



**Violence
against women**
is a bigger cause of death and
disability than cancer.

Women on the Frontline will be broadcast
first on BBC World for seven weeks starting
18 April 2008 at 1930 GMT.



dev.tv

Austrian
Development Cooperation

WOMEN ON THE FRONTLINE

It threatens the lives of more young women than cancer, malaria or war. It affects one in three women worldwide and leaves them mentally scarred for life. It is usually inflicted by a family member.

'It' is violence against women and girls. The series, Women on the Frontline, is presented by Annie Lennox and takes the front to the homes, villages, and cities of our world where a largely unreported war against females is being waged.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, rape is a weapon of war; in Turkey we find that women may be forced into suicide as a way of disguising 'honour' killings; in Nepal we follow a 24-year-old mother who helps authorities track down her sex trafficker; in Mauritania we ask if the movement to abandon harsh interpretations of Sharia can succeed; in Austria we find a law showing violent men 'the Red card'; and from Colombia and Morocco come inspiring stories of women who have shown extraordinary courage in the face of violence.

WOMEN ON THE FRONTLINE SERIES:

Nepal

Turkey

Morocco

DRC Democratic Republic of Congo

Austria

Mauritania

Colombia



Nepal

Women On The Frontline 1

Friday 18 Apr at 1930 GMT

Repeated: Sat 19 at 0430, Mon 21 at 0930 & 1230 (AP only), Tues 22 at 1530, Wed 23 at 0130 (not showing in ME, SA or AP) & 0730



Turkey

Women On The Frontline 2

Friday 25 Apr at 1930 GMT

Repeated: Sat 26 at 0430, Mon 28 at 0930 & 1230 (AP only), Tues 29 at 1530, Wed 30 at 0130 (not showing in ME, SA or AP) & 0730



Morocco

Women On The Frontline 3

Friday 2 May at 1930 GMT

Repeated: Sat 3 at 0430, Mon 5 at 0930 & 1230 (AP only), Tues 6 at 1530, Wed 7 at 0130 (not showing in ME, SA or AP) & 0730



DRC

the Democratic Republic of Congo

Women On The Frontline 4

Friday 9 May at 1930 GMT

Repeated: Sat 10 at 0430, Mon 12 at 0930 & 1230 (AP only), Tues 13 at 1530, Wed 14 at 0130 (not showing in ME, SA or AP) & 0730



Austria

Women On The Frontline 5

Friday 16 May at 1930 GMT

Repeated: Sat 17 at 0430, Mon 19 at 0930 & 1230 (AP only), Tues 20 at 1530, Wed 21 at 0130 (not showing in ME, SA or AP) & 0730



Mauritania

Women On The Frontline 6

Friday 23 May at 1930 GMT

Repeated: Sat 24 at 0430, Mon 26 at 0930 & 1230 (AP only), Tues 27 at 1530, Wed 28 at 0130 (not showing in ME, SA or AP) & 0730




Colombia

Women On The Frontline 7

Friday 30 May at 1930 GMT

Repeated: Sat 31 at 0430, Mon 2 June at 0930 & 1230 (AP only), Tues 3 at 1530, Wed 4 at 0130 (not showing in ME, SA or AP) & 0730



Deserted by her husband and with four children to support, 24-year-old Sushma, from a remote village in Nepal, was sold into sexual slavery. Her trafficker took her to Kolkata, but she managed to escape.

In this film we document how difficult it is for Nepal to staunch the flow of young women being trafficked each year across an open 2,400 km long border with India... and meet some of the women on the frontline who are trying to put a stop to the trade. We follow Sushma as she sets out to find the man who lured her to a brothel in Kolkata.

A top civil servant, Punya Prasad Neupane tells us why it is so difficult to stem the tide of girls crossing the border each year: "They have some kind of dream in their mind for a better life, for a better quality life. And these traffickers, they can easily trap girls who are aspiring for a better quality life - girls are easily caught, easily tempted by their false promises."

Turkey is cracking down on 'custom killing', making life imprisonment a mandatory sentence. Killing female family members in the name of honour for perceived injury to the family's standing is a crime emanating from centuries' old traditions. The problem is of such concern to the Turkish Government that in 2006 it set up a Parliamentary Investigative Commission. We discover there is disturbing evidence that tougher sentencing is leading to an increase in forced suicides. Nimet Çubukçu, State Minister Responsible for Women and Family Affairs tells us: "Every suicide must be investigated carefully as if it is a potential murder." Worldwide, according to UNFPA, as many as 5,000 women a year are murdered in the name of honour.

