



EVERY
WOMAN
TREATY

2024 Annual Report

Advancing State
Leadership for a New
Optional Protocol
to the Convention
on the Elimination of ***All
Forms of Discrimination
against Women.***

About Every Woman Treaty

Who we are: Every Woman Treaty is a global coalition of more than 4,000 women's rights activists and organizations in 169 countries advancing a new Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to end violence against women and girls, a binding global treaty. Our efforts build on the extraordinary work of the women's rights advocates before us who initiated the call for an international instrument more than 30 years ago.



What we do: We catalyze leadership — from grassroots activists to heads of State — for the development of a global treaty that will make the world safer for women and girls. Our signature program, the **Indrani 1000 Voices Fellowship**, builds the capacity of advocates to call for the treaty and other policy changes on women's safety. Our **Emerging Leaders Council** (activists under 35) works on treaty advocacy and local and regional policy to build a safer, more just future.

The Strategy: The Path to a Treaty

While there are multiple paths to creating and adopting a treaty, typically a group of nations officially calls for it at the United Nations and from there, the process moves into the drafting phase, followed by adoption and ratification. Currently, four nations — the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Costa Rica*, Sierra Leone, and Antigua and Barbuda — comprise the Core Group, which leads the State initiative to bring additional nations on board. Our primary goal is to increase the number of nations in support of the Optional Protocol to 30.

*As of July 2025, Costa Rica is no longer part of the Core Group.

Toward that end, Every Woman catalyzes the leadership of champion nations, experts, civil society, and UN mandate holders to build support among nations for the Protocol. We do that by:

- 1. **Framing the conversation.** We are coordinating, sponsoring, drafting, and distributing original research, positioning key messages that frame the current gaps and their solutions through policy memos, position papers, op-eds, talking points, reports, and original statistical analyses that answer objections and clarify the path forward. Original pieces are distributed to UN Member States, civil society, and other stakeholders, as well as strategically placed in the media.
- 2. **Convenings that facilitate dialogue.** Nearly all diplomatic work happens through convenings. The Core Group now relies on the Every Woman team to facilitate high-level diplomatic exchanges between nations and UN mandate holders, experts, and front-line activists and co-hosting events with champion nations in Geneva and New York.
- 3. **Diplomatic outreach to nations.** We conduct outreach and direct recruitment of additional nations to join the effort through power mapping, meeting coordination, individual briefings for Member States, traveling to meet directly at the ministerial or Head-of-State level; and training and coordination with local and regional coalitions.
- 4. **Coordinate global effort.** We provide back-end administrative support to all Champions of the Protocol, including Member States: scheduling, strategy, clerical support, travel coordination, progress tracking, and round-the-clock response to all inquiries.
- 5. **Assure full participation of frontline activists.** We achieve this through engaging our coalition of more than **4,000 activists** in **169 countries** in the Indrani 1000 Voices Fellowship, as well as taking the global stage to engage in direct diplomacy within and beyond their national borders. This includes raising their voices through media placement and small grants for local organizing.

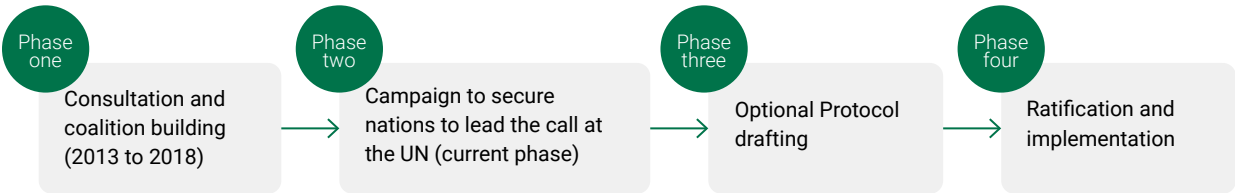




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Welcome

A New Era

Dear Global Community,

This year, in the face of rollbacks and threats to women's rights and safety, we made extraordinary progress in our efforts to secure a global binding instrument to end violence against women and girls.

The big news: 16 nations expressed interest in exploring the possibility of a new Optional Protocol to CEDAW to end violence against women and girls!

