



**Women's Foreign Policy Group  
Special Luncheon Event  
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**Dr. Kathleen Cravero**

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*Violence against Women in Crisis: From Advocacy to Action*

**INTRODUCTION**

**Patricia Ellis:** Good afternoon and welcome to all our members, guests, and friends. We are extremely pleased that you could all join us today for this very special event with our wonderful speaker, Kathleen Cravero. We are so pleased she could come down from New York to join us today. Kathleen is the Assistant Secretary-General and UNDP's Director of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery and has been a speaker for the Women's Foreign Policy Group a number of times, once when she was Deputy Executive Director of UNAIDS and most recently at our UN Study Visit in May. She definitely was a star in the line-up of speakers that we had at the UN conference. Everyone was very excited to hear her speak.

I'm Patricia Ellis, President of the Women's Foreign Policy Group, which promotes global engagement, women's leadership, and women's voices on pressing international issues of the day. Certainly, this is one of them: violence against women in crisis situations. We're also well known for our Author Series, Embassy Series, and Carnegie Islam Series. Later this fall, we will be having a conference on Islam, which we're very excited about.

Our next program will be next week at the OAS and it will be modeled on our UN Study Visit. It is a morning conference, which will include a panel on women's leadership in the America's and we also will be hearing from the OAS Secretary General. It should be very exciting and we'd love to see you there. We're also very pleased to announce the speaker for our special Annual Luncheon Event: Josette Sheeran, Executive Director of the World Food Programme. She will speak on September 29<sup>th</sup> on the world food crisis. We're very excited about this because the issue is so important.

I want to welcome Fred Tipson, who heads the UNDP Washington Office, and all his UNDP colleagues, who are cosponsors of today's event. They're great partners and we look forward to many more collaborations.

We're also joined by a number of diplomatic colleagues and I would like to recognize our friend, the Ambassador of Malawi and three Deputy Chiefs of Mission from Belgium, Norway, and Romania. So, thank you all for joining us today.

I would also like to recognize our pro-bono attorney, Sarah Kahn, of Arnold & Porter. We're so pleased to be in this beautiful space. Thank you.

**Ms. Ellis:** I would also like to recognize our Board Treasurer, Dawn Calabria. She has been a long-standing member of the Women's Foreign Policy Group. She has worked on Capitol Hill and for the UN in many different capacities on humanitarian, human rights and political issues. And in her work now as a consultant for Refugees International she's been an advocate for justice and greater attention to women's rights and potential. She will be introducing our speaker, Kathleen Cravero.

I also wanted to recognize the Ambassador from Trinidad and Tobago who just joined us.

**Dawn Calabria:** It's a great pleasure to be with you this afternoon and to have the opportunity to introduce one of those women who makes a difference no matter what she does. We're an organization that believes that each one of us can make a difference in our own lives, in our families, in our communities and hopefully in the professional work that we do, to make sure that women around the world voices are also listened to, that they have the opportunity to be heard.

Kathleen is the Assistant Secretary-General; she's one of the few women Assistant Secretary-Generals in the United Nations. She has a MPH and also a PhD in Political Science. And she's had the kinds of positions in the UN that have given her the opportunity to work on a wide range of issues: women's rights, children's rights, and health issues. Now she's got one of the most difficult jobs in the UN in Crisis Prevention and Recovery and also in her role as Chair of the UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict. She takes on a lot of heavy duty responsibilities within the UN Development Programme, which is funded voluntarily by countries around the world and which has an operating budget of about \$4 billion. The United States is a small contributor to the UN Development Programme and some of us would like to see that support increase, given the important work that they're doing, particularly in crisis prevention and recovery. Too often we hear about the existing gap in services between the end of the relief phase of a crisis and the beginning of the development phase, or the so called relief to development gap. Unfortunately, right now, Kathleen is one of the few people standing in that gap, but without resources and without our support, she's not going to be able to do her job.

