

Amanitare Sexual Rights Network
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August 12, 2011

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

We urge you to take action on a matter of utmost urgency; the routine denial of abortions for girls and women impregnated by rape in armed conflicts. The current US “no abortion” policy, attached to all humanitarian aid, including aid to countries in conflict, contains no enumerated exception for rape or for situations where the pregnancy threatens life. Given the broad reach and influence of US foreign aid, this policy is a major reason for the omission of abortion from medical services in humanitarian settings. For the reasons detailed below, we urge that you issue an Executive Order lifting the abortion prohibitions imposed on humanitarian aid for victims of rape in armed conflict, and, by doing so, reaffirm the role of the US as a standard bearer for the laws of war.

The ongoing and systemic use of rape as a weapon of war is a gross violation of international humanitarian law, threatening global peace and security. The United States has taken a leadership role in addressing these international crimes, including by proposing Security Council Resolution 1820 which acknowledges that “rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute a war crime, a crime against humanity, or a constitutive act with respect to genocide.”

Rape and forced pregnancy are part of horrific violent attacks in armed conflicts intended to kill and mutilate girls and women. Those who survive such brutal rapes suffer from life-long physical, psychological and social consequences. These injuries are compounded for those girls and women victims who become pregnant from such rapes.

All victims of armed conflict are entitled to receive complete, appropriate and non-discriminatory medical care under international humanitarian law. The deliberate omission of abortion from medical services provided for victims of war not only violates international law, it prolongs victims’ injuries by forcing on them continued pregnancy and childbearing. Their only alternatives are to commit suicide or resort to life-threatening clandestine abortions.

Norway, during the Universal Periodic Review of the US at the Human Rights Council, recommended that the US lift the abortion restrictions on humanitarian aid for victims of rape in armed conflict. The US response citing to “currently applicable restrictions” as the reason the US cannot adopt Norway’s recommendation, confirms that lifting these restrictions is within the discretion of the Executive Branch.

The right to abortion for victims of war rape arises directly from their status as “protected persons,” including as the “wounded and sick,” under the Geneva Conventions. States in armed conflict have the primary obligation to provide non-discriminatory medical care to the wounded and sick under common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, Additional Protocols I and II and customary international law. Abortion services and counseling constitute medically appropriate treatment for survivors of rape who have been impregnated. In addition, rape in

situations of armed conflict has been recognized as a method of torture, and the denial of abortion to women who become pregnant as a result of being raped has also been considered to constitute torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

The US abortion restrictions on humanitarian aid undermine the rights of victims of rape in armed conflict to non-discriminatory medical care including abortions. They also violate US obligations under common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions to “respect” and “ensure respect” for the Geneva Conventions in all circumstances. This obligation requires the U.S. to ensure its own compliance with the requirements of the Geneva Conventions, and, in addition, to take affirmative actions with respect to states that are perpetrating or supporting violations. Rather than advocating for non-discriminatory medical care for rape victims, the US attaches its abortion prohibitions on

We respect your dedication to combating human rights abuses internationally and to ensuring US compliance with international law. We urge you to issue an Executive Order explicitly lifting the restrictions on abortion services for victims of war, thereby ensuring that US humanitarian aid relieves, and not perpetuates, human suffering.

Sincerely,



Dr Lesley Ann Foster

President of Amanitare Sexual Rights Network





EUROPEAN WOMEN'S
LOBBY
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Brussels, 1 August 2011

Your Excellency President Obama,

As the largest umbrella organisation of women's associations in the European Union, promoting women's rights and equality, we urge you to take action on a matter of utmost urgency: the routine denial of abortions for girls and women impregnated by rape in armed conflicts.

The European Women's Lobby (EWL) is the largest umbrella organisation of women's associations in the European Union (EU), working to promote women's rights and equality between women and men. EWL membership extends to organisations in all 27 EU member states and three of the candidate countries, as well as to 20 European-wide bodies, representing a total of more than 2500 organisations. Working with its members at national and European level, the EWL's objectives are to lobby for the realisation of gender equality and to monitor all European policies, in order to ensure the integration of a gender perspective in all areas and to ensure the respect for gender equality and women's human rights.