With the current United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences, and three former Special Rapporteurs calling for a new Optional Protocol to CEDAW, we have entered a new era, one in which creating a safe world for women and girls is not only possible, it is underway.

What struck me most this year was the spirit of collaboration and commitment to women's rights evident in our conversations with government leaders and civil society. There was no backing down or going back, only moving forward. This commitment is rooted in the belief that every woman and girl, in every corner of the world, deserves to live a life free from violence. It's a profound and humbling experience to work alongside committed activists, organizations, and nations to ensure human rights are upheld.

We are so grateful for the work and commitment of 2024 — and excited to bring this momentum into the coming year.

In Solidarity,

Lisa Shannon
Cofounder & CEO

Diplomacy

Advancing State Leadership

Every Woman Treaty consults with United Nations Member States, UN entities, International Nongovernmental Organizations (INGOs), Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and regional bodies for inclusive and transparent dialogue on the creation of a treaty at the global level to end violence against women and girls.

Key Achievements

In 2024, our work led to 12 new nations expressing interest in exploring a new Optional Protocol to CEDAW to end violence against women and girls. Combined with the four champion nations of the Core Group, this brings the total number of interested nations to 16. The key achievements in the following pages detail the work that went into building this momentum for a new CEDAW Optional Protocol.





Placed the optional protocol into the global dialogue with 488 sessions with stakeholders

Every Woman Treaty's diplomatic engagement in 2024 was anchored in in-person connections with key stakeholders. We held 240 meetings with 73 state representatives, 140 meetings with UN entities and international organizations, and 275 meetings with civil society organizations.

Additionally, we hosted dynamic roundtable discussions and webinars designed to foster dialogue, build partnerships, and amplify the voices of those working to end violence against women and girls. These events were attended by high-level national representatives.

Every Woman Treaty consulted with 14 UN entities working on women's rights and safety, including the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Under Secretary Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (OSRSG-SVC), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), UN Women and the UN Working Group on discrimination against women and girls.

We also introduced the need for a new Optional Protocol to CEDAW to multiple stakeholders and advocacy groups, such as the Conference of State Parties to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime Vienna, the European Union Green Party and the Small Islands Developing States.

Collectively, our inclusive consultations and dialogue have strengthened our existing networks and inspired new momentum toward the creation of a new Optional Protocol to CEDAW,

as well as **placed this new binding legal framework into the global dialogue on ending violence against women and girls.** This significant milestone reflects a shared global commitment to addressing violence against women and girls and ensuring the issue remains a central focus in international human rights discussions.



16 countries support the possibility of exploring a new Optional Protocol!

- **June:** During the 56th Human Rights Council (HRC) in Geneva, 10 nations, in conjunction with the four Core Group, issued a joint statement in support of the possibility of exploring a new Optional Protocol to CEDAW to end violence against women and girls, read by the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Costa Rica. The nations show broad regional diversity, with countries in Africa, Asia, the Arab Region, Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean.
- **September:** on September 26, during the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA79), Every Woman Treaty co-hosted a high-level side event with The Carter Center and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which brought together prominent figures from various states to address pressing global issues. At the event, the call for a new Optional Protocol was reaffirmed by the Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Congo to Ethiopia.
- **November:** At the 25th Anniversary of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Ambassador of Croatia to the UN His Excellency Ivan Simonovic shared his personal support in strengthening the international framework on violence against women and girls. Ambassador Simonovic opened his remarks to the United Nations in New York by commenting on the need to evaluate the strength of the current framework on violence against women and girls and “to examine the need for the optional protocol to CEDAW on Violence against Women, as called for by the past and current UN special rapporteurs on violence against women, in their joint statement.”
- **November:** The Ambassador of the Permanent Mission of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas His Excellency Stan Oduma Smith confirmed The Bahamas support for a new OP-CEDAW in a virtual meeting held with Every Woman Treaty, bringing the total number of supportive nations to 16.

*As of July 2025, Costa Rica is no longer part of the Core Group.

The Current Special Rapporteur called for a new Optional Protocol to CEDAW at the UN - March

The Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls Ms. Reem Alsalem made a historic call for a new Optional Protocol to CEDAW at the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the UN's largest annual gathering on gender equality, stating:

“Has the time come to resurrect plans for an optional protocol to the CEDAW specifically dedicated to ending violence against women? Most of my predecessors and I believe so.”

