

## APPENDIX 3

### REPORT OF THE GLOBAL TRIBUNAL/HEARING ON VIOLATIONS OF WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS

Submitted to the World Conference on Human Rights,  
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On Tuesday, over 1,000 people attended a day long Global Tribunal/Hearing on Violations of Women's Human Rights. We heard moving testimony by 33 women from all regions of the world about abuses they have suffered. These accounts demonstrated dramatically that the United Nations and governments have failed to promote and protect women's human rights.

Women testified to specific abuses in five basic areas:

- Human Rights Abuses in the Family
- War Crimes Against Women
- Violations of Women's Bodily Integrity
- Violations of Women's Socio-Economic Rights
- Political Persecution and Discrimination

This Tribunal/Hearing was the culmination of an international campaign by over 900 women's organizations around the world seeking to bring women's human rights issues onto the agenda of this conference. As I speak, women are delivering the signed petitions that started this campaign. This petition has been circulated in 124 countries and translated into 21 languages. It has been signed by almost half a million people. The petition reads:

*The Universal Declaration of Human Rights protects everyone "without distinction of any kind such as race, colour, sex, language...or other status" (art.2). Furthermore, "Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person (art.3) and "no one shall be subject to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment" (art.5). Therefore, we, the undersigned call upon the 1993 United Nations World Conference on Human Rights to comprehensively address women's rights at every level of its proceedings. We demand that gender violence, a universal phenome-*

*non which takes many forms across culture, race and class, be recognized as a violation of human rights requiring immediate action.*

In presenting these petitions and reporting on this Tribunal/Hearing, we ask this body to consider, “Why was such a Tribunal/Hearing necessary” Why has this area of massive violation of women remained invisible for so long? And what will the world community do to redress this abuse in the future?”

Abuses of women have too long been dismissed as private, family, cultural, or religious matters. Today we demand that they be seen for what they are: fundamental violations of the “right to life, liberty and security of person,” as guaranteed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Violations of woman’s rights not only rob us of our own human dignity and freedom, but also cause physical, mental and psychological damage. Millions of women die from these abuses every year.

The Global Campaign for Women’s Human Rights, a coalition of women’s groups from around the world, organized this one-day Tribunal/Hearing to bring to you and to the listening world these moving stories of women whose lives have been violated. In doing this, woman are tearing down the wall of silence that has prevented the world from recognizing the abuses women face.

We hope this concrete evidence of abuse will galvanize all of you to take decisive action to end such violations.

The coalition would like to present here the conclusions reached by our panel of distinguished judges. They are:

- **Gertrude Mongella**, Secretary-General of the UN 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women;
- **Ed Broadbent**, President of the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development in Montraeal;
- **Justice P.N. Bhagwati**, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India;
- **Elizabeth Odio**, Minister for Justice in Costa Rica and member of the UN Committee Against Torture.

We submit the recommendations of these judges to you for your urgent action. We hope you will be moved to assume responsibility for defending women’s human rights in the 21<sup>st</sup> century so that the promise of universal human rights will be realized. This is not an appeal on behalf of a special interest group, but rather, a demand to restore the birthright of half of humanity.

In response to the testimony given at the Tribunal/Hearing, a distinguished panel of judges issued the following statement:

*We have heard with anguish and profound regret the first-hand testimony of 33 courageous women from all parts of the world. They have borne personal witness before the Global Tribunal/Hearing on Violations of Human Rights to prove beyond any doubt that violations of women's human rights continue to be cruel and pervasive on a world scale.*

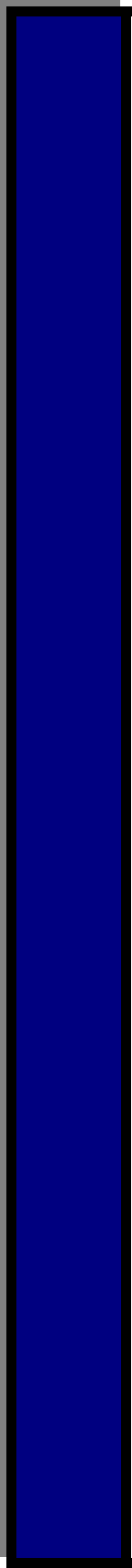
*These violations remain both unremedied and unrecognized as discriminatory or as an affront to women's human dignity. This widespread failure to recognize, honor, and protect women's human rights poses a challenge to the credibility and justice of international human rights law. We note with dismay that international human rights law has not been applied effectively against injustices women experience solely because of their gender.*

*We hereby affirm the principle of universality that protects all of humanity, including women. Universal human rights standards are rooted in all cultures, religions and traditions, but those cultural, religious and traditional practices that undermine universality and prove harmful to women cannot be tolerated.*

The judges then issued the following recommendations:

We call upon this World Conference on Human Rights, the United Nations and member states to establish mechanisms to prevent, investigate and provide redress for violations of women's rights. Here are the specific recommendations:

1. The establishment of an International Criminal Court for Women to protect and enforce women's human rights, including the rights to freedom from sexual abuse, mass rape and forced pregnancy in armed conflict;
2. The strengthening and enforcement of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Specifically by:
  - Universal ratification;
  - Withdrawal of all reservations made upon ratification which perpetuate women's subordination
  - Effective implementation, combined with elimination of cultural, religious and traditional stereotypes and practices which impede implementation;
3. The integration of gender perspectives in all human rights committees estab-



lished under human rights treaties to ensure application of all human rights treaties to all forms of subordination of women;

4. Expansion of the work of the United Nations and its specialized agencies for preventing and redressing all violations of women's rights. We recognize that these cruel and pervasive violations of women's rights retard the progress and development of society and can be prevented by treating women fairly and justly;

5. Recognition that many of these violations take place in the private sphere of the family, and that domestic violence is a violation of human rights. We recommend that the 1994 Year of the Family recognize all forms of supportive relationships that exist within and outside institutionalized family arrangements;

6. Adoption by the General Assembly of the Draft Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women; and

7. Establishment of a Special Rapporteur with a broad mandate to investigate violations of women's human rights.

Further, we call upon the non-governmental organizations and the world media to investigate and report all violations of women's human rights, and to help empower women through training to expose denials of justice by individuals and by all organs of the state.

We would like to close by underscoring the cruel and pervasive nature of the violations inflicted upon women. We congratulate the women who testified before us for their courage in bearing witness, and for their determination to give visibility to these violations that occur continuously against the rights of millions of women around the world.

The courage of these women will inspire many other women to speak out and to demand their human rights, and will encourage others to work for vindication. The voices of these women have broken the silence. Their appeal to the world must be heard. It must be recognized, investigated and sanctioned, and the violations of their human rights must be redressed.