The current US 'no abortion' policy, attached to all humanitarian aid, including aid to countries in conflict, contains no enumerated exception for rape or for situations where the pregnancy threatens life. Given the broad reach and influence of US foreign aid, this policy is a major reason for the omission of abortion from medical services in humanitarian settings. For the reasons detailed below, we urge that you issue an Executive Order lifting the abortion prohibitions imposed on humanitarian aid for victims of rape in armed conflict, and, by doing so, reaffirm the role of the US as a standard bearer for the laws of war.

The ongoing and systemic use of rape as a weapon of war is a gross violation of international humanitarian law, threatening global peace and security. The United States has taken a leadership role in addressing these international crimes, including by proposing Security Council Resolution 1820 which acknowledges that 'rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute a war crime, a crime against humanity, or a constitutive act with respect to genocide.'

Rape and forced pregnancy are part of horrific violent attacks in armed conflicts intended to kill and mutilate girls and women. Those who survive such brutal rapes suffer from life-long physical, psychological and social consequences. These injuries are compounded for those girls and women victims who become pregnant from such rapes.

All victims of armed conflict are entitled to receive complete, appropriate and non-discriminatory medical care under international humanitarian law. The deliberate omission of abortion from medical services provided for victims of war not only violates international law, it prolongs victims' injuries by forcing on them continued pregnancy and childbearing. Their only alternatives are to commit suicide or resort to life-threatening clandestine abortions.

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EUROPEAN WOMEN'S
LOBBY
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES

response citing 'currently applicable restrictions' as the reason the US cannot adopt Norway's recommendation, confirms that lifting these restrictions is within the discretion of the Executive Branch.

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The US abortion restrictions on humanitarian aid undermine the rights of victims of rape in armed conflict to non-discriminatory medical care including abortions. They also violate US obligations under common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions to 'respect' and 'ensure respect' for the Geneva Conventions in all circumstances. This obligation requires the US to ensure its own compliance with the requirements of the Geneva Conventions, and, in addition, to take affirmative action with respect to states that are perpetrating or supporting violations. Rather than advocating for non-discriminatory medical care for rape victims, the US attaches its abortion prohibitions on aid to the 22 countries currently deemed to be in armed conflict.

While our organisation traditionally focuses on the European region, we are deeply concerned by this policy as it also affects European humanitarian aid once funds are pooled with US funds. The current restrictions are not only violating International Humanitarian Law but contradict the European Humanitarian Aid policy.

We respect your dedication to combating human rights abuses internationally and to ensuring US compliance with international law. We urge you to issue an Executive Order explicitly lifting the restrictions on abortion services for victims of war, thereby ensuring that US humanitarian aid relieves, and not perpetuates, human suffering.

Sincerely,

Brigitte Triems
EWL President

Copy to:

- Ms Margot Wallström, UN Special Representative for Sexual Violence in Conflict
- Ms Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
- Ms Viviane Reding, EU Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship
- Ms Kristalina Georgieva, EU Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response
- Mr. Andris Piebalgs, EU Commissioner for Development
- Mr. John Dalli, EU Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy

elokuu 11, 2011

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

We, the European Women Lawyers' Association (EWLA) are deeply concerned on a matter of utmost urgency; the routine denial of abortions for girls and women impregnated by rape in armed conflicts. The EWLA is an organization dedicated to promote fundamental rights and gender equality within law and politics.

The current US "no abortion" policy, attached to all humanitarian aid, including aid to countries in conflict, contains no enumerated exception for rape or for situations where the pregnancy threatens life. Given the broad reach and influence of US foreign aid, this policy is a major reason for the omission of abortion from medical services in humanitarian settings. For the reasons detailed below, we urge that you issue an Executive Order lifting the abortion prohibitions imposed on humanitarian aid for victims of rape in armed conflict, and, by doing so, reaffirm the role of the US as a standard bearer for the laws of war.