We're here today to get you fired up and interested in this topic. As we start, we'd like to show you a short film that UNDP has put together that explains the work of the bureau. (Video is shown)

## **PRESENTATION**

**Kathleen Cravero:** Thank you very much. I think that short video puts what I'm about to say in some sort of context. I really want to thank Pat and Dawn for their introductions. I'd like to thank all of you for taking time out of your busy schedules to hear what we believe are the

important issues when it comes to moving from advocacy to action to end sexual violence against women.

The first-recorded international war crimes trial – for “conduct unbecoming a knight” – took place in 1474. The charge included rape, and the penalty was death. Yet it was just last month – over 600 years later – that the United Nations Security Council explicitly recognized war-time rape as a security issue that warrants a security response.

Thus we are meeting at a historically optimistic moment. A moment when mass rape has, at last, graduated from a humanitarian issue to a foreign policy priority. To paraphrase Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: “*the arc of history is long, but it bends towards justice*”. And that’s what I would like to outline today: how the international community in general – and women in particular – have *helped bend history*. How we have navigated the long arc from advocacy to action, and where it leads us *now*. Because *now more than ever* – with women increasingly the targets of war – it is essential to take stock of the milestones and roadblocks we’ve faced, and to chart a course for the future.

Through advice, policy and resource-mobilization, this is an audience able to make that roadmap real. So I extend my thanks to the organizers for this opportunity to speak not just on behalf of UNDP but as Chair of the inter-agency initiative, UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict, or Stop Rape Now. I thank them for facilitating *discussion* on a subject that has been called *history’s greatest silence*.

In the words of Sarah, a rape survivor from Sierra Leone: “*That man had the gun and he had the power. I just wanted to survive*”. The words may be simple, but they speak volumes about the reality of war for women. In communities awash with weapons, many submit to whatever it takes to stay alive.

In Sierra Leone, between 50,000 and 64,000 internally displaced women suffered sexual assault at the hands of combatants. Twenty thousand to 50,000 women were raped during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the early 1990s. Right now, in South Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo, an average of 40 women are raped every day. As others before me have said of such numbers and such crimes, *behind all those zeroes are too many ones*: one daughter, one mother, one sister, one unborn child – each unique and irreplaceable.

Yet sexual violence statistics are not only abstract, they are notoriously unreliable – representing the extreme tip of the iceberg. Rape victims caught up in conflict or crisis are among the world’s least visible, least accessible people, in some of the most austere, remote regions. Rape is a preferred method of torture precisely because victims won’t talk about it. As many of you will have read and heard, known victims are stigmatized: wives are rejected by husbands; girls are rendered “unmarriageable”. Worse still, survivors risk being accused of adultery, “illegal pregnancy”, or of tainting family “honor”. Reporting is often seen as futile. For instance, of some 14,200 rape cases registered in South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo, between 2005 and 2007, just 2% of perpetrators were ever called to account.

In fact, rape is one of the only crimes for which a community's response is often to stigmatize the victim, rather than the perpetrator. This misplaced blame and shame is compounded by a historical absence of accountability. Certainly, I'm not saying that justice can give a woman her health back; a mother her daughter back; or a girl her childhood back. But visibly prosecuting sexual violence tells them – and any potential perpetrator – that *women's lives matter*.

We have only recently begun to recognize that there is method in this madness. Perpetrators know that rape has ripple-effects for families, communities and nations that make peace less possible. These effects include forcing populations to flee – abandoning everything they have worked for their entire lives – and undercutting community cohesion, including as an economic unit. Militarized rape devastates *lives* and *livelihoods*, often exacerbating the “feminization of poverty”. As Julienne Lusenge, an activist from Eastern DRC, told the Security Council in the lead-up to last month's debate: “*Sexual violence holds entire communities hostage: women cannot access water-point and children cannot get safely to school*”. Victims have little hope of seeing their rapist brought to justice, yet constant fear seeing him in streets, fields and marketplaces. For these women, justice delayed is more than justice denied – *it is terror continued*. Even when longed-for *peace*, brings little *peace of mind*.

