**Canadian efforts to address child, early and forced marriage**

**Report for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on progress towards ending child, early and forced marriage worldwide, pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 69/156 adopted on 18 December 2014**

**March 2016**

**Context**

The Government of Canada works domestically and supports efforts internationally to end child, early and forced marriage (CEFM). The primary coordination mechanism across the various departments working on this issue is the Inter-Departmental Working Group on Early and Forced Marriage, ''Honour'' Based Violence and Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting, which includes 14 departments, agencies and crown corporations.[[1]](#footnote-1)

This report is a follow up to the report submitted in 2013 (please refer to Annex 1). The following report summarizes Canada’s main activities towards ending CEFM worldwide, since 2 April 2014.

The report addresses this in 3 sections:

* 1. Legal reforms and policies related to this matter
  2. Best practices for programmes aimed at ending the practice and supporting already married women and girls
  3. Gaps in research and implementation

Non-governmental organizations known to Justice Canada that work on these issues were advised of this opportunity to submit independent reports on their findings to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

1. Legal reforms and policies related to child, early and forced marriage

**A. Domestically**

* On July 17th 2015, a number of amendments to the *Criminal Code* came into force addressing underage and forced marriages. It is now an offence to celebrate, aid or participate in a marriage ceremony with full knowledge that one of the persons being married is marrying against their will. Anyone found guilty of that offence is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years (section 293.1).
* There is also a new *Criminal Code* offence of underage marriage whereby everyone who celebrates, aids or participates in a marriage ceremony with full knowledge that one of the persons being married is under the age of 16 years, is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years (section 293.2).
* Recent amendments to the *Criminal Code* also extended the existing offence of removing a child from Canada, who is ordinarily resident in Canada, for the purpose of committing certain offences, to include the removal of a child for the purpose of a forced or underage marriage ceremony (section 273.3).
* Further, a new specific peace bond has been addedthat gives the court power to impose conditions on a person where there are reasonable grounds to fear that a forced or underage marriage will otherwise occur (section 810.02).
* A number of other criminal offences might be committed against an individual both prior to and following a forced marriage. Relevant *Criminal Code* offences are cited in the 2013 report attached.
* Canada’s minimum full age of marriage remains the age of majority (age 18 or 19, depending on the province or territory). On June 18, 2015, amendments to the *Civil Marriage Act* came into force introducing a new absolute minimum age of marriage of 16 years, closing all possibility of exceptions below that age. This protection extends to children below the age of 16 who are ordinarily resident in Canada, regardless of where in the world the marriage ceremony purports to take place.[[2]](#footnote-2)
* On June 18th 2015, amendments were made to the federal *Civil Marriage Act* to codify the legal requirement for free and enlightened consent to a marriage and the dissolution of any former marriage prior to a new marriage.
* Canadian Immigration Law and Regulations include provisions that support ending child, early and forced marriages. Under these regulations, a Canadian citizen or permanent resident must be at least 18 years of age in order to sponsor his or her spouse for permanent residence. An application for permanent residence for a sponsored spouse will not be approved if it is determined that the marriage relationship is not genuine or was entered into primarily for the purpose of acquiring any status or privilege in Canada.
* *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulation* amendments came into effect on June 10, 2015 which raised the minimum age of eligibility to immigrate to Canada as an accompanying spouse or partner, or to be sponsored as a spouse or partner of a Canadian citizen or permanent resident, from 16 to 18. This regulatory amendment is intended to decrease the number of potentially vulnerable young spouses immigrating to Canada who have not yet reached full maturity or who do not possess the ability to act in their own best interest, potentially preventing a forced marriage or a marriage of convenience from occurring.
* On June 10, 2015, a regulatory change to the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations* that eliminates the recognition of marriages facilitated by proxy, telephone, fax, Internet or other similar means came into effect. The nature of these forms of marriage where one or both spouses are not physically present, make it more difficult to determine that they consent to the marriage. Banning the majority of such marriages for immigration purposes and improving measures to identify such marriages will help protect vulnerable people and help ensure that those who marry by these means do not gain status or privilege through the immigration system.
* A sponsored spouse or partner who is subject to conditional permanent residence[[3]](#footnote-3) and is a forced marriage victim may request an exception to the condition, as forced marriage is considered a form of abuse.
* An amendment to the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* introduced a new inadmissibility for practicing polygamy in Canada, expected to come into force in the spring of 2016.
* In the province of Québec, Bill 59 proposes amendments to the *Loi sur la protection de la jeunesse* (Youth protection Law) to ensure that “excessive control” be considered a form of psychological abuse. It would also clarify the role of Youth Protection authorities toward a child and their parents who are in need of assistance but whose situation does not otherwise require youth protection intervention. Further, Bill 59 proposes amendments to certain regulations related to the celebration of marriages and civil unions as per the *Code civil du Québec*, in particular, with regard to a marriage of a person who is a minor.
* Québec’s *Batshaw Youth and Family Services* published “Practice Guidelines for Honour Based Violence” intended to standardise their clinical practice by providing best practice assessment and intervention guidelines. Forced marriages are also specifically discussed in these guidelines.

