

**GLOBAL FUND FOR WOMEN
CENTER FOR HEALTH AND GENDER EQUITY (CHANGE)**

Thursday, May 29, 2014

For Immediate Release

**U.S./INTERNATIONAL NGO LEADERS CALL ON KERRY TO ENSURE GLOBAL
SEXUAL VIOLENCE SUMMIT ADDRESSES ACCESS TO ABORTION**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Nearly 70 leaders of U.S. and international organizations committed to human rights and the sexual and reproductive health of women and girls globally sent a letter today to U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry asking him to “accelerate U.S. leadership in ensuring women and girls who are raped have access to post-rape care that is comprehensive and rights-based,” calling U.S. leadership for care that includes abortion access “critical.”

The letter, coordinated by the Global Fund for Women and the Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE), includes signers from 35 nations such as: AIDS Accountability International (South Africa); Amnesty International USA (United States); Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW, Malaysia); Association of Women’s Organizations in Jamaica (Jamaica); B.a.B.e. (Croatia); Human Rights Watch (United States); Red Nacional de Mujeres (Colombia); Synergie des Femmes pour les Victimes des Violences Sexuelles (SFVS, Democratic Republic of Congo); United Nations Foundation (United States); World YWCA (Switzerland).

In June, the U.S. is expected to take a leadership role in the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, hosted in London by U.K. Foreign Secretary William Hague. “The London Summit will be an opportunity for the U.S. government to demonstrate its ongoing commitment to the prevention of and response to global sexual violence,” the letter stated.

“Where the United States chooses to direct its money and how it shapes its policies has a ripple effect throughout the world,” said Global Fund for Women President and CEO Dr. Musimbi Kanyoro. “Now, with the momentum of the summit propelling us forward, it is time to support comprehensive sexual and reproductive healthcare for women and girls, including access to safe abortion when required.”

“We applaud the U.S. for its leadership in addressing gender-based violence globally,” said CHANGE President Serra Sippel. “However, the conversation cannot stop at prevention. It is imperative that the response to rape in conflict and crisis is a pivotal part of the conversation at the summit and beyond. This letter shows that there is significant support to ensure access to comprehensive post-rape care, including abortion.”

“We...ask that leading up to – and during – the London Summit, the U.S. be bold in its call for a global response to sexual violence against women and girls that addresses both prevention and the response to sexual violence,” the letter stated. “Most urgently, we ask that the U.S. specifically endorse a complete medical response to sexual violence that includes access to safe abortion services, in addition to emergency contraception to prevent unwanted pregnancy and post-exposure prophylactics to prevent HIV infection.”

The letter follows a larger effort to secure executive action from President Obama on the Helms amendment – a decades-old provision that forbids the U.S. to fund abortion services as a method of family planning but does not prohibit such funding in the cases of rape, incest, or life endangerment. Lack of clarity around the Helms amendment has resulted in its misapplication as a complete ban. It also comes on the heels of a letter to President Obama from more than [30 faith-based leaders](#) urging the president to take executive action on Helms, calling access to abortion a “moral imperative.”

Attention Reporters and News Editors: For a copy of the letter to Secretary Kerry, and complete list of signers, [click here](#).

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