Morocco is coming to terms with the human rights abuses of its recent past. Televised testimonies to a truth and reconciliation commission set up by the Government have transfixed the nation. Morocco is discovering the truth about wrongful imprisonments, torture and disappearances of the past. The public has also discovered the prominent role women played in resisting abuses of the law in the 1970s and 1980s.

In this film, we feature two women - Fatna El Bouih and Khadija Rouissi - who survived the human rights abuses of the time of the 'Iron Fist', as some Moroccans describe it. Fatna tells us that she knew the risks she was taking: "Of course, I knew I risked being arrested...I risked being disappeared."

For the last ten years, the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo have been at war. The women bear the brunt of it. The precise number of victims suffering from rape and related diseases, of which traumatic fistula is one, is impossible to know. Shunned by their community, the women are often reluctant to come forward for treatment. Instead, they are forced to bear the physical and psychological scars of their ordeal alone.

We travel to Bukavu and interview Dr. Denis Mukwege. He is director and founder of Panzi General Hospital and one of the few doctors to treat fistula. His hospital receives about 10 victims of sexual violence each day and 600 women undergo major surgery there each year. No wonder Dr. Mukwege believes that "sex has done as much injury as bombs."

Each year in Austria, 7,000 cases of domestic violence are reported to the police, and police suspect more go unreported. But Austria is a pioneer in the protection of women (95% of cases involve male violence against wives or partners) and has a ten-year-old Protection Against Violence law.

In the words of one of the law's architects, "...it shows men the red card." Under the law, police have the power to eject men from their homes, which then become domestic sanctuaries for the women. In most other European countries, it is the battered women who must leave home and find sanctuary in a safe house.

In Mauritania it is illegal to have a boyfriend or girlfriend. And punishments are severe for any kind of relationship out of marriage. Rape is undefined in the country's law, and for a woman to allege she has been raped is to run the risk of imprisonment. Unsurprisingly, few do. 'Women on the Frontline' tells the story of women in prison and out who are trying to bring change. Featured is Fatima M'Baye, the first female lawyer in Mauritania, who is part of the move to blunt harsh interpretations of Sharia: "As far as Mauritania is concerned, there was a time when we only applied Sharia...we're not there anymore - we are at a stage where we have a hybrid law," which, she explained, was trying to combine two - Sharia and secular - sources of law.

The women of the Mid-Magdalena region have been living on a literal frontline, under the shadow of guerrilla war... "their bodies have been turned into a battleground," according to Amnesty International.

The film follows the life and work of one local judge, Esperanza Gonzalez. Esperanza is a woman in her late forties who has been a judge in the town for the last 23 years. She has been trained by the PDPMM "Programa de Desarrollo y Paz del Magdalena Medio" on sexual and reproductive health and she says her judicial sentences have changed: they now include a gender view on the problems she deals with.

NOTE: As a news broadcaster, BBC World reserves the right to pre-empt the broadcast in favour of a major breaking news event. Schedule changes can be found at <http://www.bbcworld.com/Pages/Schedules.aspx>.



Women on the Frontline Series

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, is an international development agency that promotes the right of every woman, man and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity. UNFPA supports countries in using population data for policies and programmes to reduce poverty and to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV/AIDS, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect.



UNIFEM is the women's fund at the United Nations. It provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies to foster women's empowerment and gender equality. Placing the advancement of women's human rights at the centre of all of its efforts, UNIFEM focuses its activities on reducing feminized poverty; ending violence against women; reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS among women and girls; and achieving gender equality in democratic governance in times of peace as well as war.



dev.tv is a non-profit association founded by media professionals. Its goal is to promote the production and distribution of television coverage of issues related to human, economic and environmental crises. dev.tv aims to draw public attention to the problems of our times, and highlight efforts to find solutions.

Austrian Development Cooperation

Austrian Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe (ADC) promotes sustainable development through reducing poverty, safeguarding peace and preserving the environment. In doing so it concentrates on seven key regions in Africa, Asia, Central America, South Eastern Europe and South Caucasus. The main priorities are water and sanitation, energy, rural development, education, the establishment of small and medium-sized enterprises and governance. ADC's programmes and projects are implemented by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) in close cooperation with development organisations and businesses.