



*ahafoundation*

Preventing Violence. Ending Shame. Reclaiming Honor.

Annual Report 2014

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## Dear Friend,

It's easy to feel hopeless with tragic events occurring all around us: terrorists murdering 12 journalists in Paris; terrorists shooting four hostages dead in a Paris kosher market; a school massacre in Peshawar that killed 150 students and teachers; a gunman in Sydney taking 17 hostages, ending with two hostages killed along with the attacker.

These acts of violence and terrorism are brutal and shocking. What's more, they underscore a disconnect between societies that value peace, democracy and individual freedoms and extremist groups that are violent, undemocratic and intolerant. Women and girls suffer the most under radical extremism as they are prevented from accessing an education and health care; exposed to violence and abuse such as kidnapping, rape and murder; and marginalized politically and socio-economically.

### **We must stop it.**

Our founder, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, often states that changing the status of women and girls is the key to challenging radical extremism and ending terror. She's right. We must change the status of women and girls globally, so they can create peace and prosperity for themselves, their communities and the world.

The pages that follow include the AHA Foundation's 2014 Annual Report. You will see that elevating the status of women and girls is at the heart of our efforts to create a more peaceful, democratic world. Working under this guiding principle, our 2014 policy advocacy efforts sparked legislation that protects girls from female genital mutilation. We enabled frontline service providers to understand and more effectively address occurrences of honor violence, and we helped survivors of these horrible crimes thrive.

### **We could not have done this work without you.**

But we know more must be done in 2015. In the coming year, we will launch two signature programs aimed at protecting women and girls from honor violence and forced marriage in the U.S., while fighting for women's rights globally to create sustainable change. We will work with women's rights activists to identify and empower female change makers around the world so they can advocate for themselves and their communities, and ultimately, transform their societies. And we will roll out a helpline - in partnership with a leading crisis helpline organization - that will offer a lifeline to women and girls facing honor violence or forced marriage.

Our 2015 initiatives need your continued support. Become a catalyst for global change by supporting our work to end horrifying practices that harm women and girls and prevent them from accessing opportunities. It is through this work that we will transform the world and create more peaceful, democratic and economically viable societies.

Learn more at [www.theahafoundation.org](http://www.theahafoundation.org), and join our conversations about issues related to women's rights on Facebook and Twitter at @AHAFoundation.

Thank you,



Stephanie Baric



Stephanie Baric testifying on Capitol Hill against child marriage

# A Detailed View

In 2007, Ayaan Hirsi Ali founded the AHA Foundation to protect U.S. women and girls from honor violence that shames, hurts or kills thousands of women and girls in the U.S. each year and puts millions more at risk. Ayaan Hirsi Ali's passion, courage and leadership have led the AHA Foundation to become the preeminent organization working to end honor violence, while enabling survivors of these crimes to thrive.

## The AHA Foundation works to achieve its mission in four ways:

- 1 Meeting the needs of women and girls in crisis
- 2 Speaking out about gender-based violence and oppression through advocacy, coalition partnerships and media efforts
- 3 Training officials on how to recognize and respond to these issues
- 4 Gathering data to inform and strengthen our work

In 2014, the AHA Foundation continued to fulfill its core mission while activating new, strategic initiatives to strengthen outcomes now and in the future through:

- Programs and Trainings
- Research
- Advocacy
- Coalitions and Partnerships
- New Leadership
- Strategic Planning and Growth

Ayaan Hirsi Ali © Jan Grarup

"We must put an end to the horrifying and painful practices that are harming women and girls behind closed doors in our own American communities. There is no culture, religion or tradition that justifies honor violence."

— Stephanie Baric,  
Executive Director of  
the AHA Foundation

"A year ago, I reached out to the AHA Foundation for assistance. I wanted a better life for myself, and a bright future with endless possibility. An end to the crippling of the culture I was born into. Today, I am living my dreams: a free human being who can choose her own lifestyle. Thank you."

