-traumatized through the legal system when law enforcement or judicial personnel do not provide necessary support, and justice and accountability processes may be unsafe or impossible to access in cases where those perpetrating the violence are also those in power. Accountability mechanisms for security forces and police perpetrating gender-based violence remain lacking. Survivors often lack knowledge about their rights or how to navigate legal processes. Survivors and bystanders face stigma for reporting crimes; they may be blamed for crimes committed against them, not believed, or ostracized by families or society. LGBTQI+ survivors may fear persecution in countries where same-sex relationships are criminalized, not recognized by law, or culturally stigmatized.²¹ Persons with disabilities face heightened challenges to accessing justice because of stigma, physical access barriers, and perceived lack of credibility, among other reasons. Some survivors of rape are forced to marry their rapists. Survivor and witness protection is often woefully insufficient, so survivors often cannot seek justice without publicly revealing their status or putting themselves at greater risk of violence. Other barriers include lack of time, money, legal assistance, transportation, and other resources required to move a case forward. For these and other reasons, many survivors do not feel they can report crimes through formal legal channels.

²⁰ [Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies](#)

²¹ [USAID, Equal Rights, Equal Justice: Toolkit for Addressing Gender-Based Violence Through Rule of Law Projects](#)

Across conflict and non-conflict contexts, transparent and survivor-centered accountability processes are critical to delivering survivors the justice they deserve and improving future prevention. While U.S. leadership, through diplomacy and programs, has helped address barriers to justice for survivors, in many places accountability mechanisms are still stalled by lack of legislation criminalizing certain types of gender-based violence, as well as by perceptions among police officers, judges, and prosecutors that gender-based violence is a private family matter. This inaccurate perception continues to place individuals in unnecessary danger. United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, and 2467²² bolster the resolve to end impunity, but implementation of these commitments remains challenging, and justice and appropriate service provisions for survivors are too often the exception rather than the rule.

Approach: We will support efforts to ensure that survivors of gender-based violence have access to justice and those responsible for gender-based violence are held accountable through judicial processes that fully respect fair trial guarantees. We will prioritize the meaningful representation of women as criminal justice practitioners, the training of law enforcement and justice sector personnel in handling gender-based violence cases in a trauma-informed manner, and appropriate survivor and witness protection and support. Justice and accountability processes must be informed by the voices and perspectives of women, girls, and gender non-conforming individuals, and must include consideration of the needs of survivors of gender-based violence, including psychosocial, medical, and livelihood support. Examples of our approach include:

Policy and Diplomacy

- In line with the *U.S. National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality*, bolstering accountability mechanisms for those responsible for gender-based violence and supporting the passage and implementation of stronger national laws and policies and international frameworks through our bilateral and multilateral diplomacy.
- Promoting fair, equitable, accessible, and inclusive justice systems that increase survivors' access to justice, including redress and protection related to gender-based violence and access to legal representation. This includes working with partners and allies to encourage reform of discriminatory standards across justice systems, including gender bias in law enforcement and justice sectors. It also includes training of judges, defense lawyers, and prosecutors on gender-based violence and trauma-informed approaches, awareness of case law, changes in the law, and disposition of cases.
- Promoting justice systems, including transitional justice processes²³ and mechanisms, that include women and other marginalized populations' meaningful participation, allow for women and survivors to define and shape what justice looks like in their specific contexts, and respond to the gendered dimensions and impacts of human rights violations and abuses.
- Coordinating with multilateral partners to strengthen accountability for those responsible for conflict-related sexual violence, including when committed by security forces. This will include continued support for and coordination with the Office of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict to identify how best to implement existing international commitments relating to accountability for conflict-related sexual violence. The United States will also continue working with allies and partners to coordinate accountability mechanisms for conflict-related sexual violence and to ensure that accountability or transitional justice mechanisms are designed to address gender-based violence and reduce impunity.

²² [United Nations Security Council Resolutions](#)

²³ [Department of State, Transitional Justice Policy Paper Series](#)

- Promoting accountability for conflict-related sexual violence through the use of sanctions and non-sanctions accountability tools, including those pertaining to visa restrictions and security assistance. This ensures equal consideration of and attention to relevant gender-based violence designations as a serious human rights abuse under existing authorities and accountability tools, as well as strengthening U.S. Government capacity to collect, identify, and assess information on gender-based violence including conflict-related sexual violence, such as by consulting with local civil society organizations, taking into account the importance of safely and ethically gathering evidence from survivors to support the use of such accountability tools.

Programming

- In support of a range of formal and informal transitional justice processes, advancing civil society efforts to investigate and document conflict-related sexual violence for the purposes of pursuing truth and justice for victims and survivors, and accountability for any international atrocity crimes committed.
- Working to support criminal and civil judicial systems that address gender-based violence; support appropriate perpetrator accountability; that support the establishment and strengthening of legal frameworks for the effective investigation, prosecution, and detention of those convicted as appropriate; that ensure criminal and civil justice institutions provide safe and secure access for alleged victims and witnesses and adequate survivor and witness protection where needed; and that ensure public education about gender-based violence laws, including consequences and avenues for victim redress, is widely disseminated and accessible to all.
- Expanding avenues for reporting gender-based violence and obtaining assistance to increase accessibility, including for persons with disabilities, older survivors, those living in rural areas, and youth.



Photo Credit: Allison DiVincenzo, USAID

Objective 2.4: Economic Empowerment

Action: Address gender-based violence prevention and response so that women, girls, and gender non-conforming individuals can fully participate in the economy and experience economic security.

Problem: Gender-based violence is a direct threat to economic development and growth. Experiences of gender-based violence at home, online, in the work environment, and while commuting can restrict women and gender non-conforming individuals from feeling safe and protected in their professions as well as from fully participating in the global economy. Sexual harassment and abuse can negatively impact women's abilities to receive promotions, equal pay, mentorship, and advance their careers and businesses, particularly in fields that are traditionally male dominated, as illuminated by the global #MeToo movement. Without efforts to make work safe and equitable, workforce participation may open women and gender non-conforming individuals to work environment violence and harassment, especially in informal, casual, and short-term positions where workers are most vulnerable and may lack sufficient bargaining power, legal and social safety nets, and other protections such as employer policies and regulations. Care workers, the vast majority of whom are women and are often migrants, face increased risks of gender-based violence when providing care in their own homes or the homes of others. This violence threatens their safety and exacerbates their already precarious economic position. As women earn income and defy entrenched social norms that strongly limit their roles to the domestic sphere, men may use violence as an attempt to control their family members. Discriminatory land and property laws can exacerbate gender-based violence, particularly for older women and widows, because they may leave women economically dependent on their perpetrators.

Those with heightened economic dependence on others, including persons with disabilities, migrant workers, and victims/survivors of human trafficking, face high risks of gender-based violence, including the withholding of economic resources as a form of coercion. Migrant workers are especially vulnerable to economic abuse, including human trafficking. These risks are amplified for particularly isolated or economically marginalized migrant groups, such as care workers, and those impacted by conflict and crises where economic insecurity and limited ability to meet basic needs heightens the risk of sexual exploitation, abuse, and trafficking.

Approach: We will work to strengthen the integration of gender-based violence prevention and response into programs and policies designed to increase labor force participation and economic growth, including through engagement and partnership with the private sector. Examples of our approach include:

Policy and Diplomacy

- Incorporating gender-based violence prevention and response into U.S. women's economic security policy. The *U.S. National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality* highlights the linkage between economic empowerment and gender-based violence and promotes quality, safe, and decent work that provides fair wages and labor protections from gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, while dismantling systemic gender barriers and ensuring freedom from gender-based violence as a precondition to women's economic security.
- Encouraging the incorporation of core principles of International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 189 on domestic workers and ILO Convention 190 on violence and harassment into international assistance programming, strategies, policies, and action plans, including U.S. investments through international financial institutions, the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, and global activities supported by the U.S. government.

- Assisting governments to enact or strengthen the implementation of laws, policies, and regulations against gender-based violence in the workplace and in support of workplace protections; to support survivors and witnesses of workplace harassment or abuse to report such occurrences without fear, penalty, or risk of retaliation; and to enable employers and employees to effectively apply those regulations in their work.

Programming

- Advancing the economic security of women and girls globally through efforts such as the Gender Equity and Equality Action (GEEA) Fund, including through addressing systemic barriers such as gender-based violence that prevent women's full economic participation.
- Conducting gender and equity analyses and gender-based violence risk assessments across economic empowerment programming to mitigate and prevent gender-based violence for program participants. Programs that advance the economic empowerment of women and gender non-conforming individuals is crucial, but the risk of gender-based violence must be properly mitigated.
- Partnering with private and public sector actors and supporting workers' efforts to shift power dynamics in work environments that normalize or tolerate gender-based violence by enabling workers to collectively hold employers accountable for developing, implementing, and enforcing workplace policies that prevent and respond to gender-based violence; and by providing workers affected by gender-based violence with safe channels, peer support, and institutional backing to safely report their experiences and pursue recourse.
- Investing in safe, inclusive, and accessible infrastructure (e.g., transportation, electricity, care facilities, lighting).
- Supporting innovations in economic empowerment efforts which bring awareness to employers on best practices for working with survivors and provide financial intermediaries with gender-based violence awareness and risk mitigation strategies for micro-enterprise efforts.

