

[Click to view this email in a browser](#)



[www.servicewomen.org](http://www.servicewomen.org)

## **Service Women's Action Network (SWAN) Hosts UN Expert during U.S. visit for Roundtable on Sexual Violence in the Military**

*Rashida Manjoo, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence  
Against Women, Met with SWAN to Discuss Rape, Sexual  
Assault, and Sexual Harassment Faced by US  
Servicemembers*

**NEW YORK, NY** – Earlier today, Rashida Manjoo, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, held a press conference at the United Nations Information Center in Washington, DC to discuss her recent official fact-finding mission to the United States regarding the issue of violence against women. As part of this official UN mission, Ms. Manjoo attended a roundtable last Friday that was hosted by the Service Women's Action Network (SWAN) to discuss the particular issue of violence against America's servicewomen. The SWAN hosted roundtable discussion with Rashida Manjoo, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, at the UN building in New York City was attended by leading advocates and service providers on issues facing women in the military, to include rape, sexual assault, and sexual harassment.

Based on the information obtained during the visit, Ms. Manjoo will present a report with her final findings and recommendations to a forthcoming session of the Human Rights Council.

"As an organization founded by women veterans, we were heartened that Ms. Manjoo had a particular interest in learning more about the horrendous circumstances that too many women wearing the uniform of the United States military find themselves in today," said Anuradha Bhagwati, former Marine Corps Captain and Executive Director of the Service Women's Action Network. "The UN visit reminds us all that the United States is not immune from human rights law. It also gave us a chance to remind Ms. Manjoo of the startling number of US servicemembers we hear from every single day who have suffered trauma due to sexual assault, rape or harassment in the military."

According to the Pentagon, 3,230 servicemembers reported being sexually assaulted last year, an increase of 11% over the previous year. Rape in the military is significantly under reported, prosecution rates are far below that of civilian society, and intimate partner violence is rampant.

Bhagwati continued, "Human rights law applies to everyone by virtue of being human beings and when you join the military you do not sign away your humanity."

In her role as the UN Special Rapporteur, Rashida Manjoo is examining the causes and consequences of violence against women for the United Nations. She visited New York as part of a six-state tour designed to gather facts and testimony about the problem in the United States. Ms. Manjoo, a professor at the Department of Public Law at the University of Cape Town, South Africa, is gathering information about violence against women in the military and in prison, sexual violence, gun violence, and the relationship between poverty and violence against women. She was appointed Special Rapporteur on Violence against women, its causes and consequences in June 2009 by the UN Human Rights Council, for an initial period of three years. As Special Rapporteur, she is independent from any government or organization and serves in an individual capacity.

*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>.*

**Donate Now**

SWAN is a 501(c)3 organization that urgently needs your financial support. Your tax deductible donation will help SWAN ensure equality, fairness, and justice for women in the military and dramatically improve resources for women veterans.