— *Salma\**, St. Louis, MO

*\* For safety purposes, we did not use the girls' real names or photographs throughout.*

# In 2014, the AHA Foundation's programs actively worked to:

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## Meet the Needs of Women & Girls in Crisis

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Honor violence is an often-overlooked form of abuse that shames, hurts or kills thousands of women and girls in the U.S. each year and puts millions more at risk.

Honor violence is typically seen in the form of physical or emotional abuse, sexual assault, rape or kidnapping - but it also includes female genital mutilation and forced marriage. In its most extreme cases, honor violence can lead to murder. In sharp contrast to other forms of domestic violence, honor violence is often condoned by families and communities, making it particularly difficult to identify and stop. Sadly, it typically involves multiple perpetrators within the family or community.

Alarming, the number of cases of honor violence is increasing in the U.S., making it clear that a more robust system for addressing these crimes is critical. **During the first half of the year, the AHA Foundation experienced a**

55% increase in calls from young women facing honor violence or coercion from family members and friends. We responded to these nearly 40 young women with counseling, education and direct introductions to local service providers.

The AHA Foundation will be launching a series of informational brochures that outline the rights of women and girls in the U.S. related to honor violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation - and include resources for help. These brochures will be sent to thousands of guidance counselors, law enforcement officials and health clinics around the U.S., and they also will be posted on the AHA Foundation Website.

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## Train officials and educators on how to recognize and respond to issues related to honor violence

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To protect women and girls from gender-based violence and oppression, the AHA Foundation trained law enforcement, service providers and educators most likely to encounter cases of honor violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage on how to best recognize, react and respond to these crimes.

The AHA Foundation has trained more than a thousand service providers and law enforcement officials on best practices for identifying and handling cases of forced marriage and honor violence. In 2014 the AHA Foundation worked with several partners to co-lead trainings for the Central New York Anti-Trafficking Task Force and the Arizona Homicide Investigators' Association. This work made it clear that similar trainings are needed to address the topic of female genital mutilation. The AHA Foundation will begin such trainings in 2015, with the aim of reviewing laws pertaining to female genital mutilation in the U.S. and cultural sensitivities that should be considered when handling cases.



In consultation with technology experts, the AHA Foundation has started to develop interactive e-learning courses that provide relevant and low-cost trainings for service providers who work with women and girls who have experienced honor violence or who are at risk for gender-based violence and oppression. The e-learning facility will include dynamic presentations that can be accessed and completed at the student's discretion. Four courses will be available when the e-learning facility launches in 2015:

**1 | Honor Violence 101:** Teaches professionals likely to encounter honor violence victims the best practices for identifying and handling cases of honor violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

**2 | Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care:** Explores the causes, impact, experience and types of trauma related to honor violence survivors, and delves into the nature, application and implementation of trauma-informed care.

**3 | Cultural Competency:** Underscores the importance of culturally sensitive attitudes, skills and behaviors among service providers who work with victims of honor violence, and educates service providers on ways to master culturally appropriate practices.

**4 | Reclaiming Honor:** Raises awareness about the rights of women and girls who have survived or who are at risk for female genital mutilation, forced marriage and honor violence, and provides information about existing laws and counseling and legal services.

Certification for completion of the e-learning training modules will be available.

**Gather Data to inform and strengthen our work:**

In 2014, the AHA Foundation and the John Jay College of Criminal Justice (a City University of New York) completed two studies that built a foundation of knowledge on the frequency of honor killings in the U.S. and forced marriages in New York City. (Currently, there is no other reli-

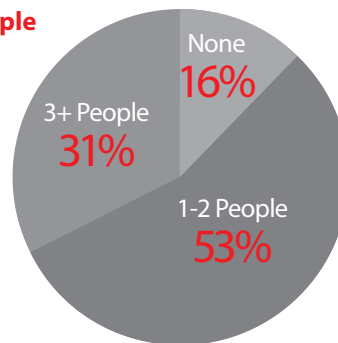
able body of knowledge on prevalence rates for these issues.) The findings of these studies underscore the need for more in-depth research to better understand the scope of the violence and more effective solutions to address it.