Objective 2.5: Education

Action: Support partner countries to develop safer, more equitable education systems that address gender norms, ensure all learners and educators are treated with dignity and respect, and condemn violence and discrimination in any form.

Problem: Learners and educators need to be safe and supported in pre-primary through higher education. The relationships that learners form with peers and adults in education settings can be protective, particularly when there are high levels of violence or instability in the community or home. Safe learning environments provide essential services such as school feeding programs and service referrals for survivors of gender-based violence. However, research shows a prevalence of three types of school-related gender-based violence: 1) bullying and other forms of non-sexual intimidation; 2) corporal punishment; and 3) sexual violence, including harassment and abuse.²⁴ The risk of experiencing school-related gender-based violence is further amplified when individuals are marginalized in other ways as well, such as displaced persons, persons with disabilities, LGBTQI+ persons, and members of historically marginalized racial and ethnic groups. Gender-based violence, and school-related gender-based violence in particular, impedes progress toward global education goals, as evidence shows that physical, emotional, and mental safety is a prerequisite for learning.

²⁴ Bullying and corporal punishment can be forms of gendered violence as they are often rooted in widely held discriminatory gender norms and practices and enforced by unequal power dynamics; [Together for Girls, School-Related Gender-Based Violence: Data + Solutions to Prevent Violence in Schools](#)

Violent conflict and crisis, including climate and health-related events, can lead to extended and recurrent school closures. When not in school, girls and young women, displaced children and youth, persons with disabilities, and members of other marginalized populations, are subjected to increased psychosocial and physical risks, such as child/youth sexual abuse and exploitation; child, early and forced marriage; unplanned pregnancy; forced labor; child trafficking; and recruitment to gangs and militant groups.

Approach: We will invest in education systems to address gender-based violence in and out of schools. These education systems can provide safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environments, and equip learners and educators with the knowledge, skills, and mindsets to become gender-based violence advocates within their communities, challenge harmful gender norms, and create more just and peaceful societies. Examples of our approach include:

Policy and Diplomacy

- Ensuring adolescent girls are educated, healthy, socially and economically empowered, and free from violence and discrimination including through the Education 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda ²⁵ and the G7 Declaration on Girls' Education: Recovering from COVID-19 and Unlocking Agenda 2030.²⁶
- Partnering with local actors to create safe, violence-free, and inclusive school environments that empower individuals to learn through the *U.S. Government Strategy on International Basic Education*.

Programming

- Leveraging USAID's Global Partnership for Education to continue strengthening global education systems and improve learning outcomes, particularly for the most marginalized groups, including girls, LGBTQI+ communities, and children with disabilities, so all children can benefit from the transformative effects of education.
- Supporting local education leaders to contribute to the development, implementation, and enforcement of policies to prevent and address gender-based violence in schools, as part of comprehensive and holistic protection efforts.
- Engaging youth leaders to advocate for improved practices and attitudes in their communities to prevent gender-based violence. Partnering with locally based organizations that represent youth, women and girls, LGBTQI+ persons, persons with disabilities, and others to work with communities to challenge gender norms and link to post-gender-based violence services.
- Building the capacity of educators, parents, and community organizations to identify and report gender-based violence and school-related gender-based violence, as well as to monitor schools' performance and provide social accountability for school-related gender-based violence.
- Investing in safe, inclusive, and accessible infrastructure (e.g., transportation, dormitories, teacher housing, and latrines).

²⁵ [UNESCO, Leading SDG 4 - Education 2030](#)

²⁶ [Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, Policy Paper: Declaration on girls' education: recovering from COVID-19 and unlocking agenda 2030](#)

- Improving methods for confidential reporting of gender-based violence, including school-related gender-based violence, and routinely collecting, analyzing, and disseminating age- and sex-disaggregated data about prevalence and types of school-related gender-based violence to inform data-driven, responsive programming.
- Increasing the availability of online education about gender-based violence prevention and response in education programming.

Objective 2.6: Health

Action: Address gender-based violence in health programs and policies supported by the United States, including humanitarian and emergency responses, to ensure access to comprehensive, survivor-centered, trauma-informed health services for all populations as well as access to primary prevention programming. Ensure that health is appropriately addressed in gender-based violence programs and policies.

Problem: Gender-based violence has significant and long-lasting impacts on physical and mental health, including injury, early or unintended pregnancy and pregnancy complications, sexually transmitted infections, increased risk of HIV acquisition, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and even death. Addressing gender-based violence is a global public health imperative, and the health sector plays a key role in reducing the prevalence and impact of gender-based violence through primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. The healthcare sector is uniquely positioned to advance prevention and response efforts, including through community-based programming to prevent gender-based violence, the identification of violence, provision of first-line support and post-violence clinical care, collection of forensic evidence for pursuing justice, and integration of survivor-centered services and supports into broader health programming. The healthcare system serves as an important referral point for connecting survivors to services and supports to address their diverse needs, which may often be primary barriers to optimal health outcomes and can address the conditions that may put individuals at risk of repeated violence or perpetration.



Photo Credit: Andrés Palacio

However, survivors and those at risk for gender-based violence face numerous barriers to accessing services, including stigma and discrimination (particularly among members of historically marginalized groups); lack of physical access to services in geographically isolated areas or during humanitarian crises or public health emergencies; lack of necessary commodities at service delivery sites; and poor quality of services. These risks can re-traumatize survivors and lead them to disengage from the entire healthcare system. Despite being the first or even only point of contact for many survivors, few healthcare providers receive sufficient training or support on how to identify cases of gender-based violence, or on the provision of survivor-centered, trauma-informed care or immediate post-violence clinical care. Furthermore, linkages to other health, social, and legal services such as mental health, child protection, psychosocial support, and sexual and reproductive health services are often weak or absent.

Approach: We will work to engage with global, national, regional, and municipal health entities to prioritize the integration of health and gender-based violence programming policies, strategies, plans, budgets, and legislation to help ensure coordinated system approaches to promote the integration of high-quality gender-based violence prevention and response in health services, health programming at the community level, and national health policies that are accessible, appropriate, and acceptable to all populations. Examples of our approach include:

Policy and Diplomacy

- Supporting the incorporation of gender-based violence prevention and response considerations, including essential sexual and reproductive health services, into health-related multilateral, bilateral, and diplomatic engagements and negotiations, including United Nations resolutions and regional-level negotiations. Ensuring health and gender-based violence are concurrently addressed in relevant global strategies and national policies, guidelines, and laws.
- Advocating for the integration of gender-based violence prevention and response considerations into health system responses, including during the COVID-19 pandemic and other future pandemics.
- Addressing critical policy, programmatic, and structural barriers, including gender-based violence, in HIV service access, uptake, and continuity, as highlighted in the PEPFAR Country and Regional Operational Plan Guidance and updated Strategic Direction,²⁷ and building on our work educating governments and health systems on health-based gender-based violence care minimum standards.

Programming

- Continuing to support key United Nations agencies, funds, and programs including UNFPA, UNICEF, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), WHO, and the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), all of which contribute to accelerating global progress toward preventing and responding to gender-based violence globally and addressing key health and gender-related Sustainable Development Goals.
- Building resources and best practices to support countries in creating a health and care workforce that is skilled and supported in addressing gender-based violence. This includes improving the ability of providers (including first responders and community health workers) to understand and recognize gender-based violence, appropriately respond to disclosures of gender-based violence in a compassionate and non-judgmental

²⁷ [Department of State, Reimagining PEPFAR at 20 to End the HIV/AIDS Pandemic by 2030](#)

manner, incorporate principles of Do No Harm in services, provide appropriate referrals, and support the respectful treatment of clients, as well as their safety from violence. Beyond training, assisting countries in identifying best practices for creating an adaptable and effective health workforce, which ranges from investing in quality management and recruitment, to policies to protect the health and care workforce, including from experiencing gender-based violence themselves.

- Delivering quality first-line support and clinical care for gender-based violence survivors that is aligned with WHO clinical and policy guidelines and standards, including prevention and response services for children, youth, and LGBTQI+ persons. This also includes addressing health provider mistreatment of pregnant patients during labor and delivery.
- Explicitly including health in gender-based violence strategies, policies, and guidelines to improve the prevention of and response to gender-based violence, particularly to deliver mental health services as a gender-based violence prevention strategy, including for men; deliver psychosocial services and sexual and reproductive health services for gender-based violence survivors; and ensure that services are child-, youth-, and LGBTQI+-friendly and accessible to persons with disabilities.
- Grounding programs and policies in the best available evidence and existing guidelines, including continuing to align integrated gender-based violence and health programming in humanitarian and conflict settings with the *Interagency Field Manual on Reproductive Health in Humanitarian Settings* and the *Interagency Minimum Standards for Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies Programming* and providing services outlined in the *Minimum Initial Service Package for Sexual and Reproductive Health in Crisis Situations*.

