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Service Women's Action Network Statement on Air Force Survey

Christian Science Monitor Previews Survey's Release: 1 in 5 Air Force Women and 1 in 20 Men Victims of Sexual Assault

NEW YORK – According to an exclusive piece published today online in the *Christian Science Monitor*, the Air Force is set to release a comprehensive survey later this week that finds almost 1 in 5 women and 1 in 20 men in the Air Force say they have been sexually assaulted or raped since joining the service. According to the story, among the women surveyed, 58% revealed they had been raped and 20% had been sodomized. Additionally, almost half of the victims didn't report the crime because they "did not want to cause trouble in their unit." To read the entire exclusive Christian Science Monitor story online, go to: http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Military/2011/0317/Exclusive-1-in-5-Air-Force-women-victim-of-sexual-assault-survey-finds?cmpid=addthis_mailto.

In reaction to the findings outlined in the story earlier today, Anu Bhagwati, executive director of Service Women's Action Network (SWAN), released the following statement:

"It should be no surprise that rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment are an every day fact of life for women in the Air Force, and every other branch of the military," said Anu Bhagwati, former Marine Corps Captain and Executive Director of Service Women's Action Network.

"Despite having more women than any other branch of service, it's clear that the Air Force, like the rest of the military, is in over its head when it comes to reducing this threat to our servicemembers," Bhagwati continued. "Survivors don't feel safe enough to report their attacks, and frankly, there's little reason for them to feel safe in today's military climate. Senior military leadership has failed to protect survivors, punish perpetrators or hold commanders accountable for failing to enforce sexual assault policy. Immediate legislative action by our elected officials is the best tool we have to stop this crisis now."

In addition to today's leak of the Air Force survey scheduled for release later this week, the Department of Defense's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO) released its FY 2010 "Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military". The SAPRO FY 2010 "Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military" can be viewed

at: http://www.sapr.mil/media/pdf/reports/DoD_Fiscal_Year_2010_Annual_Report_on_Sexual_Assault_in_the_Military.pdf

The 622 page report was released moments ago, revealing 3158 reports of sexual assault military-wide in FY10, and is being further analyzed by SWAN's experts. A forthcoming analysis of the report and fact sheet will be made available to the public as soon as it is

completed. **Media outlets interested in interviewing or booking Anu Bhagwati, SWAN's executive director, should contact: Robb Friedlander, Luna Media Group, at 913.636.0099 or robb@lunamediagroup.com.**

SWAN is spearheading a national advocacy campaign to end military rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment. More information can be found at www.servicewomen.org/endit.

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](https://twitter.com/servicewomen) on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/servicewomen>, or on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/servicewomen>.

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