As one seasoned peacekeeper said recently, it is “*now more dangerous to be a woman than a soldier in modern conflicts*”. Let's reflect on that for a moment. It has become more dangerous to be a woman collecting firewood, than to be on the front lines as a fighter. This turns the law of armed conflict on its head; it makes a mockery of civilian protection. The UN has said it, the International Committee of the Red Cross has said it, and every nation on earth has signed up to it in the *Geneva Conventions*: civilians and their property must be protected, even in the midst of war. Nowhere is the need to preserve the civilian/combatant distinction more apparent than in the plight of women – increasingly engulfed in a progressively widening scope of violence.

But what do we mean by sexual violence as a “tactic of war”? This is not *rape out of control*, it is *rape under orders*. It is rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, or forced impregnation, as a *means of achieving political and military ends*.

Sexual violence has become a *tactic of choice* for armed groups – cheaper, more destructive and easier to get away with other methods of warfare – *until now*. On June 19<sup>th</sup>, the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1820, raising the political, military and economic cost of this crime. This resounding recognition, that durable peace can never be built on women's silent suffering, is both a milestone in itself and a reinforcement of its path-breaking predecessor: Security Council Resolution 1325.

There are four concrete reasons Resolution 1820 represents a major advance.

**First, it links sexual violence as a tactic of war with the international peace and security agenda**, ending – once and for all – the debate over whether this is a matter for the Council to address. In the words of U.S. Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, who chaired the session: “*sexual violence profoundly affects not only the health and safety of women, but the economic and social stability of their nations*”.

This discredits the “public/private divide” that has served to keep rape under the radar of international, regional and national security institutions. Often called “a war within the war”, rape occurs in private spaces rarely patrolled by police or peacekeepers, often in the dead of night, when security actors are scarce. As recently as last October’s debate on Women, Peace and Security, some Council members portrayed sexual violence as an unfortunate byproduct of war that did not fall within their purview. Significantly, they can never make that argument again.

And this matters because we know that practical, tactical gaps have policy roots. Strategic responses have been elusive because the phenomenon has been sidelined as a “women’s issue”, a “gender issue” or as “random, isolated acts”, “collateral damage”, humanitarian tragedy”. In calling upon belligerents, commanders and uniformed peacekeepers to step-up prevention and response, the resolution broadens the constituency for women’s protection. It is no longer a matter left to a lone Gender Adviser, the Ministry of Women’s Affairs or women’s NGOs. And why should it be? Like any other illicit method of warfare, mass rape engages the responsibility of operational actors: force commanders, the Ministry of Defense, planners and tacticians.

Resolution 1820 outlines concrete actions including not only training, but also military disciplinary measures – and indeed, soldiers consistently say: “*one act of military discipline is worth ten human rights trainings.*” Other actions include upholding command responsibility for failure to prevent and punish rape; and vetting past perpetrators from armed and security forces. By defining sexual violence as a security matter – as the Security Council has done with issues such as climate change and AIDS – the resolution fills a doctrinal gap and gives peacekeepers the principled support they need. Mandate authorizations and renewals for peacekeeping missions should now systematically empower them to respond with the same alacrity as they would to any other atrocity.

**Secondly**, the new resolution **brings the policy framework squarely into alignment with international law**, reaffirming the status of sexual violence as a war crime, crime against humanity and constituent act of genocide, depending on the elements of the offence.

This shows that mass rape is no more “inevitable” than mass murder. Though disastrous for nations, it is *not* a natural disaster. Though a vector of deadly disease, it is *not* an epidemic. Sexual violence is a *crime* attracting individual and superior responsibility. Under Resolution 1820, it can be sanctioned as such. The Security Council has affirmed its intention to consider sexual violence when establishing or renewing State-specific sanctions regimes.

When the issue of sexual violence arose at Nuremberg after the Second World War, the Prosecutor said simply: “*the Tribunal will forgive me if I avoid citing the atrocious details*”. With these words, women’s suffering was silenced, obscured and stricken from the historical record. In today’s war-zones, mass rape remains “atrocious”, but can no longer be dismissed as a “detail”. Today, international criminal law, reflected in the *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court* and the jurisprudence of the *ad hoc* war crimes tribunals, is a vehicle for putting names to history’s most complex horrors; it lifts the “fog of war” to make women’s faces visible; increasing the scope of consequences any perpetrator to consider.