Objective 2.7: Climate, Environment, and Resilience

Action: Anticipate and address the increased risk of gender-based violence in climate crises and natural disasters, and ensure our responses are inclusive of survivors and those at increased risk for experiencing gender-based violence, including as they access and protect natural resources and deploy climate solutions.

Problem: The climate crisis impacts a myriad of facets of life for communities around the world. Women and girls in particular are often disproportionately impacted due to their unequal access to and control over resources. Climate change and environmental challenges are a threat to global food security due to production disruptions, interrupted transportation, and diminished food safety, among other causes. In contexts where women are responsible for feeding the family, they may be at increased risk of gender-based violence during times of food shortage if they are seen as not fulfilling this role. Women may also have to resort to risky behaviors to procure food for their families, exposing themselves to a higher risk of experiencing gender-based violence. Climate-related migration and forced displacement compound the risk of violence, including gender-based violence and human trafficking. Women and girls are especially vulnerable to these harms, including on migration routes, in refugee camps and temporary housing facilities, and in host communities.

The compounding effects of the climate crisis, including household stresses and community-level conflicts, also contribute to state fragility, conflict, and displacement. In turn, these consequences have been shown to increase various forms of gender-based violence.²⁸ For instance, water scarcity exacerbated by climate change increases the likelihood of women and girls traveling to farther or unfamiliar destinations to collect water for their families, which heightens their risk of experiencing gender-based violence. Additionally, food insecurity exacerbated by

²⁸ [GBV AoR HELPDESH, Climate Change and Gender-Based Violence: What Are the Links?](#)

droughts and floods (which are worsened by climate change) creates pressure for families to reduce expenses, leading to rising rates of child, early, and forced marriages as a coping mechanism.²⁹ In the aftermath of natural and climate-related disasters, rates of intimate partner violence have been shown to increase, and unsafe conditions in temporary shelters can expose women, girls, and gender non-conforming persons to gender-based violence. LGBTQI+ persons have reported feeling unsafe or discriminated against in evacuation shelters.³⁰

Gender-based violence is harmful to efforts that seek to address the climate crisis and environmental challenges, hindering women's and girls' crucial leadership and action in this space. For example, women environmental defenders are at high risk of gender-based violence, including online harassment and abuse, in addition to other types of violence faced by their male peers. Gender-based violence is used to intimidate and undermine their credibility and is often overlooked in broader conversations about violence against environmental defenders. Without the free and full participation of these women, climate solutions are less likely to be sustainable and effective. This detrimental feedback loop, in which the climate crisis exacerbates gender-based violence, and gender-based violence hinders efforts to combat the climate crisis, must be interrupted.

Approach: We will work to better integrate our foreign policy and programming efforts that focus on gender-based violence prevention, mitigation, and response with those addressing climate change and environmental challenges. We will do this work in partnership with local organizations, including Indigenous organizations and other ethnic groups. Examples of our approach include:

Policy and Diplomacy

- Working within the U.S. government and with external allies and partners to address the disproportionate impacts of the climate crisis on women and girls while simultaneously empowering women and girls as leaders in overcoming the climate crisis, as outlined by the *U.S. National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality's* commitment to “promote gender equity in mitigating and responding to climate change.”
- Advancing the integration of gender-based violence and climate issues across U.S. government policy efforts, including multilateral and bilateral engagements and negotiations, and through the efforts of U.S. Missions.
- Amplifying and partnering with women and girls, men and boys, and gender non-conforming individuals to develop solutions to gender-based violence and safety challenges exacerbated by climate stressors and to contribute to gender norms change efforts.
- Reinforcing existing international policy instruments addressing gender-based violence and working toward integrating gender-based violence considerations into relevant climate-related forum efforts and processes.

Programming

- Investing in programming that builds and acts on the evidence base around the intersections between gender-based violence and the climate crisis, including addressing the displacement and scarcity of food; water security, sanitation, and hygiene services; and other natural resources as drivers of gender-based violence.

²⁹ [IUCN, Gender-based violence and environment linkages: The violence of inequality](#)

³⁰ [IUCN, Gender-based violence and environment linkages: The violence of inequality](#)

- Accounting for and mitigating gender-based violence risks in climate, food security, disaster relief, resilience, and environmental programming and in our efforts to empower women, girls, and gender non-conforming individuals as leaders in addressing the climate crisis.
- Investing in programming that addresses the risk of gender-based violence in spheres related to food and water security.

Objective 2.8: Technology and Innovation

Action: Ensure all people have equal opportunity to access technology and to benefit from the digital economy; enjoy freedom of expression and association and privacy rights online and in other digital contexts; and safely participate in civic, political, educational, economic, and social activities without experiencing technology-facilitated gender-based violence from the use and misuse of information and communication technologies, including emerging and future technologies.

Problem: The digital world holds immense potential to amplify work to promote human rights and address gender-based violence. At the same time, social media platforms and other digital technologies have given rise to new forms and manifestations of gender-based violence both online and offline. They have also exacerbated preexisting forms of gender-based violence through the scale, speed, and reach with which information, images, and videos can flow. Moreover, those who design, and in some countries or regions access and use, communications technologies are disproportionately men.

While more data is needed to accurately measure the extent of technology-facilitated gender-based violence globally, studies suggest that 38% of women globally personally experience online violence and 85% of women witness violence against other women online.³¹ The consequences of technology-facilitated gender-based violence straddle both the physical and digital worlds. Gender-based online harassment and abuse includes a wide range of acts that are amplified or enabled by social media, technology platforms, and devices to control, attack, and silence women and girls, with unique implications for persons with disabilities, LGBTQI+ persons, and racial, ethnic, or religious minorities. Social media presents an especially unsafe space: 68% of reported online abuse of women and girls takes place on social media platforms.³² Experiencing online harassment and abuse can cause survivors to self-censor or limit online activity and step back from leadership roles, opportunities, and civic participation, leading to broader political, social, and economic exclusion. Acts of gender-based online harassment and abuse threaten the safety and ability of individuals to access educational, health, and social services as well as exercise their rights online and offline. Women leaders – from journalists to politicians and activists – face a particular risk of online abuse and harassment. The COVID-19 pandemic caused more activities to move to online spaces, which has only exacerbated this problem and its impacts, in parallel with the rise in other forms of gender-based violence during this public-health crisis.

³¹ [The Economist Intelligence Unit, Measuring the prevalence of online violence against women](#)

³² [World Wide Web Foundation, The online crisis facing women and girls threatens global progress on gender equality](#)



Photo Credit: USAID

Forms of Gender-Based Violence

Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence: A threat or act of violence committed, assisted, aggravated, and amplified in part or fully by using information and communication technologies or digital media that is disproportionately targeted at women, girls, and gender non-conforming individuals. It is a continuum of multiple, recurring, and interrelated forms of gender-based violence that takes place both online and offline. Examples can include online harassment and abuse; non-consensual distribution of intimate digital images; cyberstalking; sextortion; doxing; malicious deep fakes; livestreamed sexual violence of children, youth, and adults; rape and death threats; disinformation; intimate partner violence; and recruitment into trafficking and abusive labor.

Approach: We will work to tailor U.S. engagements and programs in ways that help women, girls, and gender non-conforming individuals around the world be safer from gender-based violence that occurs through or with technology, so they can enjoy the dividends of digital tools and reach their full potential in meaningfully participating across their communities, societies, and economies. We will work to identify and create resources and recourse for survivors of technology-facilitated gender-based violence, enabling reporting actions by platforms and enhanced accountability. Examples of our approach include:

Policy and Diplomacy

- Bringing together countries, international organizations, civil society, and the private sector to better prioritize, understand, prevent, and address the growing scourge of technology-facilitated gender-based violence through the Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse and the domestically focused White House Task Force to Address Online Harassment and Abuse.
- Promoting efforts to bridge the gender digital divide while equipping women and girls to use technology freely and safely, recognizing that to fully and equally participate in today's connected world, women and girls must have access to information and communications technology, but that online harassment and abuse impedes their ability to realize the full benefits of this technology.
- Pursuing opportunities for constructive dialogue and engagement with the private sector and technology companies to support the responsible development and application of new technologies that incorporate innovation, diversity, and security in the design phase as well as establish globally recognized norms and enact policy reforms to address the global problem of technology-facilitated gender-based violence.
- Ensuring the inclusion of a gender lens that highlights the disproportionate, gendered, and sexualized nature and impact of technology-facilitated gender-based violence that women, girls, and gender non-conforming individuals face online through U.S. government Department and Agency technology/digital/cyber strategies and offices, including the USAID *Digital Strategy* and the Department of State Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy.

