

2012 Significant Moments

January

- Afghanistan: The case of a 15-year-old child bride brutally tortured by her husband and his family for refusing to go into prostitution causes global outcry and raising questions about progress on women's rights more than a decade after the end of the Taliban's rule.
- Liberia: Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was inaugurated for a second term as President of Liberia. She became the first female president in Africa when she was elected in 2006.
- Haiti: The UN was outraged by the sexual abuse of minors by U.N. peacekeepers - the third time in five years. The Caribbean country is still struggling to recover from the devastating 2010 earthquake.

February

- Libya: Libyan Women's Platform for Peace (LWPP) welcomed the passage of a new electoral law guaranteeing women at least 40 seats on the 200-member Constituent Assembly drafting Libya's new constitution.
- Pakistan: Senate passed the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill making violence against women and children an offence carrying jail terms and fines.
- Russian Federation: Saint Petersburg passed a controversial law banning "homosexual propaganda", giving authorities the power to decide what constitutes propaganda, meaning LGBTI people risk being punished simply for their lifestyle.

March

- President of the UN General Assembly H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser (Qatar) and the Secretary-General H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon jointly proposed convening a Fifth UN World Conference on Women (5th WCW) in 2015.
- The 56th UN CSW session closed without any agreed conclusions, with some conservative member states undermining the multilateral system, questioning women's rights and gender equality.
- Mali: Tuareg rebels seized control of Mali's north, claiming the new state of Azawad and leading an aggressive campaign to implement fundamentalist interpretations of Islam across the social, economic and cultural spheres in the north. The crisis is ongoing.

April

- Burma: Aung San Suu Kyi, Burmese opposition politician and chairperson of the National League for Democracy (NLD), was elected to the lower house of the Burmese parliament. Her party won 40 of the 45 vacant seats in the lower house.
- Malawi: Joyce Banda became the first female President of Malawi and the first in the Southern African Development Community (SADC).
- AWID convened its largest Forum to date, bringing together 2,239 women's rights activists, from 140 countries and six continents, urging stronger feminist engagement with issues of economic power and exploring feminist responses and alternatives.
- During its 45th Session, the UN Commission on Population and Development (CPD) adopted a landmark resolution on the SRHR of adolescents and youth, prioritizing the 1.8 billion adolescents and young peoples' human rights and health in development priorities.

May

- Argentina passed a Gender Identity Law giving transgender citizens the right to have their gender recognised in law.

- Bolivian president Evo Morales enacted the Harassment and Political Violence Against Women Law, criminalising harassment and political violence against women with sentences ranging from two to eight years' imprisonment.
- France: New French President François Hollande makes good on a campaign promise by appointing as many women as men in the new French government: 17 of the 34 ministers are women.
- Turkish PM Erdogan publicly equated abortion to murder; soon after, the AKP government announced plans to introduce a bill to limit abortion to the first 4 weeks. Feminists responded swiftly through BiaNet online magazine's "Benim Bedenim, Benim Kararım" ("My Body, My Choice") photo campaign.

June

- Women's rights organizations and gender equality advocates were deeply disappointed by the Rio+20 process and outcome document - most worryingly, the watering down of previous agreements and the omission of women's sexual and reproductive rights from the final text.
- Swaziland: The Supreme Court reversed a February 2010 High Court ruling allowing married women to register property in their own name. Gender activists blame a lack of political will for the slow progress in replacing laws in conflict with the Constitution.
- Mexico adopted a law protecting human rights defenders and journalists - aimed at protecting life, integrity, liberty and security of those at risk because of their work defending and promoting human rights, or for exercising their right to freedom of expression.
- The 20th session of the UN Human Rights Council held the first-ever panel discussion on women human rights defenders (WHRDs) as part of its annual full-day discussion on women's human rights.
- Cambodia: The 13 WHRDs, who were sentenced to 2 1/2 years in prison for protesting eviction from their homes without adequate compensation, received reduced prison sentences for time served and were released from jail, but their convictions were not overturned and their land and housing rights not secured.
- Paraguay: Feminist and women's rights organizations were among the first to spread the word and call for international solidarity following the parliamentary coup, ousting democratically elected left-leaning President Fernando Lugo.
- Uganda banned 38 NGOs it accused of undermining the national culture by promoting homosexuality. The country's ethics and integrity minister claimed the NGOs were receiving international support for homosexuals and "recruiting" young children into homosexuality.
- Moldova: UN independent human rights experts urged the Government of Moldova to ensure the implementation of the country's non-discrimination legislation to accelerate progress on gender equality and ensure the protection of Roma women's rights.