**Thirdly, it affirms the importance of women’s participation** in all processes related to ending sexual violence, including through structured access to peace talks. In this respect it once again bolsters Resolution 1325. Whereas this earlier resolution broadly addresses the impact of war on women and their contribution to conflict resolution and sustainable peace, the new resolution focuses on sexual violence specifically. Women’s groups around the globe lobbied hard for both, and these two resolutions must be seen as *mutually-reinforcing*.

Sexual violence prevention is inseparable from the empowerment of women. This is equally true in situations of natural disaster. When society crumbles, as in the wake of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami or the recent cyclone in Myanmar, those *least* empowered suffer *most*. But the word “woman” is not synonymous with “victim”. For the UN, an integral element of what it means to “build back better” is building women’s confidence, competence and credibility to participate in public life. Resolution 1820 makes clear that women must be at the forefront of all efforts taken on their behalf. Peace agreements represent “windows of opportunity” for inclusive reforms. But, as one woman activist from Burundi told the UN Peacebuilding Commission in March: “*we don’t need a window through which to view a better future; we need a door through which to enter it*”.

**Finally**, the resolution requests the Secretary-General to provide a **comprehensive report** on implementation and to devise a **lasting solution for improving the flow of information on sexual violence to the Council**. This is tremendously important. Improving the quality of data, reporting and trend analysis ends the self-perpetuating myth that sexual violence in conflict didn’t happen, because it didn’t feature in anyone’s reports. Better data on prevalence, patterns and the profile of perpetrators will be able to inform better responses at country level.

### **So, what now?**

Any resolution is only as good as its follow-up. Indeed, women’s NGOs are already asking – quietly and not so quietly – *will the United Nations walk its talk?* In a letter to the Council dated 12<sup>th</sup> June, a coalition of 71 Congolese women’s groups signaled the significance of this development: “*...while we applaud your recent condemnation of the sexual violence we suffer, and your actions in that regard, we remind you, Mr. Secretary-General that we have suffered for decades without any notable action on your part. You must ensure that this situation will never repeat itself in the Congo or elsewhere.*”

For **States**, the new policy paradigm should spur them to treat sexual violence prevention and response as an *obligation*, not an *aspiration*. The Resolution calls on governments to strengthen judicial and health-care systems to provide sustainable assistance to survivors.

For countries **committing troops and police to peacekeeping missions**, they must ensure that all personnel sent to UN peacekeeping missions are trained on the categorical prohibition of sexual violence, as well as on the UN’s “zero tolerance” policy on sexual exploitation and abuse by its own personnel. Moreover, forces generated should include women to ensure closer liaison with the host community and to capitalize on their comparative advantage in sexual violence response.

From the second their boots touch the ground, **peacekeepers** can set the tone for how a community views and treats women. Consulting with them, fostering and reinforcing their role in peace and security, treating them with respect, can have an enduring impact. We have seen that even under-equipped, under-resourced and under-fire, peacekeepers have endeavored to protect women and girls. And we have learned over and over again what a difference that makes.

In terms of **justice institutions**, the Security Council debate heard in *statement after statement*, from *State after State*, that impunity fuels the vicious cycle of sexual violence. Twenty seven States expressly referenced the International Criminal Court as a vehicle for deterring would-be perpetrators. The new resolution says that sexual violence cannot be, I repeat, *cannot be* included in amnesty provisions – meaning we cannot forgive war crimes against women. There is a clear obligation to either *prosecute* alleged offenders or *extradite* them for trial. Failure to address sexual violence, in a manner consistent with the protection of victims and witnesses, erodes efforts to resurrect the rule of law in countries emerging from conflict.