- Strengthening U.S. government efforts to advance digital rights and democracy-affirming technology to include an intersectional gender lens, accounting for the misuse and abuse of technology by individuals, state, and non-state actors.
- Enhancing the global discourse and U.S. government efforts to protect freedom of expression to recognize the chilling effects of technology-facilitated gender-based violence against women and LGBTQI+ politicians, public figures, journalists, and civil society activists, and the societal consequences that erode democratic norms.

Programming

- Increasing the evidence base on the prevalence and manifestations of technology-facilitated gender-based violence.
- Investing in landscape studies of technology-facilitated gender-based violence in a variety of regions to assist in better targeted digital, democracy and governance, and gender programming.
- Piloting regional projects to raise awareness of technology-facilitated gender-based violence; providing mental health and psychosocial support to online survivors; and improving the online environment for all users, particularly women, girls, and gender non-conforming individuals.
- Addressing technology-facilitated gender-based violence faced by women in politics, journalism, and activism.
- Addressing the connection between online misogyny, gendered disinformation, and violent extremism.

PILLAR III: STRENGTHENING OUR EFFORTS

Since the first iteration of this strategy, institutionalizing and integrating gender-based violence work across U.S. policy and foreign assistance have been key objectives. Pillar III emphasizes the renewed U.S. commitment to amplifying and expanding what works to prevent and respond to gender-based violence globally, and articulates our focus on continued research on topics where additional evidence is needed. It discusses strengthening our support for building capacity to carry out gender-based violence work among advocates and partners globally, as well as within the U.S. government. It builds on a major focus of our previous strategies, integrating gender-based violence prevention and response across U.S. foreign policy and assistance, and maps out plans for further integration and mainstreaming. Finally, Pillar III promotes the revitalization of U.S. leadership and coordination on gender-based violence prevention and response, including how we will continue to leverage existing multilateral platforms and invest in new partnerships to make more progress, while holding ourselves accountable as leaders in this space. The approaches outlined in Pillar III and throughout this strategy keep prevention at their core and use a multi-sectoral, public health approach with the goal of stopping violence before it begins.



Photo Credit: UN Women

Objective 3.1: Amplify What Works: Bring to Scale Evidence-Based, Survivor-Centered, and Locally Led Approaches

Action: Increase U.S. support for gender-based violence prevention and response interventions that are proven, adaptable to local contexts, and survivor-centered.

Approach: The U.S. will continue to build the evidence base for gender-based violence prevent and response programming and policies, and bring to scale proven, adaptable policy and programmatic interventions. A survivor-centered, locally led approach to build evidence on gender-based violence will enhance U.S. engagement and leadership in multilateral and bilateral forums, as well as across other U.S. strategies, policies, and programming. By building and amplifying robust evidence that reflects the needs of diverse communities and different types of gender-based violence, our approach must replicate promising practices in evidence collection – particularly around research ethics, trauma-informed approaches, and centering the safety of survivors. The United States will emphasize the recruitment and training of diverse local community members, including women, girls, gender non-conforming individuals, LGBTQI+ persons, persons with disabilities, and members of other marginalized populations, to build local capacity and buy-in for better evidence generation in gender-based violence programming and policies.

With this growing evidence base, the United States will work to collaborate across sectors, partnerships, and with local leadership to uplift and amplify what works in gender-based violence policy and programming. This includes building partnerships with and learning from U.S. domestic research and promising practices on gender-based violence prevention and response. The United States will also encourage other governments and funders to support scaling promising interventions and evidence-driven policies and practices. We also commit to sharing this evidence base with and learning from partners around the world, ensuring that we can collectively fine tune services and policies to better assist survivors of gender-based violence and hold perpetrators accountable. Examples of our approach include:

Policy and Diplomacy

- Tracking annual policy successes on preventing and responding to gender-based violence globally to identify best practices that can be shared, both internally across U.S. government Departments, Agencies, and diplomatic missions, but also externally with civil society, bilateral, multilateral, and other partners.
- Leveraging multilateral platforms such as the annual Commission on the Status of Women, UN General Assembly, Generation Equality Forum, and other venues as an opportunity to share lessons learned from our global and domestic work to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.
- Hosting events, consultations, and other learning opportunities to amplify research and promising practices on gender-based violence prevention and response across countries and regions.

Programming

- Dedicating resources to encourage learning and knowledge sharing through quarterly meetings with bilateral and private funders to assist in recognizing gender-based violence programming gaps, strengthening policy responses, and overcoming known obstacles to gender-based violence programming in all communities.
- Investing in the development of: 1) evidence-driven gender-based violence programming, including integrating foundational elements and minimum standards³³ for gender-based violence programming across the development and humanitarian continuum; and 2) locally led and driven responses to gender-based violence in coordination with organizations led by women and members of other marginalized populations.
- Supporting continuous learning and adaptation to meet the needs of all communities receiving gender-based violence services and interventions, including by prioritizing investments in monitoring and evaluation efforts to assess the long-term impacts of gender-based violence prevention and response programming.
- Continuing to support and strengthen global surveys and other data efforts that collect information on gender-based violence to better inform our policies and programs.

Objective 3.2: Enhance Partnerships and Local Leadership

Action: Advance partnerships and strengthen the capacity and agency of our partners and external stakeholders to jointly contribute to an enabling environment for people to live free from gender-based violence.

Approach: Building and strengthening the capacity and agency of stakeholders across the U.S. government, gender-based violence serving organizations, and other partners that are committed to ending gender-based violence requires a whole-of-systems approach. In supporting gender-based violence organizations and other partners, we are committed to using an intersectional approach. This includes supporting partnerships with local researchers to generate policy solutions and programs with strong local ownership focused on ending gender-based violence. As we support local solutions and work with individuals vulnerable to gender-based violence, the United States will do so in a learning mode, sharing the knowledge we have while learning from those leading this work within local communities. We will seek to strengthen existing partnerships to increase the support of gender-based violence programming with encouragement for diverse leadership. This could include providing assistance to organizations and partners that use the principles in this strategy to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

³³ [UNFPA, The Inter-Agency Minimum Standards for Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies Programming](#)

An important element of this approach is considering innovative ways to resource local organizations committed to gender-based violence prevention and response, including through collaboration with other donors. Examples of our approach include:

Policy and Diplomacy

- Holding consultations with civil society and other external stakeholders on at least an annual basis to iterate and improve the implementation of this strategy.
- Identifying opportunities and developing partnerships to work with likeminded partners to fill data gaps and amplify solutions, such as the Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse and other opportunities through the Summit for Democracy.
- Developing region- and country-specific policies, in partnership with local leaders, that contextualize the principles set forth in this strategy, such as Pillar V of the *U.S. Strategy for Addressing the Root Causes of Migration in Central America*, “Combatting sexual, gender-based, and domestic violence.”

Programming

- Investing in pooled financing with other funders addressing gender-based violence to fund local and women’s rights organizations.
- Investing in the continuous skill building of gender-based violence practitioners, including self and collective care practices, survivor-centered sexual exploitation and abuse protection policies and procedures, and peer-to-peer mentorship across regions.
- Expanding partnerships, funding, and technical assistance to local organizations on gender-based violence prevention and response. U.S. foreign assistance efforts on gender-based violence will seek to prioritize shifting financial and other resources to women’s rights organizations and other local groups working with communities to end gender-based violence.
- Strengthening collaboration across the federal government and with private sector partners to deepen understanding of the role and impact of gender-based violence in the context of investments and transactions across various sectors and to identify potential risk mitigating actions.

Objective 3.3: Build and Strengthen Capacity within the U.S. Government

Action: Build the capacity, knowledge, and skills of U.S. government staff to enhance integration of gender-based violence prevention and response priorities throughout U.S. foreign policy and programs.

