

## Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence is the term used to encompass a category of crimes that are often committed against women and girls. Women are disproportionately victimized by sexual violence, sex trafficking, illegal property seizure and many other forms of violence.

Victimized women often find little recourse in the devastating aftermath of abuse, due to overburdened legal systems or a lack of police training. After sexual assault, women and girls can be further victimized by a lack of forensic capacity in the justice system, resulting in incomplete or inaccurate documentation of the physical results of such crimes, which makes securing justice in court far more difficult, if not impossible.

When women can rely on their local justice systems for protection of the law, their vulnerability to gender-based violence is dramatically reduced.

### THE FACTS

- At least one out of every three women in the world has been raped, beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise violently abused in her lifetime. (U.N. Development Fund for Women)
- Worldwide, up to one in five women report experiencing sexual abuse as children. (WHO)
- Eighty percent of trafficking victims are women and girls. (U.S. Department of State)

### IJM'S RESPONSE

IJM works with local officials to prosecute perpetrators of gender-based violence who commit acts of sexual violence, sex trafficking and illegal property seizure. By building the expectation of predictable prosecutions, convictions and jail time, IJM casework deters would-be perpetrators from committing these crimes. IJM provides training for local officials, as well as community trainings on these forms of violence in order to foster social demand for responsive public justice systems and educate populations on their own rights. Finally, when a woman or girl is represented by an IJM legal team, IJM aftercare staff help her to develop sustainable income-generating activities or ensure access to school, helping to reduce vulnerability to further crimes.



### AISHA'S STORY - UGANDA

After the death of her husband, a male relative forged a contract in order to steal Aisha's\* land. The perpetrator took advantage of Aisha's vulnerability: women's property rights – particularly those of widows – are violated on a massive scale in the developing world. Aisha desperately needed her property; not only was it her home, but it was her source of income for herself and her children.

IJM Uganda advocated for Aisha's property rights, forcing the perpetrator to relinquish his forged document and ensuring that Aisha and her children could live safely on their land. IJM aftercare staff have assisted Aisha in starting a chicken business that is now a sustainable source of income for the family.

### ABOUT INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE MISSION

International Justice Mission is a human rights agency that secures justice for victims of slavery, sexual exploitation and other forms of violent oppression. IJM lawyers, investigators and aftercare professionals work with local officials to ensure immediate victim rescue and aftercare, to prosecute perpetrators and to promote functioning public justice systems.



IJM.org

\* In order to protect this IJM client, a pseudonym has been used. Real name and casework documentation are on file with IJM.