



INTERNATIONAL  
**RESCUE**  
COMMITTEE

# **LET ME NOT DIE BEFORE MY TIME**

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN LIBERIA**

APRIL 2012

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

IN WEST AFRICA



**Liberia has made greater progress toward peace.**

**But women are still not safe.**

**And the primary threat is not a man with a gun or a stranger.**

**It is her partner.**



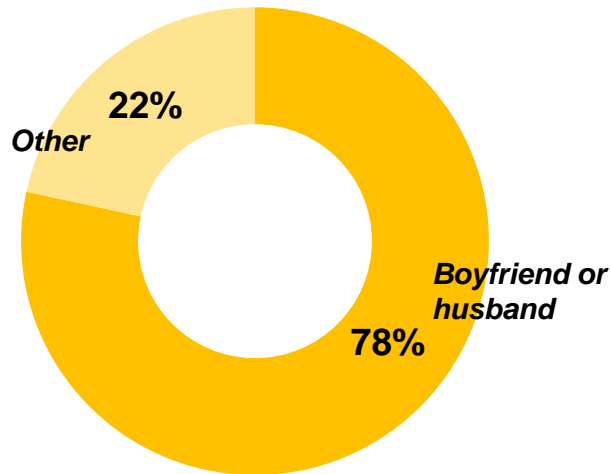
# Where does our data come from?

- IRC services
- Qualitative research
- Household survey

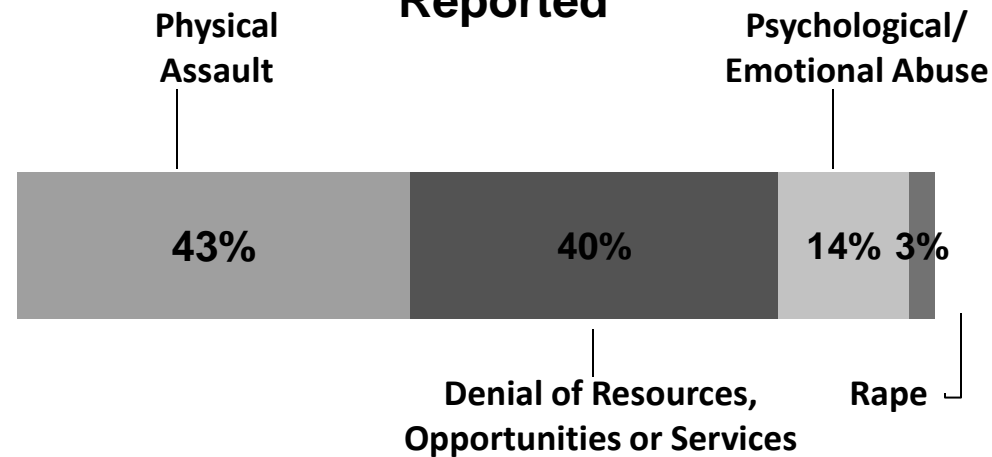


# What we know from the women who walk through our doors?

## Perpetrators of Violence in Cases Reported to IRC Liberia in 2011



## Types of Domestic Violence Reported



# Qualitative research

*“Whenever I came from school, because of jealousy, he doesn’t want me to talk to anybody. One day, me and my classmates were talking at the house, and he called me to the field here, on the football field. He asked me ‘who is that boy there?’ and I said ‘he’s my classmate’. He said I lied and he started beating me right on the field. He beat me until I lost three of my teeth.”  
(Monrovia)*

## Research questions:

- What do women see as the most destructive impacts of domestic violence?
- What solutions do women want?
- What is the impact of war on women’s current security?

# Women's Views of the Impacts of Violence

Your friends will be afraid of you because your husband has a habit of beating you. ... You isolate yourself from friends. Each time you go to your friends, he accuses them of arranging boyfriends for you. ... And your friends will stay away, they will say, 'He beats you; we don't want him to beat us as well.'

—WOMAN FROM KAILAHUN

## DEPENDENCE

When you are dependent on the man completely, you can't leave. He can do anything to you. You have to remain there because you are dependent on him. That's the reason some women can remain there until they get killed. —WOMAN FROM VOINJAMA

## ISOLATION

# Solutions: Financial Independence



*"I want them to look for a place for me to learn skills, because if I earn money no man will bluff me, if I learn some skills it will help me to improve my life. They'll say this girl is a serious girl, because she's not depending on men."  
(Voinjama)*



# Solutions: For men to change



*“I don’t need an eye for an eye; I need something to stop what’s happening to me once and for all.”  
(Monrovia)*

**Most women IRC spoke with wanted the man to change his behaviour and his attitude towards her, for the violence to end, and for the two of them to live peacefully together.**



# Solutions: Live apart from their partner

*“The main thing I want right now is, I’m suffering, so we should go to court, if this relationship cannot be maintained, we should share the property that we have. That’s the main thing I want ... If we divorce and they divide the property it will be fine. So I can live on my own. He and I, we’ve been together for 32 years, we’ve suffered together to build our property, but right now he’s the one enjoying it.” (Monrovia)*



# Solutions: Financial family support

*“Even if he doesn’t want the relationship, he should care for me, we have children. He should be able to pay for my treatment, provide food on time, but he’s not doing anything like that”.  
(Monrovia)*



# Solutions: Men to be held accountable

Some women, especially those with severe injuries, want their husbands to be held accountable by the police and courts.

*When he set the house on fire I took the case to court, the magistrates court, but they kept asking me for money, they're hiring lawyers for me, I don't have money to hire lawyers, so I just felt weak and decided to forget about the case.  
(Voinjama 14)*

## What women want

- Ongoing support, counseling and services
- Options
  - *A place to go*
  - *Supportive families and communities*
  - *Financial independence*
- A police response that addresses prosecutions and protection

## What women receive

- A one time health service that focuses on consequences of rape
- Restrictions
  - *Lack of control over property, resources, children*
- Incomplete or insensitive police responses

# Recommendations

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**Recognize domestic violence as a humanitarian issue.**

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CHANGE IN EXPECTATIONS

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**Fund programs to address domestic violence in humanitarian settings.**

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CHANGE IN RESOURCES

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**Design approaches that are effective in addressing the specific dynamics of domestic violence.**

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CHANGE IN PROGRAMMING

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# What that would look like in Liberia

Domestic  
violence  
law

Targeted  
domestic  
violence  
programs  
in GBV  
NAP

Economic  
empower-  
ment for  
women

Resources  
& training  
for police  
domestic  
violence  
squads

Social  
norms  
change

Women driving change at each step





Women Trained by IRC  
to provide basic case  
Management to  
survivors of Gender  
Based Violence

Thank you.