July

- The 20th Session of the Human Rights Council (HRC), passed resolution A/HRC/20/L.13 on internet and freedom of expression, affirming that the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online - key for women fighting for women's rights in repressive societies.
- The London Olympics was historic for women in sports - all participating countries included women on their teams, with Qatar, Brunei and Saudi Arabia including female athletes for the first time. 34 countries sent more women than men and women collected the majority of medals for China, the U.S. and Russia.

- Iran: Female students were barred from more than 70 university degree courses in an officially-approved act of sex-discrimination aimed at defeating the fight for equal women's rights.

August

- Russia: Members of punk band Pussy Riot were sentenced to two years in prison for "hooliganism motivated by religious hatred" for singing a song criticizing Russian President Putin in a church, raising concerns about Putin's crackdown on LGBT groups and civil society dissent.
- Uganda: Unlawful charges against five WONETHA WHRDs for "living on the earnings of prostitution" were dropped. WONETHA members face unlawful criminalisation for their work in promoting the rights; health and safety of sexual workers.
- Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard announced the Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development initiative at the Pacific Islands Forum - a 10-year program to improve the lives of women and girls in the Pacific region.
- Tunisia: Women held a day of protest, reminding law-makers in the Constituent Assembly, that their rights are not negotiable, that they want an equal share of the public space and contesting the article on gender "complementarity" in the country's draft constitution.

September

- Afghanistan: Dr. Sima Samar received the 2012 Right Livelihood Award, also known as the Alternative Nobel Prize, "for her longstanding and courageous dedication to human rights, especially the rights of women, in one of the most complex and dangerous regions in the world"
- Mexico: Dali Angel Perez, Zapotec Indian who lives in the State of Oaxaca, was recognized with the National Youth Award 2012 in the category of Human Rights.
- U.N. HRC adopted a controversial resolution on traditional values, introduced by the Russian Federation, posing an immediate threat to the rights vulnerable groups, including women and LGBT people, and going against the founding principles of universality and indivisibility enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

October

- Peru: The Constitutional Court accepted the Habeas corpus request by indigenous women leaders, Juana Payaba Cachique and Esperanza Gonzáles, recognizing the right to territory, autonomy and self-government of indigenous community in the native community Tres Islas.
- Day of Solidarity with Honduras engaged 121 WHRDs in 10 countries in actions to denounce violence against women and express to WHRDs in Honduras that they are not alone.
- Botswana: High Court overturned a customary law preventing women from inheriting the family home.
- Canada: Ontario's top court struck down a ban on brothels in the Bedford case, it held that the provisions restricting indoor sex work, or "bawdy houses", and living on the avails of prostitution were unconstitutional. Women's rights groups locally and globally are already organizing and planning interventions and advocacy efforts for when the case goes to the Supreme Court of Canada in 2013
- South African former Minister of Home Affairs Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma was elected as African Union Commission chairperson, making her the first woman to lead the organisation.
- Uruguay: Abortion was decriminalised but under very restrictive conditions.

- Egypt: Hundreds of women took to the streets to protest against the constituent assembly (CA) following the release of a preliminary draft of the Egyptian constitution, which they said threatens women rights, and calling for an equal dividing of seats between women and men in the CA.
- Ireland: Prohibitive abortion laws and denial of basic rights on religious grounds resulted in the preventable death of Savita Halappanavar
- Syria: UN-brokered ceasefire during the Islamic holiday of Eid al-Adha broke down as government continued attacks in the conflict that began on 15 March 2011, as part of the wider protest movement known as the Arab Spring. An estimated 2.5 million people have been displaced within Syria and over 40,000 have been killed, half of which were civilians. The crisis continues.

