

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Rio, Brazil: A convergence to place sexual violence, intimate partner violence, child abuse & maltreatment at the heart of resolve**

13 September 2017 | South Africa | A diverse assembly of global stakeholders will engage on possible interventions to prevent and manage the avalanche of gender-based violence (GBV) in various corners of the globe. According to worldwide estimates, about 1 in 3 (35%) women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime and globally, as many as 38% of murders of women are committed by a male intimate partner.

The South African Medical Research Council's (SAMRC) Gender and Health Research Unit having recently released a **Rape Justice in South Africa** report will present research reflecting the South African context at the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) Conference 18 – 21 September 2017. The Unit's report shows that the gaps in the country's criminal justice system continues to perpetuate unresolved cases of rape with only 340 guilty verdicts emanating from 3 952 reported rape cases.

"The shortfalls in case reporting; police investigations; medico legal examinations; and prosecution processes in cases of rape may not be unique to South Africa," says Elizabeth Dartnall, SVRI Research Manager. "We may find a common thread in developing countries where restricted resources and social constructs influence the reporting experience."

Themed: *Partnerships for Policy Action*, the Forum will unpack related themes and provide innovative intervention strategies pertaining to gender-based violence. The cascading forum themes reflect global GBV patterns and include mental health interventions, transactional sex, GBV in conflict settings and faith in GBV amongst others. Interpol, will present findings at the upcoming Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) Conference on research conducted on sexual homicides, femicide, intimate partner violence and the victimization of female sex workers in the country among other topics.

According to the Map of Violence survey in 2012, a woman is assaulted every 15 seconds in Brazil, and one is murdered every two hours. Within the past three decades, at least 92,000 women have been killed, many at the hands of their partners. In countries such as India 26 crimes of sexual violence and harassment are reported every hour but most remain unreported as GBV is deeply entwined with the social fabric.



“Although South Africa’s rape and violence statistics are particularly startling, GBV dynamics in our country are similar to most developing countries such as India and Brazil where rigid cultural and religious constructs perpetuate a dangerous patriarchy that allows for individuals to exert power on women and children,” says Dartnall.

The gendered nature of poverty and inequality will also be discussed at the Forum where themes such as power and violence within transactional sex as well as the diverse nature of sexual violence against children will be unpacked. In its fifth year, the SVRI Forum 2017 provides a timely space to discuss and share strategies for achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets aimed at ending all forms of violence against women and girls across the globe by 2030. In keeping with SDG targets, the Forum themes will also include trafficking, violence and torture against children; sexual violence in conflict and other harmful practices.

The forum will feature diverse programmes, with over 345 presentations about specific issues pertaining to countries across all regions of the world. A new theme concerning youth will feature this year by way of the Being Heard Project, which aims to meaningfully engage youth in understanding and preventing sexual violence. “We need to find the most appropriate approaches to facilitating young people’s participation as researchers and activists as and as future leaders in efforts to reduce violence against children and the toll it imposes on the lives of children and their families,” says Dr Garcia-Moreno.

Link to SVRI Conference page: <http://www.svri.org/forums/forum2017/index.htm>

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