**B. Internationally**

**Policy Approach**

CEFM is a complex and multifaceted harmful practice, requiring engagement at all levels of government and all sectors of society. Canada addresses this issue through both a human rights and development approach and is intensifying multilateral, programming and advocacy efforts to end this harmful practice. In April 2014, Global Affairs Canada established a Child, Early and Forced Marriage Unit that leads and coordinates Canada’s activities internationally in support of the goal of ending CEFM. The unit oversees the development, coordination and implementation of policy and initiatives on ending CEFM.

**Multilateral and Regional Engagement**

Canada has helped to bring global attention and political engagement to end CEFM and is committed to working with our partners to achieve this goal. Examples of our efforts include:

* In 2014, Canada and Zambia co-led the first substantive resolution on CEFM at the 69th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA). The UNGA 69 resolution recognized factors such as poverty, insecurity and a lack of access to education as root causes of CEFM while also demonstrating how CEFM perpetuates many of these same vicious cycles, clearly noting the negative impact CEFM has had on the achievement of six of the eight Millennium Development Goals[[4]](#footnote-4).
* Once again, Canada will co-lead with Zambia the third UNGA resolution on CEFM in the fall of 2016.
* In 2015, Canada was a member of the core group of countries that developed the first substantive resolution on CEFM at the Human Rights Council.
* Canada was active in securing a target to eliminate harmful practices, such as CEFM and female genital mutilation (5.3) in the final framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which will result in increased attention and global action on this issue. The UNGA 69 resolution on CEFM helped to secure support for this target.
* Canada has also encouraged and supported the efforts of regional organizations, including the Commonwealth, La Francophonie and the African Union to address CEFM.

**Advocacy**

Canada has helped raise awareness of the harmful impacts of CEFM and generated a dialogue on ending this practice. For example:

* Canada is collaborating with Girls Not Brides on the exhibit entitled *Girls’ Voices: Speaking Out Against Child Marriage.* The exhibit tells the untold stories of married girls and those at risk of child marriage and the community members advocating for change alongside them. It features stories from girls, boys, women and men, including religious and traditional leaders from countries in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. The exhibit was first launched at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Malta, the African Girl’s Summit on Ending Child Marriage in Zambia in November 2015, and at the 26th African Union meeting in Ethiopia in January 2016. Canadian embassies and high commissions are now showing the exhibit in countries across the globe to bring greater awareness to this issue.

Canadian embassies and high commissions around the world have also undertaken a wide range of other advocacy initiatives to build greater awareness and action around ending CEFM through engagement with a broad spectrum of actors – governments, academics, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), girls and faith-based and traditional leaders. These initiatives are also aimed at encouraging the leadership of high prevalence countries, which is critical in all successful efforts to address CEFM. Specific examples include:

* In partnership with the Government of Tanzania, the Canadian High Commission in Tanzania created the CEFM Champion award to recognize the distinguished contribution of a Tanzanian leader in the effort to end CEFM. Canada is providing a platform for the CEFM Champion to raise awareness on CEFM, through public events and social media initiatives.
* In Guatemala, the Embassy of Canada embassy partnered with Plan International Guatemala to provide scholarships to girls in rural communities of Alta Verapaz who were at risk of leaving school and facing the possibility of premature marriage. In addition, the embassy held an essay contest for girls who had received education scholarships, which asked them to write to their Member of Congress on what they and their communities need to help them achieve their dreams.
* A mural depicting the impact of child marriage and highlighting the value of education in empowering young girls and boys was painted on the exterior wall of the Canadian High Commission in Ghana. The graffiti artists came from one of Accra’s most impoverished neighbourhoods, and the participation of important TV and music personalities helped significantly broaden the reach of the mission’s associated social media campaign (#CanadaWallGH) and raise awareness about the issues.
* The High Commission of Canada in India organized a seminar on CEFM prevention in association with the Indian non-governmental organization, Jagran Pehel and the Patna Women’s College. The seminar’s panelists focused on mobilizing support towards ending CEFM by stressing, notably, the importance of empowering women economically as a means of shaping a more egalitarian society.

2. Best practices for programmes aimed at ending child, early and forced marriage and supporting already married women and girls

**A. Domestically**

* Justice Canada, in partnership with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and Global Affairs Canada provide training on these issues to front-line police officers, border officers, and to other service providers.
* A Federal/Provincial/Territorial Working Group on Underage and Forced Marriage, “Honour” Based Violence and Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FPT WG on UFM) was formed to provide a forum for inter-governmental information exchange about relevant legislation, policies, interagency protocols, training materials, risk assessment tools and public awareness and education material to prevent and respond to these forms of family violence.
* Justice Canada co-hosted a national conference with the (then) Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development in February 2015 on underage and forced marriages and “honour” based violence. There were participants from across Canada from various sectors including provincial-territorial officials, police, Crown prosecutors, front-line service providers and child protection representatives.
* Justice Canada with colleagues from Global Affairs Canada and the RCMP led a workshop at the annual conference of the Committee of Youth Officers of Ontario, in February 2016 on underage and forced marriages and “honour” based violence.
* Justice Canada and Global Affairs Canada are co-hosting a knowledge exchange with agencies and provincial/territorial officials on protecting vulnerable children, which will include addressing underage and forced marriages and “honour” based violence.
* Justice Canada provided some funding for the development of a high school curriculum entitled Youth Agency and the Culture of Law:  A High School Curriculum on Forced Marriage, for use in high schools. The curriculum can be found at the following link: <http://ojen.ca/resource/8898>.
* Status of Women Canada (SWC), supports projects that address the issue of violence against women and girls and aim to ensure sustainable mechanisms are in place to enhance prevention and protection efforts. SWC’s Women’s Program has supported projects that prevent and reduce violence against women and girls in the name of "honour". “Honour” based violence can be linked to CEFM.
* SWC is currently in the preliminary stages of analyzing completed projects taking into consideration:
* institutional barriers and other factors that limit the work of community agencies to respond to the needs of women and girls who are at risk of, or have experienced, violence committed in the name of "honour";
* approaches and/or best practices that have positively assisted with identifying and responding to the specific needs of women and girls, including partnerships and collaboration between community agencies and stakeholders; and
* emerging issues related to “honour” based violence in Canada.
* Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has implemented a number of administrative measures, including operational guidelines to officers on how to address forced marriage cases. Safety measures are followed for potential forced marriage victims to avoid putting these persons at risk. This includes the “one chance rule”[[5]](#footnote-5) and treating any request for assistance as a high priority. It also includes taking into account privacy concerns and protection of personal information.
* In the situation where a person confirms with IRCC that they are a forced marriage victim, IRCC will provide the person with information about resources and options available. Victims of forced marriages in Canada who wish to receive immigration-related information may contact IRCC’s Call Centre. The IRCC Call Centre prioritizes calls received from victims of abuse or neglect, or who are victims of a forced marriage.
* A protocol has been developed between IRCC and Global Affairs Canada that facilitates lawful information sharing in select cases of forced marriage.
* If IRCC becomes aware of any form of abuse against a child and the child is in need of protection, IRCC will inform the appropriate authorities while taking into account privacy legislation.
* IRCC produces many resources to support the prevention of gender and family-based violence. Both Canada’s citizenship study guide *Discover Canada* and the *Welcome to* *Canada* orientation guide include information on gender equality and Canadian laws, and reinforce the fact that certain practices are unacceptable in Canada. These documents are also used by different organizations such as schools, libraries, and settlement organizations to educate Canadians and newcomers about Canadian values.
* Through the Settlement Program, the Government provides significant funding to nearly 500 service provider organizations across Canada to deliver pre and post-arrival settlement services to newcomers, of which more than half are women. These services include activities for newcomers that support the awareness and prevention of gender-based violence by providing information and workshops on identifying violence, cultivating healthy family relationships, developing risk mitigation strategies and understanding rights, responsibilities and Canadian norms such as gender equality.
* In the province of Ontario, although there is a need for greater public awareness and education regarding forced marriage as an unacceptable practice and the availability of resources for victims, particularly those services available to children and youth, there are a number of qualified, specialized service providers in the Greater Toronto Area for victims of forced marriage for example, the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario, the Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic, Justice for Children and Youth, India Rainbow Community Services of Peel, Agincourt Community Services Association and Peel Children’s Aid Society. There is a need for expansion and greater funding for such services, particularly for young persons and victims residing outside of the Greater Toronto Area.
* In the province of British Columbia, the project Enhancing Community Capacity to Respond to and Prevent Forced Marriages is a Justice Canada funded initiative. In partnership with Ending Violence BC (EVA), MOSAIC has led the initiative to increase awareness of the issue of forced marriage in the community and enhance the capacity of service to individuals facing situations of forced marriage. The findings from their literature review, online survey, key informant interviews and focus groups were used to inform the development of a risk assessment framework. Ultimately, MOSAIC and EVA BC contribute to new and innovative approaches to thinking about and responding to violence against women with the provision of this risk assessment framework. It will assist service providers in dealing with cases of forced marriage, facilitate open discussion with different stakeholders, including men and women, and raise awareness of the issue in the community.