November

- The first Feminist LesBiTransInter Encuentro "Going South" took place in Asuncion, Paraguay.
- USA: The tightly contested elections saw the number of women in the Senate increase from 17 to 20, including Tammy Baldwin who made history by becoming the first openly gay politician, and first Wisconsin woman, elected to the U.S. Senate.
- Iran: Jailed human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh was allowed to see her children in Tehran's notorious Evin prison for the first time in weeks following her 49-day hunger strike
- The UN General Assembly's human rights committee adopted a resolution against female genital mutilation (FGM) - a major victory to civil society organizations fighting for an end to the abusive traditional practice
- DRC: Escalating violence in the North Kivu province of the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo received limited international response to protect civilians, including women human rights defenders. The humanitarian crisis continues.
- Palestine: UN voted overwhelmingly to recognise Palestine as the world's 194th state
- Eurozone: Hundreds of thousands of Europeans participated in anti-austerity protests across the continent against German-orchestrated cuts as the Eurozone looked set to move back into recession. Those already disenfranchised by gender, race and class, the elderly, the young, and single and migrant women continue to bear the brunt of the ongoing Eurozone crisis that started in 2008.

December

- U.N. climate talks in Doha approved a "gender balance" goal that will increase women's participation in climate negotiations, with the hope of making climate change policy more responsive to women's needs.
- Pakistan and UNESCO announced an initiative to get more girls into school. The Malala Plan -- named after Malala Yousufzai, the teenage schoolgirl who was shot in the head by Taliban gunmen for advocating education for girls -- will receive \$10 million from Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari
- Philippines: After almost 15 years in Congress the Reproductive Health Bill, Republic Act No. 10354, is finally passed, giving millions of women access to contraception that has been out of their reach.
- India: 23-year-old physical therapy student was gang raped on a bus in Delhi, and later died from her injuries, causing massive protests across India, saying enough is enough to sexual violence against women. In India a woman is raped every 22 minutes, and few see justice.
- The CSO Platform for Development Effectiveness was launched by civil society leaders and representatives of all the different regions of the world, and from the faith-based, feminist,

labour, rural sectors, and international civil society organizations at their meeting in Nairobi, Kenya.

Attacks against women human rights defenders continued unabated and with impunity in 2012

2012 Saw ongoing and increasing attacks and violations against women human rights defenders (WHRDs), including criminalization, assassination, attempted assassination, death threats to themselves or their family, assault and harassment.

In 2012 AWID took 198 actions in response to alerts received regarding violence against WHRDs in 44 countries

Among those who survived assassination attempts in 2012 are:

Ms. Carolyn R. Borja and Ms. Nenita Lacasa (the Philippines); Telma Yolanda Oqueli Veliz Del Cid (Guatemala); Malala Yousafzai (Pakistan); and Denis Mukwege (DRC)

Among those who were detained and remain imprisoned to date are:

Mansoureh Behkish (Iran); Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, Maria Alekhina and Ekaterina Samutsevich (Russia); Ms. Roza Tuletaeva (Kazakhstan); Mao Hengfeng (China)

We pay tribute to the WHRDs who lost their lives because of who they are and the work they do defending women's human rights

Mexican Transgender activist Agnes Torres was found dead outside of her hometown of Puebla, 12 March 2012

Mexican journalist and human rights defender Regina Martínez Pérez, was found dead in her home on 28 April 2012.

Mexico - Maria Edy Fabiola Osorio Bernaldez, Mexican human rights defender and renowned environmental activist, was shot in her home on 31 May 2012

Farida Afridi, co-founder of SAWERA, Safeworld Field Partner in Pakistan, was shot by militants while on her way to work on 6 July 2012.

Juvy Capion, Filipino community leader involved in a campaign against Sagittarius Mines Inc. (SMI) for exploiting natural resources on the ancestral lands of the B'laan people was three months pregnant when she and her two sons were shot in their home on October 18, 2012 by the Filipino armed forces

Montha Chukaew and Pranee Boonrat, members of the Southern Peasants Federation of Thailand (SPFT) and advocates for the right to agricultural land, were shot on their way to a local market on 19 November 2012.

On 15 December 2012, Rosa Helena Bernal Pinto, lifelong Colombian defender of human rights and community leader was shot.