For its part, **UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict** is mentioned in the resolution as playing a role in ongoing coordination of efforts across the UN system to create awareness about sexual violence in armed and post-conflict situations, and ultimately to end it. UN Action, of which I am immensely proud to be Chair, will help coordinate, streamline and up-scale system-wide efforts, including monitoring the work of the Security Council. Strong, specific mandates are required for a robust response. Military peacekeepers have made it clear: they cannot operate in an environment of ambiguity. In this regard, we would look to last December’s mandate renewal for the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo – which for the first time explicitly calling for sexual violence reporting and response – as a precedent. UN Action, in partnership with UNIFEM and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, will advance efforts to catalogue good peacekeeping practices that work to protect women, to help meet the resolution’s call for guidelines.

Thus, we are meeting at an opportune moment.

The United Nations has a newly-articulated responsibility and roadmap for action. It must put the full force of its moral and operational power behind ending this violence, prosecuting the perpetrators and assisting those who survive.

We can each find ways, in our respective spheres of influence, to capitalize on the current momentum as a message of hope to women the world-over. For instance, we can be vigilant about harnessing the media to keep sexual violence on the agenda, including in relation to so-called “forgotten conflicts and crises”. We can be vigilant about reminding elected officials to match the commitments they have made with resolve and resources. We can demand that people running for office in this country to speak and be educated about it.

Rape has been an atrocity of war since time immemorial – yet there is no memorial to the Unknown Raped Woman. She is just becoming visible. I began by reflecting on history and it is high-time to consign sexual violence – the barbarism of “looting, raping, pillage and plunder” – to the annals of history, where it belongs. Together we can and must help bend the “arc of

history” toward the goal of durable gender *justice* for Sara and for the millions like her across the developing world.

Thank you.

## QUESTION AND ANSWER

**Ms. Ellis:** We’ll now open it up for the Q & A. I’m going to turn to Dawn Calabria for the first question.

**Ms. Calabria:** That was a very intelligent address and I thank you very much for your work and for the work of the other women at the United Nations. I know that this Secretary Rice thing will help bring things about. But now my question is that, we’ve talked about how we’re trying to prevent and deal with the consequences with rape. I’d like to know if you, in your capacity at UNDP and the Crisis Prevention and Recovery Unit, are able to help countries address these kinds of things. In other words, are you working on programs to help women who’ve gone through these things, to develop jurisprudence mechanisms for women so that they can bring a case against someone? What are the next steps now that we have this on the books and now that we’ve got to take this very seriously? How are we going to help some of the victims and some of the institutions that should be helping them?

**Dr. Cravero:** What are we doing? The UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict was formed in order to bring the major UN institutes that were working on various aspects of rape and reducing sexual violence together in a more coherent way to support what the UN was doing on the ground. We’re all based in New York but we’re trying to support the work that’s going on, on the ground, so it includes agencies that work in different areas. For instance, one member of the UN Action is the UN Population Fund, which really focuses on health assistance to survivors of sexual violence. As the UN Development Program, we are really trying to go after access to justice and ending impunity. I think that Dawn’s question was a very good one and the way she put it indicates an understanding of the complexity of these issues. If you want to make law real for women, first there has to be the law, then they have to know about the law, then there has to be ways for them to access the law, then they have to be able to survive after they enforce the law. So, when you look at it that way, you can see that it needs to be a comprehensive approach to programming.

We have the World Food Programme as part of UN Action, UNICEF, the UN Population Fund, UNAIDS, they’re all a broad range of organizations and we’re trying to help country teams on the ground look at it in this broad way. And, raise more money, time, and attention from our own organizations as well as getting the resolution. Getting the resolution is the first step but it is an enormous first step in terms of political will because there is a lot more to be done.

**Ambassador Glenda Morean-Phillip:** I’m Glenda Morean-Phillip, Ambassador of Trinidad and Tobago. I just want to follow up on the question that Dawn just asked. We have had some international criminal tribunals for awhile. Also, you mentioned Bosnia and Herzegovina. Now



that there is this resolution, I wonder, I believe that the UN should look towards going forward on establishing a tribunal to prosecute the perpetrators of rape.

