

# India Tops the List of Countries Most Dangerous for Women

**Thomson** Reuters Foundation conducted a survey of about 550 experts on women's issues. The survey asked the respondents which five of the 193 United Nations member states they thought were most dangerous for women and which country was worst in terms of healthcare, economic resources, cultural or traditional practices, sexual violence and harassment, non-sexual violence and human trafficking.

The poll of 548 people was conducted online, by phone and in person between March 26 and May 4 with an even spread across Europe, Africa, the Americas, South East Asia, South Asia and the Pacific. Respondents included aid professionals, academics, healthcare staff, non-government organisation workers, policy-makers, development specialists and social commentators.

Respondents ranked India the 'most dangerous country' for women in terms of high risk of sexual violence, human trafficking, including sex slavery and domestic servitude, and for customary practices such as forced marriage, stoning and female infanticide.

The other countries in the top 10 are Afghanistan, USA, Syria, Somalia, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Congo, Yemen, Nigeria and Egypt.

The poll was a repeat of a survey in 2011 that found experts seeing Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Pakistan, India and Somalia as the most dangerous countries for women.

Afghanistan fared worst in four of the seven questions, with concerns over healthcare and conflict-related violence. Afghan Women and girls faced severe gender-based violence, abuse, illiteracy, poverty and other human rights offences.

The impact of a seven-year war drove Syria into third place in the survey, amid concerns over access to healthcare and both sexual and non-sexual violence.

Somalia, where more than two decades of war has fuelled a culture of violence and weakened institutions meant to uphold the law, was again named as one of the five most dangerous countries for women.

India, Libya and Myanmar were considered the world's most dangerous nations for women exploited by human traffickers in a global crime worth an estimated \$150 billion a year.

Saudi Arabia ranked fifth. One of the worst laws that prevent women from having equal opportunities is guardianship—because every woman is subjected to a male guardian. She cannot get a passport, cannot travel, sometimes she cannot work.

Pakistan was ranked sixth as the most dangerous country for women after coming third in the 2011 poll. Pakistan was named as the fourth worst nation when it came to economic resources and discrimination in the work place and regarding land, and also regarding the risks women faced from cultural, religious and traditional practice including so-called "honour killings". It ranked fifth when it came to non-sexual violence.

Democratic Republic of Congo was named as the seventh most dangerous country for women after coming second in the 2011 poll. Millions of people face hellish living conditions in DRC after years of factional bloodshed, unleashed by the imperialist manipulation and intervention. About 4.3 million people were displaced amid endemic violence including gang rape.

Yemen was named as the eighth most dangerous country for women. It ranked poorly on access to healthcare, economic resources, the risk of cultural and traditional practices and non-sexual violence. Saudi Arabia has been waging proxy war in Yemen that has killed more than 10,000 people, displaced three million and pushed the impoverished country to the verge of starvation. Yemen is still reeling from the world's most urgent humanitarian crisis where 22 million people needed vital assistance.

Nigeria was ranked as the ninth most dangerous country for women with human rights groups accusing the country's military of torture, rape and killing civilians during its nine-year fight against Islamist insurgency Boko Haram. The conflict has killed more than 30,000 people and spawned one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

Africa's most populous country was named as the sixth worst nation regards the risks women face from cultural and traditional practices and tied 10th when respondents were asked about the risks of sexual violence. But Nigeria was named as the fourth most dangerous country when it came to human trafficking. Studies have shown that tens of thousands of Nigerian women have been trafficking into Europe for sexual exploitation.

The United States ranked as the 10th most dangerous country for women, the only Western nation to appear in the top 10. The United States shot up in the rankings when respondents were asked which the most dangerous country was for women in terms of sexual violence including rape, sexual harassment, coercion into sex and the lack of access to justice in rape cases. It was ranked sixth for non-sexual violence.

Except US, Saudi Arabia and India, the countries in the top 10 list are victims of direct aggression or military intervention by the imperialist countries, mainly the US imperialism. The invading armies used rape as weapon of war. Along with it, long drawn war of aggression deteriorated the living conditions of people, particularly women as they were forced to become sex workers. Moreover, the religious terrorist organizations that sprout up with the aid from the US intelligence agencies as well as those who pose as fighters against terrorism have been frequently resorting to violence against women.

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