Approach: Consistent with the *U.S. National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality*, U.S. government Departments and Agencies will comprehensively integrate gender-based violence prevention and response strategies into new and existing foreign policy, diplomacy, defense, and programming efforts. To carry out and sustain this integration, as outlined in this strategy, Departments and Agencies will build up the capacity and technical expertise of their U.S. government staff across sectors. This includes investing in, hiring, and maintaining well-qualified gender-based violence technical experts in foreign policy and foreign assistance roles. We will strengthen formal gender-based violence training courses as well as informal learning tools that showcase holistic and multi-sectoral approaches to ending gender-based violence. Further, we will leverage intra- and interagency platforms across sectors to more consistently and effectively integrate gender-based violence issues across U.S. efforts and to avoid duplication. The

U.S. government takes seriously our moral and ethical responsibility to ensure our staff and partners actively work to ensure safe delivery of assistance and programs, protect the populations they serve, ensure nondiscrimination for program participants, and hold those responsible for sexual exploitation and abuse to account. To strengthen intra- and interagency efforts, we will encourage a robust community of practice within each agency contributing to gender-based violence prevention and response efforts. Examples of our approach include:

Policy and Diplomacy

- Through institutional reform efforts of the *U.S. National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality*, building the capacity and technical expertise of U.S. government staff across sectors to better understand gender-based violence and better tailor gender-based violence prevention and response activities, including by working with government advisors and working groups that specialize in gender issues across departments, agencies, and overseas missions.
- Ensuring that training and skills-building on gender-based violence issues, and on specific forms of gender-based violence, continue to be included and integrated in relevant standalone courses for U.S. diplomats. Resources, including training, will be geared to staff who are not specialists in gender-based violence, including diplomatic and foreign service officers, to ensure the integration of gender-based violence priorities and principles into policy and programming efforts.
- Encouraging all departments and agencies working on foreign assistance to have an agency-specific gender-based violence prevention, mitigation, and response training that would be required for all U.S. government staff.
- Educating U.S. government staff across sectors on the best and promising practices for safe and respectful engagements with gender-based violence survivors in policy, programs, and public diplomacy through gender and inclusion analysis, risk analysis, and gender-based violence mitigation.

Programming

- Supporting evidence-driven gender-based violence programming, including the integration of foundational elements and minimum standards.³⁴ Gender-based violence programming should be informed by the lived experiences of survivors and position them in leadership and advisory roles.
- Actively encouraging the integration of gender-based violence prevention and response efforts into all sectoral programming that receives U.S. funding. This includes incorporating the results of robust gender analyses in programs; acknowledging and understanding gender-based violence referral systems by working with communities; addressing the unique vulnerabilities of certain populations; and ensuring a survivor-centered approach.
- Enhancing the development, training, and implementation of internal policies and processes, including proactive risk analyses and mitigation measures to prevent and address sexual exploitation and abuse in U.S. government-funded efforts, regardless of their focus or sector.
- Conducting gender analyses and risk assessments across U.S. government programming that include identifying risks and mitigation for gender-based violence.

³⁴ [UNFPA, The Inter-Agency Minimum Standards for Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies Programming](#)

Objective 3.4: Revitalize Leadership and Coordination

Action: Strengthen U.S. engagement and collaboration on gender-based violence prevention and response on the global stage and lead by example through our domestic prioritization of ending gender-based violence within the United States.

Approach: Revitalizing U.S. leadership and coordination on gender-based violence prevention and response globally will entail continued engagement in relevant United Nations and other multilateral forums and processes; raising gender-based violence issues in strategic and bilateral dialogues; ensuring adequate resourcing of global gender-based violence prevention and response efforts, including by maintaining leadership-level funding to relevant United Nations organizations; and sharing U.S. best practices and lessons learned on a global scale, including leading by example through our revitalized domestic efforts via the implementation of the forthcoming *U.S. National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence*. We will actively pursue new partnerships and explore new opportunities to collaborate with global allies to accelerate an end to all forms of gender-based violence. We will work with, lead, and fund coalitions of bilateral and multilateral, private sector, civil society, private sector, and other partners to amplify our shared goals of preventing, mitigating, and responding to gender-based violence globally. Examples of our approach include:

Policy and Diplomacy

- Fulfilling U.S. commitments and continuing our leadership on gender-based violence issues through the Generation Equality platform as a member of the Multi-Stakeholder Leadership Group and “commitment-maker” under the Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence.³⁵ These commitments include policy, funding, and multilateral efforts and will be tracked and measured via the annual Generation Equality accountability reporting process.
- Continuing to elevate gender-based violence as a U.S. priority through various multilateral forums, including the UN Commission on the Status of Women, UN Security Council, UN General Assembly, UN Human Rights Council, G7, G20, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and other regional bodies. This may include negotiating the inclusion of gender-based violence language in all relevant resolutions, drafting or sponsoring new gender-based violence-related resolutions, hosting relevant high-level side events, and leveraging meetings of these forums to raise the profile of timely gender-based violence matters on the global stage. As a top four “contributing country” on the Executive Board of UN Women, the United States will continue to support and advise on the board’s gender-based violence work.
- Coordinating, sharing learnings, and leading by example as we simultaneously work to end gender-based violence within the United States and around the world. The forthcoming *U.S. National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence* offers a unique leadership opportunity to memorialize U.S. domestic gender-based violence efforts to date and set a course for future domestic gender-based violence work. It will also mobilize governments around the world to prioritize prevention and response efforts within their own borders.

³⁵ [The White House, Fact Sheet: United States to Announce Commitments to the Generation Equality Forum](#)

Programming

- Exercising leadership in multilateral forums, including through funding for various key entities leading pioneering programs, research, and response services for gender-based violence. In addition to support for UN Women, the U.S. supports gender-based violence work through our funding for the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, the UNICEF-UNFPA Joint Program to End Female Genital Mutilation, and the Office of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.
- Convening funders investing in addressing gender-based violence globally to share opportunities of co-investing, evidence generation, and strategic policy development to meet global goals in ending different forms of gender-based violence.

Photo Credit: United Forced for Our Disappeared in Coahuila





IMPLEMENTING AND MEASURING THE STRATEGY

The White House Gender Policy Council, in partnership with the National Security Council, coordinates the development of U.S. global gender-based violence prevention and response policy, including this strategy. The Department of State and USAID are the U.S. government's primary implementers of policy and programs to prevent and respond to gender-based violence around the world. Bureaus, offices, and missions are strongly encouraged to use this strategy as a resource for incorporating gender-based violence prevention and response efforts into relevant, lower-level strategies and operational plans. Participating U.S. government Departments and Agencies, including the Departments of Treasury, Defense, Justice, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, and State; the Peace Corps; the Millennium Challenge Corporation; the Development Finance Corporation; and USAID will continue to designate one or more representatives, as appropriate, with incorporating the *U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally* into policies and programs with the objective of full implementation.

Implementation Plans




Pursuant to this strategy's objectives, the Department of State and USAID will cooperate closely on implementing the pillars outlined above. Following the 2022 update of this strategy, Department of State and USAID agency-specific implementation plans will be reviewed and updated as needed. The implementation plans will outline U.S. government Agency and Department metrics and indicator reference sheets, as appropriate, to be used to measure progress of implementation in line with the below section. Other participating Departments and Agencies will develop implementation and monitoring standards and definitions as needed for the metrics and milestones they volunteer to take on.

Measuring U.S. Government Programs, Policy Engagement, Public Affairs, and Public Diplomacy Work

We are committed to accountability and iteration in implementing and measuring our progress under this strategy as a partner in ending gender-based violence. Multiple Departments and Agencies contribute to this implementation, each with unique systems for reporting and measuring progress. While each Department and Agency implementation plan or method of implementation will be detailed further, this interagency results framework is meant to discuss progress of the aggregate U.S. government. Progress will be reviewed annually, through consultations across the interagency and with civil society, to identify challenges and gaps and find ways to adapt and improve our implementation and measurement of progress against this strategy. These consultations may be coordinated with other gender equity and equality consultations, such as those held for the *U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security*.

Results Framework

The following results framework will guide the measurement and monitoring of this strategy. An illustrative results framework graphic is provided, followed by more detailed assumptions, actions, outputs, and outcomes across the three strategy pillars. For reference across the pillars of this strategy, items are tagged with each pillar. This framework supports the vision of this strategy to build a future free from gender-based violence for all people.

Illustrative Results Framework	Assumptions	Actions	Outputs	Short Term Outcomes	Long Term Outcomes
 <p>Pillar I: Focusing on Gender and At-Risk Populations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harmful gender norms and power dynamics resist change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Localize and empower communities, families, and survivors of GBV. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survivor-centered accountability and access to justice implemented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work against harmful gender norms increases. GBV work is more inclusive with intersectional approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diverse partnerships strengthened and developed to prevent and respond to GBV. Increased options to safe, accessible, and quality services for all survivors of GBV.
 <p>Pillar II: Integrating GBV Prevention and Response Across Sectors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USG works to build its own capacity on GBV prevention, mitigation, and response. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survivor-centered accountability. Adapt and respond to emerging and new challenges that impact GBV in all spaces, including digital. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved legal/policy frameworks and implementation. GBV services improved and increased. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harmful gender norms rejected. Quality of gender integration increased. Support of locally led solutions increased. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incidents of gender-based violence reduced. GBV addressed holistically.
 <p>Pillar III: Strengthening Our Efforts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional, national, and global shocks and stressors continue. Capacity will continue to depend on political will and appropriate funding levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USG improves implementation of GBV policy and programs. USG works with and learns from other global partners, including funders, INGOs, and multilateral organizations to address GBV. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USG diplomatic and programmatic relationships increase locally led engagements on GBV. GBV integrated across USG lines of effort. USG staff capacity built with training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence base stronger. Survivor-centered evidence base that promotes Do No Harm approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased USG integration of GBV prevention and response policies and programs. Legal and policy frameworks more survivor-centered. USG strong partner at all levels.