- The John Jay College of Criminal Justice estimates that, at minimum, there are between 23 and 27 honor-motivated murders of women and girls in the U.S. each year. This study – coupled with other evidence that shows that millions of women and girls are at risk for the type of violence that can lead to honor killings – points to the need for in-depth research involving immigrant communities in the U.S. that hail from countries with high rates of gender-based violence and discrimination.

- To study the prevalence of forced marriage in New York City, John Jay College of Criminal Justice researchers interviewed 100 City University of New York students of Middle Eastern, North African and Southeast Asian descent about their knowledge, understanding of and experiences with forced marriage. The results of these in-depth, qualitative interviews show that nearly 85 percent of students interviewed know of at least one person in their social circles who accepted an unwanted marriage.

**How many people do you know who accepted an unwanted marriage?**

*Research conducted by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in partnership with the AHA Foundation*



“Not a day goes by that I am not grateful for the way the AHA Foundation helped one of my patients, a pregnant teenager at risk of honor violence. The AHA Foundation quickly stepped in to help my patient escape her dangerous home.”

— Dr. Elizabeth Gibson, Pediatrician in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania



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**Raise awareness about honor violence that harms women and girls in the U.S. through advocacy, coalition partnerships and communications:**

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**Advocacy:**

The AHA Foundation spoke out against the practice of female genital mutilation. Additionally, we partnered with Unchained at Last, to help push forward a New Jersey state bill (S1524 in the Senate/A1676 in the Assembly) that eases the process for women experiencing domestic violence to obtain final restraining orders against their abusers and, crucially, make this process confidential. This bill has been signed into law by the New Jersey governor.

Stephanie Baric, Executive Director of the AHA Foundation, provided written testimony for a Senate Hearing Committee on Canada's "Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act," calling for support to amend federal statutes to prevent early and forced marriage and polygamy. Stephanie will testify on this topic before the House in 2015.

The AHA Foundation continued to consult with the Massachusetts Women's Bar Association, which has created a taskforce that advocates for criminalizing female genital mutilation in the state of Massachusetts. The legislation is slated to be introduced in early 2015, and the AHA Foundation will rally its network of influentials and social media supporters to ensure the legislation passes without hesitation.



*"With girls at risk in Massachusetts, we felt it was key to have state legislation as one of the many tools needed to fight female genital mutilation. The AHA Foundation has been a significant resource and guide in helping us navigate the process."*

*— Beth Watters, Massachusetts Women's Bar Association*

**Coalition Partnerships:**

The AHA Foundation provides a leading voice within several notable coalitions that raise awareness about key issues facing women and girls in the U.S. today, including violence and oppression stemming from culturally-motivated practices and beliefs. Speaking out along-

side coalition partners makes our voice louder and increases our impact. In 2014, the AHA Foundation worked within two key coalitions to further our work:

- The AHA Foundation joined four of the Tahirih Justice Center's National Forced Marriage Working Group meetings, during which we discussed the increasing number of forced marriage cases in the U.S. and relevant legislative initiatives that could address the growing problem.
- The AHA Foundation also played an important role in the April 8th Girls Not Brides discussion on improving strategies for ending child marriage in the U.S. and globally. Girls Not Brides is a global partnership of over 300 civil society organizations committed to ending child marriage.

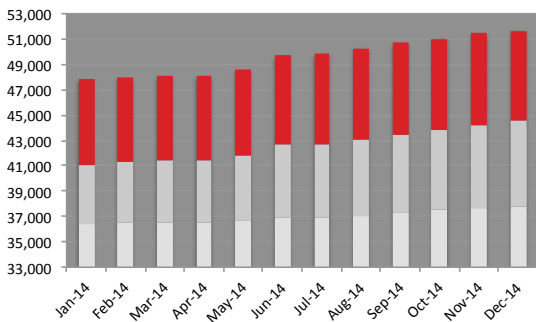
**Communications and Awareness:**

The AHA Foundation remains one of the most outspoken and articulate voices on ending violence against women and girls in the United States that stems from harmful traditional practices. In addition to our advocacy efforts, we spoke out in the following ways:

- **Media Outreach:** Ayaan Hirsi Ali and the AHA Foundation were featured in several national media outlets, including two Op-eds in the *Wall Street Journal* and stories appearing in *Time*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Washington Examiner*, Fox News and Al Jazeera America. The media attention spotlighted the issue of violence against women and girls worldwide and underscored the AHA Foundation's work to prevent culturally motivated violence in the U.S. The coverage also presented Ayaan's points of view on recent global events, such as the shocking abuse of women and girls in Iraq and Syria by the self-labeled Islamic State, honor killing of a pregnant woman in Pakistan, a Sudanese woman accused of apostasy, and the kidnapping of schoolgirls in Nigeria.

Not only did this media attention raise awareness of the AHA Foundation's mission, it also helped generate a 115% increase in online donations during the time of the press coverage. You can read these articles and other related news coverage here: <http://theahafoundation.org/category/news/>

- Social media: AHA Foundation engages followers through its website, emails and e-newsletters, Facebook and Twitter. **In 2014, the AHA Foundation's supporter network increased to nearly 52,000 members.**



- Salons: The AHA Foundation organized salons in New York City, Boston and Dallas with Ayaan Hirsi Ali and other influential leaders to raise awareness about our work, discuss current affairs and U.S. foreign policy, and develop new partnerships to strengthen our efforts moving forward.

- Ayaan Hirsi Ali received the following awards and accolades:

Independent Women's Forum's *Women of Valor Award* for her courage and commitment to women, personal liberty and political freedom. Previous award recipients include Lynne Cheney, Fmr. Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao, Fmr. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Nancy Brinker and others.

*The Dr. Miriam and Sheldon G. Adelson In Pursuit of Excellence Award* for her courageous fight against the oppression of women. This award recognizes those who inspire others through global leadership, high moral standards, commitment to future generations and tireless efforts on behalf of humanity. Past recipients include Nobel Laureate Dr. Aaron Ciechanover (2014), Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel (2013), Professor Alan Dershowitz (2012) and Refusnik Leader, Natan Sharansky (2011).

Open University of Israel's *Tzadej Award* for her moral courage and excellence in principles. Previous award winners include John Bolton and Nina Rosenwald.



Ayaan Hirsi Ali is awarded The Dr. Miriam and Sheldon G. Adelson In Pursuit of Excellence Award by Sheldon Adelson, left, and Dr. Miriam Adelson, right.

A standing ovation at the Manhattan Institute's annual Alexander Hamilton Award Dinner, which celebrates leaders in public policy, culture, or philanthropy.

- Ayaan Hirsi Ali also was featured in a video about a young Afghan couple under threat of honor violence at the "This World: The Values Network's Annual Gala" held on May 18 in New York City, which is the second annual champions of Jewish values international awards.



"The prevalence of honor violence and honor killings in the U.S. will only increase, unless we act now. We have a duty to protect these young women and to be a voice for them. Most importantly, it is the right thing to do."

— Detective Chris Boughey Peoria, Arizona Police Department



## New Leadership

The AHA Foundation is working under the leadership of Stephanie Baric, the organization's new Executive Director. With more than 20 years of experience managing programs to empower women and girls in the Middle East and Africa through ChildFund, CARE, Counterpart, and the United Nations, Stephanie is well equipped to lead the AHA Foundation into this exciting new phase of growth. Stephanie understands the underlying causes of gender-based violence and how to develop programs that address them. She also has the fundraising and advocacy experience to galvanize support that will strengthen our work and increase our impact.



## Looking Ahead

*"I have experienced the pain, the betrayal and the feeling of utter hopelessness that comes with forced marriage, female genital mutilation and honor violence. I founded the AHA Foundation to serve women and girls who faced similar atrocities – and to end these crimes forever. Five years later, the AHA Foundation is at the heart of my efforts to stop honor violence and gain equal rights for women and girls. I see every day that the Foundation's work is more important than ever. But I also know that we aren't reaching enough women and girls. We must and can do more."*  
— Ayaan Hirsi Ali

The work of the AHA Foundation is more relevant and critical than ever. Global events point to horrifying accounts of culturally-motivated abuse and murder of women and girls around the world. And here in the U.S., the number of women and girls experiencing honor violence, coercion and oppression is rising at an alarming rate.