The ongoing and systemic use of rape as a weapon of war is a gross violation of international humanitarian law, threatening global peace and security. The United States has taken a leadership role in addressing these international crimes, including by proposing Security Council Resolution 1820 which acknowledges that "rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute a war crime, a crime against humanity, or a constitutive act with respect to genocide."

Rape and forced pregnancy are part of horrific violent attacks in armed conflicts intended to kill and mutilate girls and women. Those who survive such brutal rapes suffer from life-long physical, psychological and social consequences. These injuries are compounded for those girls and women victims who become pregnant from such rapes.

All victims of armed conflict are entitled to receive complete, appropriate and non-discriminatory medical care under international humanitarian law. The deliberate omission of abortion from medical services provided for victims of war not only violates international law, it prolongs victims' injuries by forcing on them continued pregnancy and childbearing. Their only alternatives are to commit suicide or resort to life-threatening clandestine abortions.

The right to abortion for victims of war rape arises directly from their status as "protected persons," including as the "wounded and sick," under the Geneva Conventions. States in armed conflict have the primary obligation to provide non-discriminatory medical care to the wounded and sick under common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, Additional Protocols I and II and customary international law. Abortion services and counseling constitute medically appropriate treatment for survivors of rape who have been impregnated. In addition, rape in situations of armed conflict has been recognized as a method of torture, and the denial of abortion to women who become pregnant as a result of being raped has also been considered to constitute torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

The US abortion restrictions on humanitarian aid undermine the rights of victims of rape in armed conflict to non-discriminatory medical care including abortions. They also violate US obligations under common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions to "respect" and "ensure respect" for the Geneva Conventions in all circumstances. This obligation requires the U.S. to ensure its own compliance with the requirements of

the Geneva Conventions, and, in addition, to take affirmative actions with respect to states that are perpetrating or supporting violations. Rather than advocating for non-discriminatory medical care for rape victims, the US attaches its abortion prohibitions on all humanitarian aid. This is of particular concern for us as an European Organization once funds for humanitarian assistance are commingled with funds provided by the US Government and thereby subjecting the entire pool of funds to the US abortion restrictions.

We respect your dedication to combating human rights abuses internationally and to ensuring US compliance with international law. We urge you to issue an Executive Order explicitly lifting the restrictions on abortion services for victims of war, thereby ensuring that US humanitarian aid relieves, and not perpetuates, human suffering.

Sincerely,

Prof. Dr. Jur. Herdís Thorgeirsdóttir
EWLA President
Avenue Louise 522 Bte. 11,
B-1050, Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32-2-638-98-50

ABOUT EWLA

The European Women Lawyers' Association (EWLA) was founded in 2000 and is a Brussels based international non-profit association. Ever since its founding congress in Berlin, EWLA has aimed to promote fundamental rights and gender equality within law and politics. It has organised events and published statements and resolutions that highlight the issue of fundamental rights and gender equality to politicians and law makers. EWLA has become the main network of women from all legal professions all over Europe – and beyond.

www.ewla.org

**SOLIDARITY FOR
AFRICAN WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

A force for freedom



**MOUVEMENT DE SOLIDARITÉ
POUR LES DROITS
DES FEMMES AFRICAINES**

Une force pour la liberté

August 10, 2011

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

I am writing on behalf of *Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR)*, a pan African coalition of 39 organizations and regional networks that are working for the recognition and promotion of the rights of women in Africa as laid out in the landmark Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa adopted in July 2003 by the African Heads of State and Government at the Second African Union Ordinary Summit held in Maputo, Mozambique. In spite of the very 'underdeveloped' status of women's rights as a whole, the Protocol, in recognition of the magnitude of unsafe abortion and its implications for maternal morbidity and mortality rates in the region, makes specific provision for women's sexual and reproductive rights in its Article 14 (2) (c) which calls upon States parties to ensure the protection of reproductive rights of women by authorizing medical abortion including in cases of sexual assault and rape.