**Dr. Cravero:** I think that tribunals for prosecuting rape are something that we should seriously consider. There is debate about whether there should be a separate tribunal for prosecuting rape. At this point in history, would that tribunal have the most junior lawyers and the least amount of money? Is it better to get the prosecution of rape mainstreamed into the tribunals of war crimes, as a war crime, rather than setting it apart? The bottom line is that rape needs to be publicly and consistently prosecuted.

**Question:** I'm Jomane Qaddar from the RFK Center for Human Rights. My question is specifically regarding the Sudan. The current definition of rape is kind of set in as a medical definition so that women have to admit having committed illegal intercourse, which is a very shameful thing. Within the system, they have to admit that in order to get any legal help at all. I was wondering if countries are being encouraged, specifically countries that have weakened political systems, to change these sorts of definitions?

**Dr. Cravero:** In Sudan, we at the UNDP support a program in Darfur to increase women's access to justice, specifically in cases of rape. We've had an enormous amount of success in helping women report rape and actually get successful prosecution of it. At UNDP, we do that in a number of countries, like the ones you referred to. However, what I think we need to recognize here is, we're talking about rape as a war crime, as a universal definition. We don't look at what was the particular law of the country in which she got raped. If it was done as a strategy, as a method of war, if it occurred in the context of a war, that's an important distinction.

**Question:** I'm Virginia Bouvier from the U.S. Institute of Peace. Thank you first of all for your presentation, it is an important issue. I want to follow up; you mentioned the tens of thousands of women who have been subjected to sexual violence after the ex-combatants have been demilitarized. And this is something that we're seeing a lot in many post-conflict situations. I wonder if UN Action is organizing any sort of systematic data across countries; and where would that happen? The UN Secretary-General is now looking to systematize some data and I think that is really needed. I wonder if in anybody specifically has looked at this issue across DDR programs.

**Dr. Cravero:** We actually, as a UN system, have something called the integrated standards for DDR programs. DDR programs are disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs. So it's an important approach to how you go from a militarized society that has been at civil war for years. How do you reintegrate people? Either you reintegrate soldiers into a national army or you reintegrate them back into civilian life at home. In order to do DDR, there are situations in which people are in camps for some amount of time, etc. So that's the origin of the question.

We have integrated standards for DDR programs within the UN system, which over 20 organizations follow in their approach to DDR. There is a whole section of these standards that deal with sexual and gender based violence. And we need to pay special attention to sexual and gender based violence in the context of these programs. So, we absolutely focus on that. And even outside of formal DDR programs, we know that the reintegration process is also going to be

difficult, it's frustrating, and it's also a situation in which the levels of sexual violence can be quite high.

There is the direct rate by armed groups as a tactic or strategy of war and then there are the many situations in which rape and sexual violence are elevated because of the impacts of that war. For instance, there was one situation in one country, where men were being blocked, they were being stopped at a roadblock and only women were being allowed to get through the roadblock. Therefore, only women could actually earn any income. They were the only ones who could get a job because they could get past the roadblock. So what happened? The areas where they were coming from, the levels of domestic violence skyrocketed because, in the homes, men felt completely disempowered. They could not longer fulfill their roles. So not only were these women earning the money and working all day, but they were coming home to high levels of domestic violence. So, we need to look at the problem broadly.

**Didi Cutler:** I'm Didi Cutler, Board Member of UNDP-USA and member of the WFPG. I'm wondering if these are legal actions only for war crimes, because I'm thinking about honor crimes and I'm thinking specifically of Queen Rania, who tried to get legislation passed in Jordan against honor crimes and make it really punishable. She took it to parliament and it was denied and I don't know, actually, where it is now. Are you only dealing with war or also with honor crimes, because they are so terrible?

**Dr. Cravero:** The UN system absolutely is involved with trying to create environments where there will be legislation against honor crimes and there will be prosecution when those crimes occur. It's a very important part of UNDP work and democratic government, this legislation to reduce domestic and sexual violence broadly. Resolution 1820 deals specifically with rape and sexual violence crimes that occur in conflict or immediate post-crisis situations. So it would cover honor crimes that occur in that point of time. But then it would be linked to UN Action that's trying to look much more broadly at sexual violence and how levels get raised over time.