Assumptions

- Thematic areas of U.S. government policy and program engagement will continue to need resources, technical support, and capacity building for collaboration and gender-based violence integration.
- Gender-based violence will continue to manifest in different forms and will require an approach that is responsive, adaptable, and flexible.
- Harmful gender norms and power dynamics, including those within governments and multilateral organizations, will continue to create obstacles to enacting change.
- The world, including the global community as well as specific regions, will continue to face shocks and stressors that impede our collective ability to fully prevent and respond to gender-based violence.
- Capacity to deliver effective context and culturally tailored, inclusive, and survivor-centered gender-based violence programming at scale is dependent on political (U.S. and partner nation) buy-in and the availability of sufficient funding.

Actions

- Advancing accountability, survivor-centered justice, and restorative justice, developed within a survivor-centered approach for gender-based violence (Pillar II).
- Adapting and responding to new forms of gender-based violence and the contexts in which it arises (e.g., technology-facilitated gender-based violence) (Pillars II & III).
- Increasing support for gender-based violence prevention programs, aiming to build positive peace and challenge harmful gender norms (Pillars I & II).
- Adapting and localizing gender-based violence prevention and response programs and policy advocacy to better support survivors, communities, and civil society (Pillar I).
- Improving implementation of gender-based violence policy and programs, including gender analysis mandates and standards and systems to advance protection from sexual exploitation and abuse; encouraging gender budgeting, training, resourcing, monitoring and data collection and analysis; and encouraging continuous learning and adaptation (Pillar III).
- Improving coherence and alignment by the U.S. government across international engagements on preventing and responding to gender-based violence (Pillar III).

Outputs

- Improved laws, policies, regulations, or other legal instruments implemented to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, including providing restorative justice approaches (Pillar II) [GNDR-1 & 5].
- Increased gender-based violence services delivered/gender-based violence programs implemented with the U.S. government supporting high-quality, gender-based violence prevention and response (Pillars II & III) [GNDR-6 & PEPFAR GEND_GB].
- Increased accountability, access to justice, or other forms of community/restorative justice that are developed and supported with a survivor-centered approach (Pillars I & II).
- Increased multilateral and bilateral diplomatic and policy engagements and/or advocacy actions that aim to uplift locally led efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence (e.g., resolutions, statements, events) across all technical sectors (Pillar III).

- Increased integration of gender-based violence topics across U.S. government training (Pillar III).
- Increased training opportunities to improve staff capacity to prevent, mitigate, and respond to gender-based violence (Pillar III).

Outcomes

Short Term

- Increase in inclusive, survivor-directed data collection and research to support evidence-informed advances in preventing and responding to gender-based violence (Pillar III).
- Increase in percentage of participants in U.S. government programs reporting disapproval of/ disagreement with harmful gender norms that contribute to gender-based violence (Pillar II).
- Increase in gender integration, specifically related to preventing and responding to gender-based violence, across U.S. government thematic engagements (Pillars II & III).
- Increase in support of leadership at all levels and solutions to end gender-based violence across technical sectors (Pillars II & III).
- Increase in number of programs that challenge harmful gender norms, including those with survivor-leadership (Pillars I & II) [related to GND-4].
- Increase in application of intersectional approaches to preventing and responding to gender-based violence (Pillar I).
- Strengthened evidence base and monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems for preventing, mitigating, and responding to gender-based violence (Pillar III).
- Bolstered inclusive, survivor-centered evidence base that supports lived experience and promotes Do No Harm approach (Pillar III).



Photo Credit: Allison DiVincenzo, USAID

Long Term

- Reduction in gender-based violence globally (Pillars I, II & III).
- More communities, nations, civil society organizations, and partner nation militaries engaged in partnership with the U.S. government to prevent and respond to gender-based violence (Pillar I).
- More easily accessible and quality services for all survivors everywhere (Pillars I & II).
- Enhanced U.S. government integration of gender-based violence prevention and response across training and programs increased across Agencies and Departments (Pillar III).
- Systems, laws, and policies that reflect a stronger, survivor-centered approach to ending gender-based violence (Pillars I, II & III).
- Improved U.S. government ability to partner with communities, countries, and bilateral and multilateral partners to prevent and respond to gender-based violence (Pillar III).

Progress and Reporting Against the Results Framework

Each Department and Agency contributing to the implementation of this strategy will document how they will collect and measure progress for annual reporting and which metrics they plan to report against. Variation is expected based on the mission and organizational structure of each Agency and Department. Combining and analyzing each Department and Agency's reporting across the interagency will require the White House Gender Policy Council and Department/Agency leadership to synthesize the reports, as described in the process milestones below.

Indicators: Some standard foreign assistance

indicators are listed below as potentially contributing to reporting against the specific strategy pillars and stages of the results framework, but many Departments and Agencies have their own indicators and metrics that will need to be defined, tracked, and analyzed to measure progress. Standard foreign assistance performance indicator reference sheets (PIRS) exist for the indicators below, and Agencies and Departments may volunteer additional indicators for reporting against activities, outputs, and outcomes and should detail how they will work toward process metrics and milestones in their implementation plan.

- **GNDR-1:** Number of legal instruments drafted, proposed, or adopted with U.S. government assistance designed to promote gender equality or non-discrimination against women or girls at the national or subnational level.
- **GNDR-4:** Percentage of participants reporting increased agreement with the concept that males and females should have equal access to social, economic, and political resources and opportunities.
- **GNDR-5:** Number of legal instruments drafted, proposed, or adopted with U.S. government assistance designed to improve prevention of or response to sexual and gender-based violence at the national or subnational level.
- **GNDR-6:** Number of people reached by a U.S. government funded intervention providing gender-based violence services (e.g., health, legal, psychosocial counseling, shelters, hotlines).
- **PEPFAR GEND_GBVI:** Number of people receiving a minimum package of post-gender-based violence clinical care services.

To ensure that Departments and Agencies implementing this strategy work toward continual improvement in implementation and increased effectiveness in preventing, mitigating, and responding to gender-based violence, this strategy proposes milestones and improvements in processes to support an ongoing cycle of learning, adaptation, and iteration. The below milestones and measurements are proposed to ensure accountability for creating and implementing systems of improvement.

Coordination and Commitment Milestones

- Annual Gender Policy Council, Agency, and Department leadership reflection based on annual reporting against this strategy.
- Annual interagency consultation with civil society and other external stakeholders to provide feedback and ways to iterate and improve implementation of this strategy.
- Annual public report of progress toward implementing this strategy.
- Annual interagency reflection and internal consultation to improve coordination across related gender strategies to promote streamlining of gender equity and equality efforts and reporting.

Process and Accountability Measurements

- Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse policy standards and best practices promulgated across U.S. government international Departments and Agencies.
- Programmatic risk assessments that include identifying risks and mitigation for gender-based violence.
- Gender analysis that includes consideration of gender-based violence prevention, mitigation, and response required across all programs.
- Increase in resources invested in preventing, mitigating, and responding to gender-based violence analyzed for quality, impact, and relationship to other resources invested (e.g., foreign assistance, personnel).
- Expanding U.S. government gender data tracking and collection to support an inclusive, evidence-informed approach, including but not limited to:
 - U.S. investments in preventing, mitigating, and responding to gender-based violence (people, training, and programs).
 - Data related to gender-based violence globally.
 - Data related to the ecosystems of power, control, and violence that underpin gender-based violence.
 - Measuring progress and encouraging adaptive management for programs preventing and responding to gender-based violence.
 - Costs of gender-based violence for a community, nation, or region.

ANNEXES

Annex A: Agency Roles and Responsibilities

The *U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally* is an interagency strategy, meant to guide the efforts of all federal Departments and Agencies. Development of this strategy was led by the Department of State and USAID, in close consultation with the White House Gender Policy Council and the National Security Council, and coordinated across the interagency through a working group. The below Departments and Agencies participated in the interagency working group and are important partners in preventing, mitigating, and responding to gender-based violence across U.S. foreign assistance, policy, and national security.