The UN Security Council Resolution 1820 which was proposed by the US recognizes rape as a weapon in armed conflict: *"rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity or a constitutive act with respect to genocide."* In addition to health implications, rape destroys women's dignity through terror and humiliation which in turn has negative repercussions on entire communities. Even in normal situations the toll of unsafe abortion in Africa is unacceptably high. The WHO estimates that, worldwide, almost 20 million unsafe abortions take place each year, with 95% of these (19 million) performed in developing countries; the risk of death from unsafe abortion is about 1 in 150 procedures in Africa with the gap between developing and developed countries in terms of risk of death from unsafe abortion stands at an all time high of 1/150 000 in developing countries versus 1/150 in developed countries. Sadly, in situations of armed conflict where women often have fewer if any options, pregnancy resulting from rape and sexual assault more often than not becomes a death sentence in itself.

The US "no abortion" policy attached to all US humanitarian aid for victims of rape in armed conflicts, is particularly devastating in its implications for women in Africa where the status of women's' rights remains a matter of great concern currently being addressed at the highest continental levels including the Protocol's Articles 4 on the *Right to Integrity and*

Membres de la coalition

Action for Development (ACFODE), African Centre for Democracy And Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS), Akina Mama wa Afrika, Association des Juristes Maliennes, Cellule de Coordination sur les Pratiques Traditionnelle Affectant la Sante des Femmes et des Enfants, Coalition on Violence Against Women, Equality Now-Africa Regional Office, FAHAMU, FAMEDEV-Inter-African Network For Women, Media, Gender and Development, FEMNET - African Women's Development and Communication Network, Foundation for Community Development, Inter-African Committee on Harmful Traditional Practices (IAC), Oxfam GB, Reproductive Health and Rights Alliance (RHRA), Sister Namibia, Union Nationale des Femmes de Djibouti, Voix de Femmes, University of Pretoria Center for Human Rights, Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternatives, Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDFAF)

**SOLIDARITY FOR
AFRICAN WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

A force for freedom



**MOUVEMENT DE SOLIDARITÉ
POUR LES DROITS
DES FEMMES AFRICAINES**

Une force pour la liberté

Security of Person, 11 on the Protection of Women in Armed Conflict, and 14 on Health & Reproductive Rights.

August 12, 2011 will mark the 62nd anniversary of the adoption of the Geneva Convention of 1949 which makes provision for civilians' right to comprehensive and non-discriminatory medical care during armed conflict. We thus urge you, Mr. President, as we celebrate the creation of this milestone instrument for the promotion of human rights, to rescind the blanket abortion restrictions placed not only on all US humanitarian aid for women and girls in armed conflict, but on all US foreign assistance, and all foreign governments, NGOs and humanitarian aid providers that receive US funds, or whose donor funds are commingled with US funds, from offering abortion information or services with no exception made for rape or to save the life of a woman. This constitutes a gross violation of the rights of these women who find themselves in already dire situations.

We thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Faiza T. Mohamed', written in a cursive style.

Faiza Jama Mohamed
Director,
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Membres de la coalition

Action for Development (ACFODE), African Centre for Democracy And Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS), Akina Mama wa Afrika, Association des Juristes Maliennes, Cellule de Coordination sur les Pratiques Traditionnelle Affectant la Sante des Femmes et des Enfants, Coalition on Violence Against Women, Equality Now-Africa Regional Office, FAHAMU, FAMEDEV-Inter-African Network For Women, Media, Gender and Development, FEMNET - African Women's Development and Communication Network, Foundation for Community Development, Inter-African Committee on Harmful Traditional Practices (IAC), Oxfam GB, Reproductive Health and Rights Alliance (RHRA), Sister Namibia, Union Nationale des Femmes de Djibouti, Voix de Femmes, University of Pretoria Center for Human Rights, Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternatives, Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF)



Columbia University
MAILMAN SCHOOL
OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Heilbrunn Department of
Population and Family Health

March 4, 2011

Michael Posner, Assistant Secretary of State
Bureau of Democracy, Labor and Human Rights, US Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Posner:

As an expert in the field of reproductive health in conflict, I urge the US Department of State to respond affirmatively to Norway's recommendation, made as part of the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review process on November 5, 2010, that the US "*remove its blanket abortion restrictions on humanitarian aid covering the medical care given [to] women and girls who are raped and impregnated in situations of armed conflict.*"

The routine use of rape as a weapon of war has engendered increasing attention and concern from the international community. In addition to the profound violation inherent in any act of sexual violence, rape during conflict often involves particularly brutal violence intended to cause permanent mutilation, even death. For women who do survive, the physical and psychological recovery period may be prolonged due to social shunning, rejection by spouses, lack of available treatment, and the combined psychological toll of conflict and rape (Human Rights Watch, 2002). For women impregnated as a result of rape, this trauma is compounded, particularly if forced pregnancy has been a strategy of genocide (Wagner, 2006).

Our experience has shown us that it is possible to provide high-quality clinical services in response to rape in conflict settings. Yet women pregnant as result of rape during conflict can rarely obtain a safe abortion. Organizations receiving US humanitarian aid are constrained from providing the full range of medical services that women and girls who have been raped in conflict want and need.

These organizations are caught between their obligation to apply humanitarian standards, which require that they act to prevent forced pregnancy and carry out other activities in response to rape, and USAID Acquisition and Assistance Policy Directive 08-01, which prohibits them from offering abortion information, education, or services with their US funds (Center for Global Justice, 2010).

Ultimately, this policy results in needless suffering and preventable deaths. The inability of social systems, including health systems, to respond adequately to rape exacerbates this needless suffering and death.

I agree with the increasingly held view that denial of safe abortion for girls and women who have been raped in armed conflict constitutes cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment (Committee on Torture, 2009). I strongly urge the US to adopt Norway's recommendation to lift all restrictions related to abortion for survivors of rape from US humanitarian medical funding. As President Obama noted in his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance remarks, the US has long been a "standards bearer" in the laws of war. The US must continue this tradition and help to promote the efforts of countries in conflict to adhere to international humanitarian law.

Abortion for survivors of rape is a life-saving medical service that should be recognized as a protected and valid right. I would look forward to being able to promote the health and rights of the women and girls who are so profoundly affected by conflict.

Sincerely,

Therese J. McGinn, DrPH
Associate Professor of Clinical Population and Family Health
Heilbrunn Department of Population and Family Health
Mailman School of Public Health
Columbia University

References

Center for Global Justice, United States of America, Submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review, Ninth Session of the UPR Working Group of the Human Rights Council. New York: Center for Global Justice. (November 2010).

Committee against Torture, Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties under Article 19 of the Convention: Concluding Observations of the Committee against Torture, 16, U.N. Doc. CAT/C/NIC/CO/1 (Jun. 10, 2009).

Human Rights Watch. The war within the war: Sexual violence against women and girls in Eastern Congo. New York: Human Rights Watch; (2002).

Wagner, J. The Systematic Use of Rape as a Tool of War in Darfur: A Blueprint for International War Crimes Prosecutions. *Georgetown Journal of International Law* 37; 193. (2006).

The logo for the New York City Bar, featuring the text "NEW YORK CITY BAR" in a bold, serif font, centered between two horizontal blue bars.

NEW YORK
CITY BAR

SAMUEL W. SEYMOUR
PRESIDENT
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March 4, 2011

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

I write on behalf of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York regarding United States compliance with its international obligations under international humanitarian law to provide non-discriminatory medical care to women and girls raped and impregnated in armed conflict, including their right to receive abortion services. The Association is an independent non-governmental organization with a membership of more than 22,000 lawyers, judges, law professors and government officials from New York City, throughout the United States and abroad. Founded in 1870, the Association has a long history of dedication to international and humanitarian law.