It was the first time the Special Rapporteur called for a new Optional Protocol at a UN event, making it a significant moment in the global conversation on gender equality. Additionally, her call provided a critical platform to highlight the urgent need to combat violence against women and girls worldwide with a more robust legal framework. It also reinforced the growing consensus that ending violence against women and girls requires the collective action of UN Member States, UN entities, and civil society,



INGO Alliance Forming - September

Following a co-hosted event alongside The Carter Center, a coalition of INGOs came together to begin discussion on forming an INGO group supportive of a new Optional Protocol to CEDAW. This strategic group will be a pivotal step forward in uniting the global civil society community in support of a binding legal framework to end violence against women and girls.

Advocating for a new Optional Protocol to CEDAW at the French Senate - November

On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (November 25), Every Woman Treaty and the Group of 100 Global Women Leaders (G100) held a colloquium at the French Senate to foster diplomatic engagement and dialogue on the global state of women's rights, with a focus on addressing violence against women and girls. The colloquium brought together diplomats and representatives from various nations, NGOs, advocates, academic experts, policymakers, and members of international coalitions dedicated to women's rights. The event reinforced the critical need for a unified global effort to protect women's rights, provided a platform for knowledge sharing, and inspired actionable commitments. A guided tour of the French Senate offered participants a cultural touchpoint, further strengthening diplomatic ties.



Coalition

Elevating Grassroots Leadership

Every Woman Treaty works in coalition with women's rights activists and organizations around the world, united in our shared mission to create a safer, more equitable world for women and girls through a new Optional Protocol to CEDAW. The stronger the call for a new instrument from advocates and citizens, the more compelled nations are to support the creation of a new protocol. Our programs support leaders on the frontlines of change, providing critical resources for advocacy and career advancement, fostering collaboration, and amplifying their voices on the global stage.



Key Achievements

Advocacy

Launch of the Latin American Coalition! - January

In late January 2024, during a special event at the Hall of Presidents at the Legislative Assembly in San José, Costa Rica, the Latin American Coalition for a new Optional Protocol to CEDAW was launched with 189 women's rights activists and organizations in 17 countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico,

Trinidad, and Tobago, Venezuela. Marysela Zamora, founder of Nosotras Women Connecting, Every Woman Treaty coalition member and fellowship alumni, led the effort. “The urgency we face is real,” she said at the event. “89,000 girls and women globally fell victim to murder in 2022, and an alarming 650 million women worldwide were forced into marriage while still children. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, establishing a protocol emerges as the swiftest path toward constructing a safer world.”

753 people urged the UN to support a new Optional Protocol - August 2024

Indigenous women’s rights activists sent a sign-on letter to UN leaders calling for their support of a new Optional Protocol to CEDAW. The letter was delivered to the UN General Secretary, the UN Deputy Secretary-General, and the executive directors of UN Women and UNFPA and signed by 753 indigenous people and supporters from 78 nations.

More than 1,200 activists call on Canada to support a new Optional Protocol - September 2024

The Emerging Leaders Council called on the Canadian officials — Governor General of Canada Mary Simon, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Melanie Joly — to support a new Optional Protocol to CEDAW in two letters signed by over 1,200 activists and allies in over 88 countries.

Every Woman Treaty organized and spoke at multiple events during the 68th United Nations Session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

- **The Necessity of a Binding Optional Protocol to CEDAW to End Violence against Women and Girls.** Our parallel event on the need for a new Optional Protocol to CEDAW to end violence against women and girls brought together legal and social experts, including **former Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Dr. Dubravka Šimonović**. Coalition members **Amanda Arroyo** (Costa Rica), the **Reverend Nicqi Ashwood** (World Council of Churches) and **Bose Ironsi** (Nigeria), together with Every Woman Treaty’s Chief of Global Diplomatic Campaign Lawyer Patricia Elias, emphasized the rise in violence due to climate change and the multi-dimensional impact of violence on women, their families and communities.