**B. Internationally**

**Consular Services**

Consular Services are available to Canadian victims of forced marriage abroad. Consular officers provide assistance to safeguard the well-being of children and protect adults from the abuses associated with forced marriage. The consular services and assistance available to Canadians abroad will vary according to the particular circumstances and wishes of the victim, including factors such as the legal system in the country where she/he is located and the victim’s age.  Training provided to consular officers sensitizes them that both men and women of all ages can be vulnerable to forced marriage, although research shows that it is most commonly perpetrated against women who may, in addition, be affected by local laws or customs that restrict their freedom to return to Canada. In exceptional circumstances, consular assistance may be provided to Permanent Residents of Canada and to non-citizens with strong ties to Canada. Consular case management officers responding to requests for assistance from victims under the age of 18 years are trained with respect to child-specific issues, as there is added complexity in these cases, such as the legal issues surrounding the provision of consular services to a minor without parental knowledge or consent, and the need to involve provincial Child Protective Services upon the child’s return to Canada.

Services available to victims abroad may include:

* Identifying trustworthy resources to secure food, security, accommodation, medical services, legal services, etc.
* Assessing the local context and possible departure strategies
* Providing information on departure requirements
* Providing travel documents
* Coordinating transportation to airport or point of exit
* Arranging the private transfer of funds
* Assisting in securing public funding for repatriation
* Ensuring that a post-departure plan is in place
* Where appropriate, coordinating with local police, social services, NGOs, Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA), airport officials, or trusted family members or friends upon arrival in Canada
* Establishing first contact with provincial child welfare services or local shelters to facilitate accommodation and other support services
* Referrals for legal advice related to forced marriage, before or after the marriage has taken place

**Development Programming Activities**

Canada has intensified development programming efforts to end CEFM and support women and girls who are already married, recognizing the serious impacts of this harmful practice on girls, their communities and the development of their countries. Canada’s approach has been to support a diverse portfolio of programming interventions at the global, regional, national and grassroots levels. Since October 2013, over $80 million in new targeted programming has been committed at all levels. In addition to this targeted programming, several Canadian international development assistance programs also address the causes and consequences of CEFM, including through health, poverty alleviation, education and child protection initiatives. In particular, Canada’s work on CEFM intersects with Canada’s efforts to promote the health of women, children and adolescents. Examples of specific CEFM programming interventions include:

* In July 2014, a $20 million contribution over three years to UNICEF toward ending CEFM was announced. The UNICEF project aims to accelerate the movement to end child marriage in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Yemen and Zambia by supporting efforts in these countries to strengthen programming and political support to end the practice.
* In July 2015, Canada announced a $20 million contribution to a CEFM project with UNFPA. The project aims to help adolescent girls gain better access to health information and services, education and life skills training, while also generating valuable data that will be used for advocacy, training and project tracking. UNFPA is implementing the project over two years in Guatemala, Haiti, India, Niger, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.
* Canadian support for UNICEF and UNFPA has been an important contribution towards the creation of the joined up Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage. The Global Programme will fast track progress on ending CEFM through a coordinated multi-sector approach, involving the two UN agencies, key donors, governments of high prevalence countries and civil society.
* In July 2015, Canada announced a $2.3 million contribution to a Commonwealth of Learning project to end CEFM in Commonwealth countries through open learning and distance education. The project builds on Canada’s international advocacy efforts to prevent CEFM by working in Commonwealth countries to promote secondary schooling for girls and women and provide them with skills development training to improve their livelihoods.

* Canada is supporting the AU Campaign to End Child Marriage through technical and financial contributions.
* In October 2013, Canada announced $5 million dollars in programming support to help address the causes and consequences of CEFM in high prevalence countries around the world. Initial programming was undertaken in Ghana, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Somalia and Afghanistan. Further programming was announced under this envelope in March 2015 to support the work of Save the Children in Somalia, as well as the Women’s Refugee Commission to support girls in situation of conflict and displacement, including support for Somali refugees in Ethiopia, Syrian refugees in Lebanon and internally displaced peoples in Burma. Additional funding was also provided to Parliamentarians for Global Action to build the capacity of African Parliamentarians to help end CEFM.
* In November 2014, Canada announced an additional $10 million in funding, including for projects with Care Canada (Mali and Benin), Plan Canada (Bangladesh and Zimbabwe) and Save the Children Canada (Nigeria), as well as providing institutional support to Girls Not Brides, a global partnership of more than 550 civil society organisations from over 70 countries committed to ending child marriage and enabling girls to fulfill their potential.
* In December 2015, Canada announced a $15.7 million contribution over five years to Oxfam Canada for its Creating Space to Take Action on Violence Against Women and Girls project. The project will help reduce gender-based violence—including CEFM—through training and greater access to support services, such as legal advice in Bangladesh, Nepal, Indonesia, India, Pakistan and the Philippines.
* The Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) provides direct funding assistance to local NGOs and other grassroots organizations such as village councils, cooperatives and women’s groups. In fiscal year 2014/2015, the CFLI funded over 70 projects in over 40 ODA recipient countries for a total of $1.6 million. In fiscal year 2015/2016, the CFLI funded close to 152 CEFM projects in 60 ODA recipient countries for a total of approximately $4.0 million. The Fund is managed by Canadian embassies and high commissions and enables Canada to respond to local needs by working at the community level. It has been a useful tool for Canadian embassies, in that they have been able to leverage the CFLI projects and combine them with their advocacy efforts on CEFM.

Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC) also supports projects on CEFM. This includes:

* A project by WILDAF in Mali, Niger and Togo to strengthen women’s capacities to challenge social, cultural and religious norms that contribute to the perpetuation of CEFM in the region.
* Research in urban poor settlements in Bangladesh to understand the socio-economic, institutional and cultural factors contributing to CEFM and to help design suitable public policy interventions.
* A project in Pakistan to empower girls to become their own advocates to resist CEFM, supported by women, and benefitting from safe spaces, new knowledge, skills and the support of peers, including engaging boys as allies. It also seeks to generate community-owned changes to advocate for policy reforms.

