

2013

Global Shelter Data Count



GLOBAL NETWORK
OF WOMEN SHELTERS

A Day in the Lives of Shelters around the World

More than 250 girls have disappeared in Nigeria, captured by members of a brutal terrorist group, Boko Haram, in the dead of night. The terrorists are raping the girls, conducting mass marriages, and selling them each for \$12.

In India, two teenage cousins were found hanging from a mango tree after being kidnapped, gang-raped, and lynched.

In Egypt, five women were sexually assaulted at Egypt's inaugural festivities for their new president.

In Canada, more than 1,200 Indigenous women have been murdered or gone missing.

Violence against women is an international problem, it is a barrier to gender equity, it is a direct infringement on the rights of women and girls everywhere, and it needs to end.

The Global Shelter Data Count for 2013 gives a snapshot of **1 day** around the world, in **41** countries, of the **108,388** women and children seeking refuge or support. Of this number, **97,490** women and children find it and **10,898** women and children do not, simply due to a lack of space.

These numbers are shocking, yet they do not represent the whole picture. The Global Shelter Data Count does not include information from every country nor from every women's shelter in participating countries. It does not represent the full extent of this violence but it is a call to action.

Why do women and children go to shelters?

They are escaping:

- Physical abuse and threats against their life
- Sexual Abuse
- Psychological and emotional abuse
- Financial abuse
- Neglect

"The daily challenge is to find some peace and quiet to reflect on what the women really want in life and to get the necessary legal/medical support to pursue what they want to achieve."

- A service provider in Malta

Challenges to Equity and the End of Violence

Despite the work of many, there remain numerous barriers to equity and ending violence against women, which all stem from systemic gender inequality. Women, children, and gender minorities continue to be victimized by sexual and domestic violence.

Shelters Continue to Lead

The women's shelter movement aims to change attitudes, values, and practices that allow violence against women and children to continue. This movement advocates for improving legislation, policy, and practices that protect women and children from this violence. Service workers in shelters continue to challenge barriers to equity and work to support all survivors of this injustice.

"If this shelter didn't exist, I would be dead... The shelter has not only saved my life, also my malnourished children have been properly fed... In this shelter, they have shown me how invaluable I am as a woman."

- A woman living in Honduras

Shelters' Concerns

Despite their best efforts, shelters around the world are facing problems of their own. Most shelters struggle to maintain their funding and government support in order to operate. Many report not having enough shelters in their region to meet the needs of all women and children survivors of violence. Many are facing security threats in the midst of conflict, and many more simply do not have the resources or abilities to provide the necessary space, programs, and services.

"We need a place for the women who fall between the cracks... Due to the lack of affordable housing, women with or without children are returning to abusers more often."

- An advocate in Canada

The Way Forward

The next steps to creating fundamental change to end violence against women:

- Legislation and policy changes to protect the rights of women and children
- National and local action plans to end violence against women
- Increased opportunity for women to participate fully in the economy
- Increased opportunity for women to participate in key decision making roles
- Increased awareness of violence against women to change attitudes surrounding this issue

Women and children are escaping with their lives. This violence needs to end now.

The Global Shelter Data Count is an initiative of the [Global Network of Women's Shelters](#), administered by the [Alberta Council of Women's Shelters](#) in Alberta, Canada.