- **The Intersections of Gender, Poverty & Climate Change.** Hosted by Soroptimist International online, this event featured coalition member **Kabahenda Kiggundu (Canada)** speaking on how a new Optional Protocol to CEDAW can help address related issues like poverty and the climate crisis.
- **A New Optional Protocol to CEDAW: A Global Solution to Ending Violence against Women and Girls.** Hosted by Global Rights for Women online. Moderator Vayuna Gupta spoke with coalition members **Meera Khanna (India)**, **Zainab Ali Khan (Pakistan)**, **Cheryl Thomas (USA)**, and **Dr. Uzodinma Adirieje (Nigeria)**.

Six Essays Call for Optional Protocol During 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence - November

Emerging Leaders Council (activists under 35) published six essays from six continents on our website during the annual 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence (Nov 25 to Dec 10). The essays detailed how a new Optional Protocol to CEDAW would address violence against women **in Nigeria, Lebanon, the UK, India, Latin America, and globally**. Taken together, they demonstrate the vast potential a new Optional Protocol to CEDAW to end violence against women and girls has to transform women's lives on the ground.



#16Days: Stronger Laws – How an Optional Protocol Can Work to Better Protect Women in Lebanon



#16Days: A Culture of Crisis - Transforming India's Response to Gender Violence with a new Optional Protocol



#16Days: A New Optional Protocol – Break the UK's Misogynistic System



#16Days: An Optional Protocol Can Elevate Women's Leadership — A Latin Perspective



#16Days: A New Optional Protocol's Role in Ending Ritual Abuse in Nigeria



#16Days: Putting a Stop to Online Violence Against Women with a New Optional Protocol to CEDAW

Growing the movement

In 2024, Every Woman Treaty **expanded its coalition by 242 organizations and activists from 18 nations** — El Salvador, Benin, Burundi, Cape Verde, Peru, Colombia, Chad, Ethiopia, Maldives, Mozambique, Ghana, Panama, Mexico, Senegal, Mali, Barbados, Canada, and Iran. This growth reflects the commitment of women's rights advocates worldwide to ending violence against women and girls. With these additions, our coalition now represents more than **4,000** women's rights activists and organizations in **169** countries, embodying the diverse collective strength and determination needed to drive global change.

Media

Coalition Members call for the Optional Protocol

Activists published 20 op-eds in 10 countries

Opinion pieces were published in leading outlets in **Canada, Chile, Kenya, Madagascar, Nepal, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Scotland, the United States, and the United Kingdom in three languages (English, Spanish, and Malagasy)**. These thought-provoking pieces shed light on diverse perspectives, helping to steer the conversation toward actionable solutions and elevate the voices of those at the forefront of gender equality.



Leadership Training & Support



The Indrani 1000 Voices Fellowship

When we launched the fellowship in 2021, we didn't know what would happen. Would activists sign up? Would they find the content engaging? On the fellowship's third anniversary in 2024, those questions were answered with a resounding YES!

To date, **385 activists from 61 countries** have graduated from the program.

Graduates have had an extraordinary impact on advancing the treaty and furthering efforts to end violence against women and girls and gender inequality across the world.

They have:

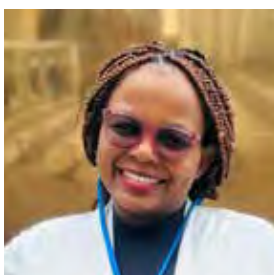
- published op-eds
- spoke at the United Nations
- participated in diplomatic meetings
- held treaty learning sessions
- developed television and radio programs
- started movements that have received international attention
- appeared in the media
- founded their own organizations
- initiated sign-on letters and other advocacy

What fellows say about the program



"I now have an understanding of how as an activist I can deliver key messages to world leaders." – *Saraphina Ambale, Kenya, 2024 Fellow*

"I have learned a great deal about advocacy from this fellowship." – *Ramsha Alam, Pakistan, 2024 Fellow*



"The program was packed and enlightening!"
– *Donna Nyadete, Zimbabwe, 2024 Fellow*

Survey Highlights

92% of 2024 graduates were comfortable or very comfortable delivering a message during a diplomatic meeting or interview after completing the fellowship.

