



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**The Advocates for Human Rights Works in Morocco, Mongolia, Latvia, and Lithuania in January to Combat Violence Against Women**

**Minneapolis / St. Paul, MN (2/1/13)** - In January, 2013 The Advocates for Human Rights traveled to Morocco, Mongolia, Latvia, and Lithuania to work with partners on new reforms toward a safer, more just world for women and girls. The Advocates has built relationships with government officials and local women's rights organizations in these and many other countries around the world to help reform, implement, and monitor laws on violence against women.

In Morocco, The Advocates is conducting a training for a coalition of women's rights groups working to pass a comprehensive law on violence against women. The law would be the first of its kind in the Arab world. The Advocates' training focuses on helping the coalition use United Nations mechanisms to put pressure on the Moroccan government to pass the law. The Advocates has worked with local partners in Morocco on domestic violence legal reform since 2008.

On January 19, The Advocates traveled to Mongolia to conduct an assessment of the country's domestic violence law and its implementation. The Advocates worked with its Mongolian partner, the National Center Against Violence (NCAV), to interview police, prosecutors, judges, social service providers, non-governmental advocacy organizations, and high-level government officials. The Advocates and the NCAV plan to release a report with findings and recommendations prior to October, when proposed amendments to the 2005 domestic violence law are scheduled to be introduced in Parliament.

Also in January, The Advocates traveled to Latvia and Lithuania to conduct trainings for police on responding to violence against women. Despite a new law on domestic violence in Lithuania, weaknesses in enforcement and unresolved cases have prevented women from getting protection. During a training session, a local police supervisor told The Advocates, "We realize now we need to change our approach. We need to work with other people in the system to have closer linkages. Our system needs to improve."

Cheryl Thomas, Director of The Advocates' Women's Human Rights Program, says, "The passage of laws on violence against women is always thrilling, but there is such a risk that laws will just sit on the books. We are encouraged when leaders and activists like those in Latvia, Lithuania, Morocco, and Mongolia step forward and look for information from officials from other parts of the world who have made arrests, investigated cases, protected women through the justice system and punished those who assault women. When a country's legal professionals need this information, The Advocates can help. Our decades-old Minnesota model is a powerful guide."

For more information on violence against women, visit [www.stopvaw.org/](http://www.stopvaw.org/).

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The Advocates for Human Rights, a nonprofit organization headquartered in Minneapolis, is dedicated to the promotion of internationally-recognized human rights. To learn more visit [theadvocatesforhumanrights.org](http://theadvocatesforhumanrights.org).