

PENTAGON RELEASES LATEST REPORTS ON SEXUAL ASSAULT IN THE MILITARY

Statistics show rapes and sexual assaults continue unabated, military's efforts are proving ineffective.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Yesterday, the Pentagon's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO) published the *Department of Defense Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military*. The 622 page report details sexual assaults from each branch of the service for fiscal year 2010. The numbers indicate that cases of rape and sexual assault have not decreased, and that the military is no closer to ending this crisis in the ranks.

In FY2010, there were 3,158 total reports of sexual assault in the military. The DOD estimates that this number only represents 13.5% of total assaults in 2010, making the total number of military rapes and sexual assaults in excess of 19,000 for FY 2010.

“This latest report clearly shows that the military's response to rape and sexual assault within its own ranks has been both inadequate and ineffective,” said Anu Bhagwati, former Marine Corps captain and executive director of the Service Women's Action Network. “This crime continues to see massive amounts of underreporting because victims do not feel the climate is safe to report, and perpetrators are not being brought to trial in sufficient numbers.”

The SAPRO Annual Report shows that of the 3,158 reports made in FY2010, only 529 went to trial.

“For decades the DOD has not demonstrated the leadership needed to bring their own troops in line with their stated goals and policies on sexual assault and sexual harassment,” said Bhagwati. “Immediate legislative action by our elected officials is the best tool we have to stop this crisis right now. The military's continuing efforts are just reinforcing failure.”

Along with the *Annual Report*, the DOD also released its *2010 Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Active Duty Members*, which surveys service members every two years about sexual assault and sexual harassment in the workplace. This report indicates that the military's climate of fear and intimidation around sexual assault reporting still exists. The survey reveals that 67% of women are “uncomfortable” with reporting, 54% “fear reprisal”, and 46% of both men and women in the military believe that sexual assault was “not important enough” to report at all.

SWAN is a national human rights organization founded and led by women veterans. SWAN's vision is to transform military culture by securing equal opportunity and the freedom to serve in uniform without threat of harassment, discrimination, intimidation or assault. SWAN also seeks to reform veterans' services on a national scale to guarantee equal access to quality health care, benefits and resources for women veterans and their families. You can follow Service Women's Action Network on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/servicewomen>, or on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/servicewomen>.