86% to 95% of 2024 graduates had strong familiarity with international instruments related to violence against women and girls, including CEDAW, Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and the regional treaties. This is a sharp rise from little familiarity in most categories.

98% of 2024 graduates were confident in being a global voice to end violence against women and girls.

The Mentorship Program

Supporting a new generation of activists

The Mentorship Program pairs Emerging Leaders (activists under 35) with senior activists. This year activists held 136 virtual sessions, covering various topics from leadership to gender equality. Together, they are shaping the future of advocacy and ensuring the movement remains strong and sustainable for years to come.



“The experience provided personalized guidance for my career path aimed at eradicating violence against women. I gained invaluable insights into my skills and potential, fostering a fresh perspective on my career trajectory. It not only honed my abilities but deepened my commitment to the eradication of gender-based violence in my region.” – *Alejandra Ortiz, Colombia*

“My mentorship program has helped me know how to access opportunities better and identify my leadership style.”
– *Ijeoma Nnantah, Nigeria*



Well-Being

The Emerging Leaders Council hosted **two work-life balance and career development workshops for 31 members**, and two workshops with our partner Frontline Defenders on mainstreaming **well-being and digital protection**. These workshops benefited **30 fellowship graduates**.

Board of Directors and Financials

Board of Directors 2024

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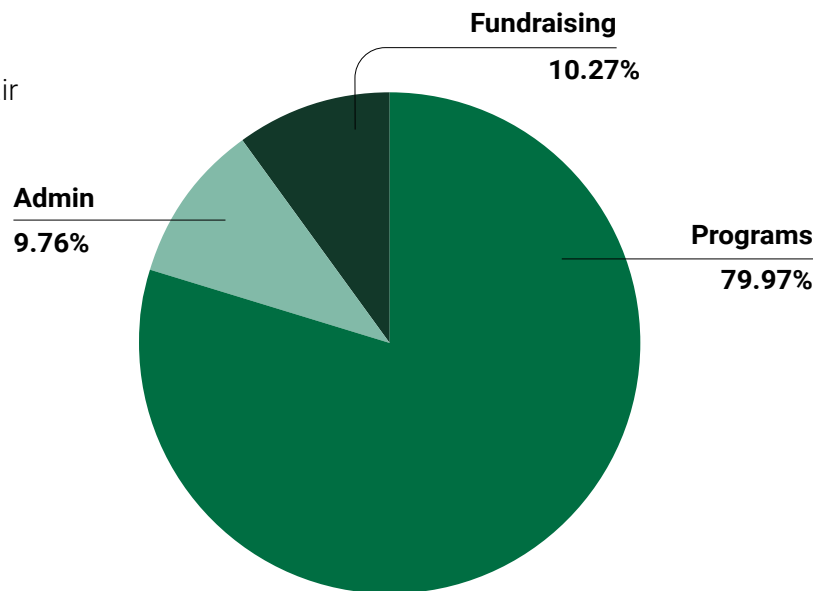
Kristen McGuire

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Special Thanks to Our Donors and State Leaders

Our Donors

Our work would not be possible without the generosity of individuals and organizations committed to gender equality, human rights, and ending violence against women and girls. We are so grateful for your support.

Foundations

Amalgamated Charitable Foundation
 Birch Fund
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 Girls Rights Project
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 International Civil Society Action
 Leslie Brunker Fund
 Mustang Foundation
 Oakpoint Charitable Fund
 Rotary Portland
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 So Hum Foundation
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 The Valone Family Charitable Fund

Individuals

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 Kim Rivers
 Karleanne Rogers
 Kylie Schuyler
 Andrew Shakman
 Robert Shakman
 Lisa Shields
 Robert Skrondal
 Serena Smulansky

State Leaders

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the following nations and their Permanent Missions to the United Nations for their exemplary leadership in spearheading the State-led initiative for a new Optional Protocol to CEDAW to end violence against women and girls. Their dedication to advancing women's rights and fostering international collaboration is an inspiring example of collective action in the pursuit of equality and justice.

Democratic Republic of the Congo | Costa Rica* | Sierra Leone | Antigua and Barbuda

*As of July 2025, Costa Rica is no longer part of the Core Group.



Every Woman Treaty

is a 501(c)(3) organization

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everywoman.org

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