**Ms. Ellis:** I'd just like to follow up and ask you about the impact of the world food crisis. Because we're also not talking about war but, if you could talk about what impact you think this is having on increased violence against women and how that could be factored into actions that have to be taken against violence.

**Dr. Cravero:** The food crisis relates to what I was saying before. There are two problems, I mean there are many problems, but in terms of sexual violence, the food crisis itself causes crisis. We've seen it in Haiti, we're seeing it in Guinea; we're seeing it in a number of countries where actual riots on the streets and social unrest are caused by the food crisis. In those situations, levels of sexual violence and rape go way up. But, before it erupts in a crisis we can see, the food crisis starts to eat away at harmony and relationships inside a home and can result in higher levels domestic violence way before you actually see riots on the street. So, it's a highly relevant and dangerous phenomenon for women.

**Question:** I'm Yingling Liu from the Worldwatch Institute. Are you taking any legal action to encourage the set up of special units of peacekeeping troops to review testimonies and to work with political leaders and also the victims on the ground? And another question is that, within

the United Nations, do you have a certain degree of response agencies in the units to address the nature of these crimes?

**Dr. Cravero:** Special units both to deal with the perpetrators and to assist the survivors are enormously effective when they are set up well and properly resourced. The problem is, that's not very often. Female peacekeepers, female police, female humanitarian workers, make a huge difference. Women will open up to them, women will talk to them, there's more of a liaison, there's more of an instinctual understanding of a dangerous situation for women to be in. It just makes an enormous amount of difference. The Secretary-General is repeatedly asking for the countries that commit troops and resources to peacekeeping missions to put women forward.

One example is an all-female police troop from India that's been deployed to Liberia. I actually was at a meeting with the current the commander of that police force. She said that shortly after they got there, because they were all staying in the same compound, women began to gather. Pretty soon, every evening, there were a couple hundred women in front of this police compound. So finally the commander and a couple of others went out and said "what are you doing?" The women said, "we're just praying for you, we're just thanking God that you're here and hoping that you'll never leave." I don't think that happens outside of every peacekeeping compound.

**Question:** I'm Kristen Wells with the Committee on Foreign Affairs. Senator Biden introduced a bill called the International Violence Against Women Act. There are a number of things to address international violence issues against women, including decisions we are making in U.S. foreign policy that directly speak to women. My main question for you is what role can a country like the United States play, what kinds of things can we do? This legislation has been introduced but it's probably going to change before it actually gets passed. Over the coming recess we will be looking very carefully at this issue. Hopefully we'll be traveling to places in Africa. So I'm just curious, if you were to look at three or four things a country like the United States or other major leaders in Western Europe possibly, despite their own internal problems and of course the United States is not foolproof on domestic violence issues or violence against women issues either. But as we look towards foreign policy, what kinds of roles can strong states like ours play in helping people address this international issue?

**Dr. Cravero:** On what can a country like the United States do, I could talk for a long time. Let me say three things that I think we could do. One, the United States can use its membership as a permanent five member of the Security Council to insist that every single peacekeeping mandate, whether it's a new one being created or one being renewed, has strong language on the need to report, the need to invest in reporting on sexual violence, and the need to be adequately staffed and resourced to provide protection for women and to start to create an environment where the level of sexual violence will go down. That's number one.

Number two, relates to in country U.S. ambassadors. I was a UN representative in four different countries and there were many situations in which I could not get in to see the president, sometimes I could. But, I can tell you that in each of those countries, if the U.S. ambassador called to speak to the president of that country, he or she got in the door that afternoon. So, the idea that you could get it on the radar screens for U.S. ambassadors in countries to say: this is

something that we as a partner, we as an ally, we as a funder, we want to see action. Right now, through pressure like that, President Kabila has finally indicted three of his top military commanders in Eastern Congo for rape but he hasn't done anything else yet. He's going to prosecute, but they're still out there free. He has announced that he's going to prosecute them but nothing's happened yet. As I said when I was speaking, one act of military discipline is worth a year of human rights training. That's second.