**Best Practices**

Canadian support for specific programming to address CEFM has increased in recent years and many projects are in the early stages. The following is a sampling of best practices, identified to date by programming partners from both past and ongoing projects, which Canada will continue to draw on in our future programming and advocacy:

* **Girls:**
  + - Recognize and mobilize girls’ agency and strengthen the capacity of girls as their own advocates
    - Address the social isolation of girls and create safe spaces
    - Promote peer-to-peer participation
    - Increase access to quality educational opportunities and skills training for girls, including using new technologies to reach girls living in remote areas, or those facing other barriers to attending school such as the security situation or sanitation issues
    - Improve the economic situation of girls, including by providing vocational training
    - Increase access to health services
    - Support girls who have already been married
* **Families and Communities:**
* Raise awareness of parents and traditional, religious and community leaders of the harmful impacts of CEFM, including through media campaigns
* Facilitate dialogue with, and action by, families and communities
* Work with local partners that have strong relationships with local communities
* Engage boys and men
* Encourage economic opportunities for families
* **National level:**
* Create national dialogue on CEFM and involve all stakeholders
* Develop and strengthen national multi-sector plans that are resourced and implemented
* Coordinate the various services for at risk girls and boys, which work towards addressing the root causes of this complex issue, including poverty, patriarchal cultural norms and practices undervaluing the girl child, and a lack of access to education (particularly for girls)
* Address gaps in legal frameworks and systems that protect children
* Ensure implementation of laws and policies around CEFM

3. Gaps in research and implementation

**A. Domestically**

* There is limited data available on the incidence of forced marriage in Canada or of Canadians being forced into marriage in other countries.
* More outreach and assistance should be provided to non-governmental organizations working with victims of forced marriage in Canada.
* Many victims of forced marriage and "honour" based violence are young. There are different age thresholds for child protection intervention under provincial and territorial child protection legislation, thus, the ability of young persons to access the protective services of children’s aid societies, including in-care placement and counselling services, varies across Canada.

**B. Internationally**

* More research is needed on the underlying causes and the best preventative and responsive programming strategies to address CEFM in conflict, post-conflict, and humanitarian emergency contexts.
* More emphasis should be put on developing and implementing holistic, comprehensive and coordinated responses that effectively address the needs of those already forced into marriage. This is especially important for girls and adolescents, who once married, are considered to be adult women in many communities.
* Research and interventions should explore the links between CEFM and other harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation/cutting, particularly where multiple practices are prevalent.
* In scaling up interventions on CEFM, expanding the evidence base will be useful in developing context specific approaches.
* While there has been success in raising awareness on CEFM, in some regions and countries where the practice is prevalent, the harmful effects are still not well understood and the practice is not recognized as problematic.

1. As of March 2016, membership is as follows: Canada Border Services Agency; Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation; Canadian Heritage; Correctional Services Canada; Employment and Social Development Canada; Global Affairs Canada; Health Canada; Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada; Justice Canada; Public Health Agency of Canada; Royal Canadian Mounted Police; Service Canada; Statistics Canada; and Status of Women Canada. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The minimum age for marriage is an element of legal capacity to marry. Prior to these amendments, this absolute minimum age for marriage of 16 existed in legislation that applied only to the Province of Québec, and other provinces and territories had included exceptional provisions in their legislation for certain situations where a child under that age (or in some cases, under age 15) had parental consent and/or court approval, for example, where a female child was pregnant or had a child. These additional requirements for parental consent and court approval will continue to apply to marriages between age 16 and the age of majority. This approach of an absolute minimum age of 16 together with additional safeguards for marriage between 16 and the age of majority, seeks to balance protections for minor children with respect to decisions of mature minors in limited appropriate circumstances, for example where they have a child. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This condition requires certain sponsored spouses, common-law or conjugal partners to cohabit in a conjugal relationship with their sponsor for two years after the day on which they became a permanent resident. Sponsored spouses and partners who fail to meet the condition, and do not qualify for an exception, risk having their permanent resident status revoked and could be removed from Canada. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/sustainable-development-goals-why-ending-child-marriage-should-be-a-target/> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The “one chance rule” means that there may be only one opportunity to speak to a potential forced marriage victim and refer them to victims support services. The individual may have extreme difficulties in leaving their residence or reaching out to authorities. It is highly recommended that where possible, any request for assistance be treated as a high priority. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)