Rape has increasingly been recognized by the international community as a weapon in armed conflict, as evidenced by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1820, which acknowledges that “rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity or a constitutive act with respect to genocide.” Rape is used in situations of armed conflict to destroy communities through terror and humiliation. Women who are raped and impregnated in situations of armed conflict suffer a wide range of significant physical, psychological and social consequences, including increased rates of maternal mortality, and risk of resorting to non-sterile or unsafe methods of abortion. It is critical that women and girls who are raped and impregnated in situations of armed conflict receive appropriate and non-discriminatory medical care. Tragically, women who become pregnant as a result of rape in situations of armed conflict are routinely denied access to abortion as part of their medical care. Consequently, women and girls who wish to end an unwanted pregnancy are denied such treatment and are consequently forced to carry an unwanted child to term, perpetuating the physical and psychological effects of their injury.

The United States is the world's largest provider of humanitarian assistance to victims of armed conflict, the overwhelming majority of whom are civilians. Regrettably, U.S. policies which place restrictions on U.S. funds for abortion related services contribute to the routine denial of access to the full range of medically appropriate care for victims of rape, which includes access to abortion. The source for these restrictions is the Helms Amendment, originally enacted in 1973, which prohibits the use of federal funds for abortion services "as a method of family planning" and currently applies to all aid provided through the Foreign Assistance Act. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has interpreted the statute broadly in regulations and other guidance and statements and has in practice restricted funding for all abortion services. Restricting funding for abortion services where they are medically indicated, such as is the case for victims of rape in situations of armed conflict, goes beyond the statute since such services cannot be considered a method of family planning. USAID has also inserted such restrictions reflecting its interpretation in virtually all contracts with foreign governments, and humanitarian and non-governmental organizations. Concern over such restrictions was expressed in the recommendation that the US "remove its blanket abortion restrictions on humanitarian aid covering the medical care given women and girls who are raped and impregnated in situations of armed conflict" made by Norway as part of the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review process.

USAID's current interpretation and implementation of the Helms Amendment goes beyond the statutory language, thus restricting the fundamental right of women who are victims of rape in a situation of armed conflict to non-discriminatory medical care and undermining U.S. efforts to meet its obligations under international law. The Association therefore recommends that you issue an executive order removing any restrictions on abortion funding imposed through regulations or other guidance or policies of government agencies from humanitarian assistance that conflict with or undermine U.S. compliance with its obligations under the Geneva Conventions and customary international law.

States have an obligation to provide non-discriminatory medical care to the wounded and sick under common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, Additional Protocols I and II and customary international law. Abortion services and counseling constitute medically appropriate treatment for survivors of rape who have been impregnated. In addition, rape in situations of armed conflict has been recognized as a method of torture, and the denial of abortion to women who become pregnant as a result of being raped has also been considered to constitute torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Consequently, the denial of the full range of medically appropriate care to victims of rape in situations of armed conflict constitutes a violation of their rights under applicable international law.

The United States has an obligation under common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions to "respect" and "ensure respect" for the Geneva Conventions. The obligation to respect and ensure respect means that the U.S. must not only ensure its own compliance with the requirements of the Geneva Conventions, it must also take action with respect to states that are perpetrating or supporting violations. Additional obligations arise under international law to the extent that rape and the denial of the medical option of abortion in a situation of armed

conflict amount to torture, a serious breach of a peremptory norm, or a constitutive act of genocide.

The application of the Helms Amendment restrictions to humanitarian assistance contributes to the widespread denial of abortion as a treatment for women and girls who are raped and impregnated in situations of armed conflict. Ending such restrictions in the context of armed conflict would significantly improve care for the wounded and sick as required by the Geneva Conventions and help to alleviate suffering for some of the most vulnerable victims of war crimes, who might otherwise be forced to exacerbate their wounds through seeking an unsafe abortion or bearing an unwanted child. I therefore respectfully request on behalf of the Association that you issue an executive order rescinding all restrictions on U.S. funds humanitarian assistance that would prevent abortion as medically indicated from being provided in situations of armed conflict.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our views on this important issue.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. W. Seymour', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Samuel W. Seymour

cc: Hon. Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of State
Hon. Harold Koh, Legal Adviser of the Department of State
Hon. Michael H. Posner, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights & Labor
Hon. Rajiv Shah, Administrator, United States Agency for International Development