Department of State: The Department of State takes a comprehensive, multifaceted approach to addressing gender-based violence, including ensuring appropriate care for survivors while also strengthening deterrents through legislation, legal, and judicial action. This work occurs through bilateral and regional diplomacy, multilateral diplomacy, and public diplomacy across the Department of State. This work is also supported through foreign assistance, including supporting training for U.S. government and foreign governments, the work of public-private partnerships, and direct implementation of gender-based violence prevention and response. The Department of State incorporates a gender and gender-based violence lens into other intersecting efforts, including human rights, democracy and governance, justice and accountability, implementation of the *Women, Peace, and Security Act*, women's economic empowerment, women's political participation, climate, programming and policies focused on LGBTQI+ persons and persons with disabilities, anti-trafficking policies and programs, and HIV prevention and treatment through coordination of PEPFAR. The Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues leads the Department of State's gender-based violence policy work and collaborates closely with gender experts across bureaus, offices, and posts to advance policies and programs that prevent, mitigate, and respond to all forms of gender-based violence. A variety of bureaus and offices within the Department of State develop policy and support programs that take multifaceted, multi-sector approaches to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in diverse settings. These include: the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration; the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor; the Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and Health Diplomacy; the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations; the Office of Global Criminal Justice; the Bureau of International Organization Affairs; the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs; the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons; and all Department of State regional bureaus.

U.S. Agency for International Development: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has a long history of programming around gender-based violence prevention, risk mitigation, and response within its development and humanitarian assistance mandate. USAID programs address the root causes of violence; improve prevention and protection services; respond to the health and economic needs of those affected by gender-based violence; and support legal frameworks that, when implemented, mitigate gender-based violence. USAID has strengthened its attention to gender equality issues, including through its *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy*; its implementation plan for the *U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security*; its policy on Counter-Trafficking in Persons; its LGBT Vision for Action; its gender equality guidance and requirements related to strategic and program design; and its suite of training, including an introductory course required of all USAID staff. Furthermore, USAID has an active gender-based violence working group chaired by the senior gender-

based violence advisor in the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub and consisting of members from various bureaus and offices across USAID. USAID's Senior Coordinator for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub collaborate closely with Agency-wide networks of gender experts, including dedicated gender-based violence advisors and allies, to reduce gender disparities in access to, control over, and benefit from resources; address harmful gender norms; increase the capability of women, girls, and gender non-conforming people to realize their rights; and reduce gender-based violence and mitigate its harmful effects on individuals, communities, and nations through programs in every sector globally. In addition, the Senior LGBTQI+ Coordinator works across USAID Bureaus, Missions, and Independent Offices to support the inclusion of LGBTQI+ persons in gender-based violence programs.

Department of Defense: The Department of Defense (DoD) recognizes the linkages between gender-based violence; atrocity prevention; local, national, and regional stability; and individual security. DoD emphasizes the importance of building capacity with allies and partners and demonstrating the role of security sector actors for upholding the tenets of this strategy. DoD's implementation of the *Women, Peace, and Security Act* emphasizes gender responsive approaches to human security, focusing on the prevention and protection of women, girls, and gender non-conforming individuals from violence, including gender-based violence. DoD's Women, Peace, and Security program supports the implementation of this strategy in two lines of effort. The first focuses on institutionalizing an intersectional gender analysis within military planning processes to better understand, prepare, and account for the impacts of gender-based violence in the environments our military forces operate within. The second effort is working with our Allies and partners through security cooperation to build their own internal capacity to prevent and respond to gender-based violence while conducting operations. These two lines of effort support DoD's ability to promote and protect the human rights of individuals while accomplishing U.S. national security objectives. Furthermore, DoD values the inclusion of activities which are preventative of and responsive to gender-based violence in nature as important components of its humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping advisory and training support. DoD provides equitable access to humanitarian assistance based on need, including vulnerable populations that are at risk for gender-based violence, regardless of gender, race, religious, political, or ethnicity consideration.

Photo Credit: Crystal Stafford/USAID



Department of Health and Human Services: The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) oversees a range of gender-based violence prevention and care services in the United States and globally. For example, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) works to stop gender-based violence from happening in the first place, and mitigate its impacts on individuals, families, and communities. For nearly 40 years, the CDC's Division of Violence Prevention (DVP) has utilized and shared the best available data and conducted research to identify what works to prevent gender-based violence, bringing together partners and connecting data, science, and action to inform the development, implementation, and sustainability of violence prevention strategies proven to be effective. The CDC and Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) are key partners in PEPFAR and are committed to accelerating progress toward rapidly reaching HIV/AIDS epidemic control in the highest burden countries through client-centered prevention and treatment services, including integration of gender-based violence prevention and response. This includes implementing evidence-based HIV and violence prevention programming for adolescent girls and young women and their communities; working with governments, civil society, and other stakeholders to build capacity to identify and respond to gender-based violence and to tailor efforts to the populations most affected by violence, including female sex workers, gender- and sexually-diverse populations, and youth; and developing guidance and training documents on gender-based violence to build the capacity of healthcare workers to identify, address, and compassionately manage care and referrals for survivors.

In the United States, HHS works to prevent and address gender-based violence through a wide range of programs. The Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) Program administers the FVPSA, the primary federal funding stream dedicated to the support of shelters and other supportive services for victims of domestic violence and their children. FVPSA also provides funding for the National Domestic Violence Hotline, the 56 state and territorial domestic violence coalitions, and various national resource centers that provide training and capacity building to improve services for survivors. Additionally, the HHS Office on Women's Health (OWH) leads the HHS Violence Against Women Steering Committee and implements several initiatives focusing on gender-based violence. Through OWH's Preventing HIV Infection in Women through Expanded Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Prevention, Screening, and Response Initiative, OWH focuses on supporting victims and survivors, reducing harms after experiencing IPV, and implementing activities to prevent transmission, increase screening, and improve access to services. Additionally, the Violence Against Women and Substance Use Prevention Initiative works to train substance use disorder (SUD) treatment providers in IPV and address the intersection of IPV and SUD during the pregnancy and postpartum period.

Department of Homeland Security: The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is in a unique position to contribute to global gender-based violence prevention and response as it operates at the nexus of both domestic and international efforts. Global issues including gender-based violence are likely to show up at U.S. borders through its immigration systems. Many immigrants may be survivors of gender-based violence. DHS plays an important role in global gender-based violence prevention through its numerous initiatives to strengthen efforts to eliminate gender-based violence and expand programs to protect vulnerable individuals from gender-based violence, such as its Council on Combating Gender-based Violence (CCGBV). DHS efforts to promote gender equity and fairness in justice and immigration systems also contribute to gender-based violence prevention, whether through increasing access to T and U visas, Special Immigration Visas, and Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) relief; expanding access to gender-based humanitarian protections; or ensuring the proper treatment of immigrant women in detention. The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) also manages a robust outreach program aimed at protecting young girls from female genital mutilation/cutting called Operation Limelight USA (OLLUSA). OLLUSA operates at

international airports across the United States to educate the traveling public about the dangers of female genital mutilation/cutting, the criminal framework prohibiting travel for the purpose of female genital mutilation/cutting, survivor resources, and contact information for reporting a child who may be at risk. While the focus is female genital mutilation/cutting, such programs can be expanded to include other global gender-based violence issues such as child, early, and forced marriage. Critically, DHS also works to aid survivors of gender-based violence through its leadership in combating sex trafficking, forced labor, and child exploitation, all crimes that disproportionately impact women, girls, and gender non-conforming individuals. The DHS Center for Countering Human Trafficking integrates the efforts of 16 agencies and offices within DHS, leveraging expertise in criminal investigations, victim assistance, external outreach, intelligence, and training. Similarly, the DHS Child Exploitation Investigations Unit – part of the Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Cyber Crimes Center (C3) – works to apprehend perpetrators, rescue victims, and train domestic and international law enforcement partners. DHS consistently strives to adopt a victim-centered approach throughout its policies and operations.

Department of Justice: The Department of Justice’s Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) provides federal leadership in developing the national capacity to reduce violence against women and administer justice for and strengthen services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Created in 1995, OVW administers financial and technical assistance to communities across the country that are developing programs, policies, and practices aimed at ending domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Grants support effective responses to violence against women through activities that include direct services, crisis intervention, transitional housing, legal assistance to victims, court improvement, and training for law enforcement, prosecutors, and courts. Since its inception, OVW has awarded over \$9 billion in grants and cooperative agreements and has launched a multifaceted approach to implementing the *Violence Against Women Act*, including supporting training and technical assistance for grantees. By forging state, local, and tribal partnerships among police, prosecutors, judges, victim advocates, health care providers, faith leaders, and others, OVW grant programs help provide survivors with the protection and services they need to pursue safe and healthy lives, while simultaneously enabling communities to hold offenders accountable for their violence. Although VAWA funding is not available for programming in foreign countries, OVW meets with Department of State-sponsored international visitor delegations to share information about promising practices, policies, and protocols related to gender-based violence prevention and response. To the extent practicable and permissible, OVW shares access to existing OVW-funded training and technical assistance, including informational materials, training materials, recorded webinars, etc. and provides referrals to technical assistance providers and national experts focused on improving the response to gender-based violence.

