

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



# SAFE SCHOOLS EVERY GIRL'S RIGHT

A young girl leaps through the ribbon as she wins a race at her school in Dhaka, Bangladesh.



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**EVERY GIRL HAS A  
RIGHT TO EDUCATION  
IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT**

All over the world girls face violence as they pursue their education. Some suffer long-term harm to their mental and physical health. Many more go to school in fear. The result is that countless girls are kept out of school, drop out of school or do not participate fully in school. Their human rights – rights to freedom from violence, to equality and to education – are violated.

Girls' rights are protected in international human rights law, as well as in national legislation. Governments are obliged to respect girls' rights, to protect girls from abuse by others, and to make girls' rights a reality. Teachers and school employees are agents of the state and share this responsibility. Others also have a part to play. Parents, community leaders and NGOs can support government and school efforts by participating in action plans, reporting violence and providing human rights-based training and services.

Stopping school-related violence requires challenging discrimination within schools and in the broader community. It demands listening to the voices of girls and taking into account their everyday experiences and needs. Amnesty International is therefore calling on government officials and bodies, including schools, in collaboration with all relevant parties, to take the following steps now.

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**STOP VIOLENCE  
AGAINST WOMEN**

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**Amnesty International** is a global movement of 2.2 million people in more than 150 countries and territories, who campaign on human rights. Our vision is for every person to enjoy all the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments.

We research, campaign, advocate and mobilize to end abuses of human rights – civil, political, social, cultural and economic. From freedom of expression and association to physical and mental integrity, from protection from discrimination to the right to shelter – these rights are indivisible.

Amnesty International is independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion. Our work is largely financed by contributions from our membership and donations.

# SIX STEPS TO STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST SCHOOLGIRLS

## STEP 1:

**PROHIBIT ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS**, INCLUDING CORPORAL PUNISHMENT, VERBAL ABUSE, HARASSMENT, PHYSICAL VIOLENCE, EMOTIONAL ABUSE, AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION. ENACT AND ENFORCE APPROPRIATE LAWS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.

## STEP 2:

**MAKE SCHOOLS SAFE FOR GIRLS** THROUGH NATIONAL PLANS OF ACTION TO ADDRESS SCHOOL-RELATED VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS. THESE SHOULD INCLUDE GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS, COMPULSORY TRAINING FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS, THE DESIGNATION OF A GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE FOR PREVENTING AND INVESTIGATING INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE AND ADEQUATE PUBLIC FUNDING TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM. ENSURE THAT SCHOOLS HAVE SEX-SEGREGATED TOILETS AND WASHROOMS, SECURE DORMITORIES, AND SUPERVISED PLAYGROUNDS AND SPORTS FIELDS.

## STEP 3:

**RESPOND TO INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS** THROUGH CONFIDENTIAL AND INDEPENDENT REPORTING MECHANISMS, EFFECTIVE INVESTIGATIONS, CRIMINAL PROSECUTIONS WHEN APPROPRIATE, AND PROVIDE SERVICES FOR VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS. ENSURE THAT ALL INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS ARE REPORTED AND RECORDED, AND THAT PEOPLE CONVICTED OF RAPE, SEXUAL ASSAULT OR OTHER CRIMINAL OFFENCES AGAINST CHILDREN ARE NOT EMPLOYED IN SCHOOLS.

## STEP 4:

**PROVIDE SUPPORT SERVICES FOR GIRLS WHO HAVE SUFFERED VIOLENCE**, INCLUDING COUNSELLING; MEDICAL TREATMENT; HIV/AIDS INFORMATION, MEDICATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES; COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION ON SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS; AND SUPPORT FOR REINTEGRATION INTO THE SCHOOL SYSTEM OF GIRLS WHO ARE LIVING WITH HIV OR ARE PREGNANT, MARRIED OR MOTHERS.

## STEP 5:

**REMOVE BARRIERS TO GIRLS' ACCESS TO SCHOOL** BY ELIMINATING ALL FEES, DIRECT AND INDIRECT, FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL, MAKING SECONDARY SCHOOLS ACCESSIBLE TO ALL, AND DEVELOPING PROGRAMMES TO ENSURE ACCESS FOR GIRLS FROM MARGINALIZED GROUPS.

## STEP 6:

**PROTECT GIRLS FROM ABUSE** BY DEVELOPING AND ENFORCING CODES OF CONDUCT FOR ALL SCHOOL STAFF AND STUDENTS. TRAIN SCHOOL STAFF IN EARLY INTERVENTION STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS IN SCHOOL.

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**THERE CAN BE NO EXCUSES,  
NO EXCEPTIONS AND NO DELAYS**