And thirdly, media, I mean, getting this out in the media. Some of you may have seen the film on sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A lot of people can't even get through that film and that's just the tip of the iceberg, watching. So, get that kind of thing out there. Make people watch it. Make them understand what's happening. And I think we have a lot of leeway to do that.

I have to say, I haven't read the bill but it certainly seems like that would be a fourth thing. Get a bill like that, if it's only a start, but it forces this issue to be integrated into U.S. foreign aid assistance programs and to how countries are evaluated in their use any assistance they are given. It's all really important. Every step in the right direction is part of the journey.

**Question:** I'm Jeannine Scott from Africare. I was wondering if you might speak as well to the situations of refugee and stateless women. We know that, very often, as a result of conflict situations we see the proliferation of populations of women, who are displaced in a country or are facing situations within their own country. But they are under refugee camps or into even stateless situations and they have special situations that they face as a result of that. I'm wondering how some of the issues that you are addressing also will reach out and address them in their plight.

**Dr. Cravero:** Despite the terrible things that happen in refugee camps, once refugee women get in a camp setting, ironically, they have a better shot of somehow getting some level of protection than they do outside a refugee camp. Of course, a lot of refugee women are not in camps, they are just fleeing. And stateless women have no protection. When we are talking about prosecuting rapes as war crimes, we're not going to make anybody show a passport when they report rape as a war crime. We just want to help women say, "this happened to me". And of course, we want to reduce statelessness. Being a stateless woman must be the most vulnerable position in the universe, you're just vulnerable to everything. So, first of all, we obviously have to reduce the number of stateless women. Certainly, at the UN, we are very aware that that protection has to be offered in the quickest, most effective way to those women.

**Question:** Kristen Wells, Committee on Foreign Affairs. I'd like to follow up on her question. There is a statelessness bill that we might be marking up this month or hopefully next month in the Committee on Foreign Affairs. We're trying to get the United States government to support more than they already have been doing in the efforts that the UN has started taking on statelessness. I believe it is the UNHCR that is the lead agency. If you're interested in refugees and statelessness, I would encourage you to take a look and keep your eye out for that bill and it should be on [www.congress.gov](http://www.congress.gov) which is the website you can use to look up the bill

**Ms. Calabia:** The bill is number HR 6520.

**Dr. Cravero:** Thank you both.

**Question:** I'm Courtney Stuckwisch from the Women's Foreign Policy Group. My question is about awareness. You just explained to us that the issue is higher on the agenda. But, what are some other campaigns? I know you mentioned Stop Rape Now, but how is that campaign going to change the situation with the passing of this resolution? How can awareness be raised?

**Ms. Ellis:** And since she is a young woman, how can you get this issue on the radar screen of the next generation of women leaders?

**Dr. Cravero:** I think that UN Action just hired a full time advocacy officer, Letitia Anderson, who is here. And one of the reasons I wanted her to be here was to see how we would partner. Part of Letitia's job is to see how we can partner. We actually have a website that we were helped by, I know you announced your pro-bono lawyer, well we got an advertising firm that did our entire website pro-bono. So it's not one of the boring UN websites, it's very interactive. You should have seen our name before this wonderful group of colleagues came and said "no, no, no, no". And they came up with the name Stop Rape Now ([www.stoprapenow.org](http://www.stoprapenow.org)). We had some long UN name. So that has been hugely helpful. We would like to partner with organizations like this one and organizations that women in this room and men in this room come from in order to get awareness out. I think this is something that people, it doesn't matter what underlying political philosophy you have. I mean, people understand that this is something that shouldn't happen. It's a way of drawing people in also for other issues.

**Ms. Ellis:** I want to thank Kathleen so much for this really important and informative presentation. There's a lot to be done and obviously a lot of people in this room have good ideas and want to be involved and so we look forward to working with you and UNDP. I also want to thank the staff of the WFPG and the UNDP for making this all possible. Thank you all for coming and we'll see you next time.