Additionally, the Department of Justice addresses gender-based violence through the Criminal Division’s Office of International Affairs; the Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance and Training (OPDAT); the Office of Justice Programs’ Office for Victims of Crime (OVC); the National Institute for Justice via research and evaluation; the Office of Tribal Justice; and the Executive Office for United States Attorneys.

Department of Labor: The Department of Labor’s Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) works to eliminate gender-based violence and harassment in the world of work globally through technical assistance, trade policy, and multilateral and bilateral engagement. Through technical assistance, ILAB works to build the agency of women and girls in all their diversity; transform laws and policies governing public and private institutions to be more gender-equitable; and change community social norms that perpetuate gender inequality and labor rights violations, including gender-based violence and harassment, wage inequality, and child and forced labor. ILAB engages with



Photo Credit: Johannes Go/USAID

U.S. trade partner countries to ensure that laws, institutions, and practices are in place to protect workers from gender-based discrimination, violence, and harassment and to ensure workers have equal access to justice when faced with discrimination. Through multilateral and bilateral engagement, ILAB has sought to advance efforts globally to prevent and address gender-based violence and harassment in the world of work, particularly against women, who have been disproportionately represented among frontline and care workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. ILAB has advocated for research in the multilateral context to strengthen knowledge about effective public services to address gender-based violence and improve data collection on this issue. ILAB has also funded research on work-related violence and gender-based violence in six Central American countries.

Department of Treasury: The Department of Treasury supports gender-based violence prevention and response efforts, women's economic empowerment, and legal and regulatory reforms supporting equality and equity. This work occurs through bilateral and multilateral diplomacy via engagements at multilateral development banks and other international financial institutions with Bank Management, Bank staff, and other Board members. The Department of Treasury incorporates a gender and gender-based violence lens into other intersecting efforts, including general economic empowerment and development programming, climate finance, sanctions, as well as programming and policies specifically focused on LGBTQI+ persons.

International Development Finance Corporation: The International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) has incorporated action steps and metrics as part of the DFC action plan for the *U.S. National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality* that are specific to the agency's investment context in emerging markets. For example, integrating gender-based violence risk assessments into environmental and social policies and procedures and

training for investment officers and others to strengthen understanding of how gender-based violence can manifest in DFC-supported transactions and how teams can support risk mitigation. The agency is seeking ways of integrating gender-based violence and harassment risk assessments into 2X eligibility, overall project assessment documents, and overall review processes.

Millennium Challenge Corporation: The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) has a mission to promote poverty reduction through economic growth, and MCC recognizes that gender-based violence is a significant impediment to women’s abilities to participate in the economy and to contribute to their own and their families’ economic security. MCC has increasingly incorporated a range of approaches to address gender-based violence in its country programs through the years. Gender-based violence education has been integrated into trainings for contractors, staff, and community outreach events as part of MCC’s extensive investments in infrastructure. MCC also addresses sexual harassment through the systematic application of International Finance Corporation performance standards in infrastructure projects and has added guidance on the prohibition of sexual harassment in all bidding documents and contracts as part of the country partners’ procurement processes. As gender-based violence is a central feature of trafficking-in-persons, MCC has worked to counter gender-based violence through the adoption of a *Counter-Trafficking-in-Persons Policy* that is applied across all MCC programs. MCC has been developing groundbreaking approaches to addressing gender-based violence through more recent sector work. Notably, MCC is pursuing innovative approaches to address public gender-based violence in transport services (for example, Malawi), recognizing that gender-based violence risks reduce women’s mobility and thus access to employment. This work includes reform for regional governments to support stronger regulation of gender-based violence in public markets and associated transport services, and work in the private sector to support development of a self-regulation and branding scheme for ‘woman safe’ transit tied to civil society training and monitoring. Through the Lesotho program, MCC is also supporting novel approaches to incorporating gender-based violence-related services throughout national health care systems, from health staff curriculum and training to standard operating procedures, clinical practice guidelines, data systems, and referral systems across government and gender-based violence service providers. Moreover, MCC has begun to incorporate the economic benefits of gender-based violence-related interventions into cost-benefit analysis models in these sectors. Through the new *Inclusion and Gender Strategy*, MCC further commits to proactively identifying risks and undertaking activities related to gender-based violence across its country programs.

Peace Corps: Peace Corps has a longstanding programmatic commitment to addressing structural gender inequalities in the countries in which the Peace Corps works. Gender inclusion and gender-based violence prevention programming are foundational pillars in the Peace Corps’ development approach, and prevention activities are integrated within each sector (education, health, environment, agriculture, community economic development, and youth development). Through both primary and secondary activities, the Peace Corps seeks to empower local communities to address power imbalances and build their capacity to enable sustainable behavior change, thus addressing root causes of violence. Examples of common activities include topical trainings conducted with local counterparts; anti-stigma/discrimination activities and communications; student safe school programs; life skills curricula either in schools or as standalone programs; clubs for both adolescent girls and boys that focus on topics such as consent, managing emotions, and healthy communication; sports-related programs for HIV/AIDS education/prevention; and more.

Annex B: Strategy Mandate and Policy Frameworks

The Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the *Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2012* (Div. I, P.L. 112-74), [H. Rept. 112-331], calls for the U.S. Department of State and USAID “to submit to the Committees on Appropriations, not later than 180 days after the enactment of this Act, a multi-year strategy to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls in countries where it is common. The strategy should include achievable and sustainable goals, benchmarks for measuring progress, and expected results. The formulation of the strategy should include regular engagement with men and boys as community leaders and advocates in ending such violence.” In August 2012, when the strategy was issued, President Obama issued Executive Order 13623, Preventing and Responding to Violence Against Women and Girls Globally. E.O. 13623 called for, inter alia, an interagency evaluation of the U.S. government’s implementation of the strategy within three years, and an update to the strategy within 180 days of the evaluation. In March 2021, President Biden issued Executive Order 14020, Establishment of the White House Gender Policy Council, calling for, inter alia, a comprehensive, interagency review and update of the strategy. This document updates the 2016 strategy as called for by E.O. 14020.

The efforts detailed in this strategy are guided by a number of legal frameworks and policies including: the *U.S. National Security Strategy*; the *Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Act of 2022*; the *Department of State and USAID Joint Strategic Plan for FY 2022 – 2026*; the Presidential Memorandum on Protecting Women’s Health at Home and Abroad of 2021; the *U.S. National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality* of 2021; the *Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act of 2021*; the *Global Fragility Act of 2019* and *U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability* of 2020; the *Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017* and *U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security* of 2019; the *Women’s Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act of 2018*; the *Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2018*; the *U.S. Strategy to Anticipate, Prevent, and Respond to Atrocities* of 2022; Presidential Memorandum to Promote Accountability for Conflict-Related Sexual Violence; E.O. 14020 on Gender Equity and Equality; the Presidential Memorandum on Advancing the Human Rights of LGBTQI+ Persons Around the World; E.O. 14075 on Advancing Equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Individuals; E.O. 13988 on Preventing and Combatting Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation; E.O. 13985 on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government; E.O. 14035 on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce; the *International Religious Freedom Act of 1998*; and the *Americans with Disabilities Act*.

Annex C: Acknowledgements

The 2022 version of the *U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally* reflects over 12 months of labor; intensive collaboration across multiple federal agencies; and input from representatives from many different external organizations. The core drafting team was comprised of technical advisors from the Department of State’s Secretary’s Office of Global Women’s Issues and USAID’s Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Hub. Other key drafters from the Department of State and USAID included technical staff from: the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor; the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration; the Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and Health Diplomacy; the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations; the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs; the Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation; the Bureau for

Global Health; the Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Stabilization; the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security; the Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning; the Bureau for Africa; the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia; the Bureau for Asia; the Field Office in Jordan; the Field Office in El Salvador; the Field Office in Rwanda; and the Field Office in Colombia. Additional offices and bureaus provided valuable feedback and suggestions during the clearance process.

The federal interagency working group provided integral support and included representatives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Commerce, Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Justice, Department of Labor, Department of State, Department of Treasury, Department of Health and Human Services, Millennium Challenge Corporation, National Security Council, Office of Management and Budget, Peace Corps, U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, and the U.S. Trade Representative. The White House Gender Policy Council and National Security Council set an ambitious agenda and provided guidance throughout the process. Lead drafters of the *U.S. National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence* were also crucial interlocutors.

We are deeply grateful to representatives and participants from the civil society organizations and experts that participated in the consultations that informed this strategy, particularly the Adolescent Girls Coalition, Astraea Foundation, Equimundo, Gender-Based Violence Coalition, and Outright International who organized listening sessions during the consultation phase. EnCompass also provided exceptional facilitation and analysis for a subset of the listening sessions and larger consultation events.

Finally, and most importantly, we recognize all survivors of gender-based violence around the world who have inspired and informed this strategy. It is our hope that continued commitment, investment, and diplomacy from the U.S. government will lead to greater peace and security for these survivors and their communities.



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