In 2015, the AHA Foundation will activate its new strategic plan to build on the impact of our award-winning work and expand efforts to address cultural norms and behaviors that perpetuate abuse and discrimination.

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**We know we need to reach more women and girls in crisis, and we have the strategy in place to do it.**

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In 2015, the AHA Foundation will step up our work to train educators, law enforcement officials and community leaders on ways to recognize and handle honor violence through a new e-learning facility and more in-depth group trainings. We also will train the Manhattan District Attorney's Office and Family Justice Center on the differences between honor violence and other forms of domestic abuse, and how the distinctiveness of honor violence can impact the investigation and prosecution processes. This knowledge and understanding will help bring more criminals to justice.

We will continue to ensure that women and girls who are facing honor violence, oppression and coercion have a way out – and that survivors of these crimes get the help they need to cope and thrive.

We will strengthen our advocacy efforts by conducting a policy analysis to prioritize legislation, while continuing to advocate for policies that protect the rights of women and girls, such as criminalizing female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

The AHA Foundation will unveil a new website, Facebook and Twitter pages to showcase our mission and vision in a clearer, more compelling manner. We also will increase efforts to engage our grassroots network and strengthen relationships with supporters, community organizations and advocacy groups.

The AHA Foundation also will support the launch of Ayaan Hirsi Ali's forthcoming book, *Heretic: The Case for a Muslim Reformation* (spring 2015), and amplify her work to raise awareness about women and minority rights and challenge political Islam. We will continue to shine a spotlight on honor violence crimes and, in doing so, aim to end them all together.

But our work will not stop there. In 2015, the AHA Foundation will launch two signature programs aimed at protecting women and girls

from honor violence and forced marriage in the U.S., while working to improve women's rights globally to create sustainable change.

**1 | Lifeline of Support:** A young woman may have very little warning that she will be thrust into violence. In some cases, she may think she is traveling abroad on a family vacation, when she realizes at the airport that she'll be forced into an unwanted and dangerous marriage. Or, after experiencing continual violence at home, she may feel there is no way out. To meet this critical need, the AHA Foundation will roll out a helpline - in partnership with a leading crisis helpline organization - that will offer a lifeline to women and girls facing honor violence or forced marriage.

**2 | Global Change Makers:** Nearly a decade of working with women and girls, community activists and women's rights thought leaders has taught us that if we want to live in a world of peace and democracy, we must address the root causes of violence and oppression that plague millions of women and girls worldwide. But we can't do it alone and legislation can only go so far. It is not enough for Ayaan Hirsi Ali to speak out.

**We need to identify more female leaders – passionate reformers and change makers – to amplify this message and create lasting change on a global scale.**

In 2015, the AHA Foundation will work with women's rights activists to identify and empower change makers around the world, so they can advocate for themselves, for their communities, and ultimately, for women and girls globally.

There are women and girls all over the world who bear Ayaan Hirsi Ali's brand of passion for changing the world. They just need the opportunity to step out of the shadows – away from harm – find their voices and use them.



## Learn More

Just as Ayaan Hirsi Ali transcended violence, oppression and coercion rooted in traditional cultural beliefs, other women and girls experiencing these types of harmful practices can live freely with your continued support.

We encourage you to learn more about the AHA Foundation's work at [theahafoundation.org](http://theahafoundation.org) and join our conversations about issues related to gender-based violence and oppression on Facebook and Twitter at [@AHAFoundation](https://twitter.com/AHAFoundation). Please encourage your friends and family to follow us as well.

Together, we can put an end to the horrifying and painful practices that are harming women and girls behind closed doors in American communities. There is no culture, religion or tradition that justifies this type of violence.

*You also can contact our staff to learn more:*

*Stephanie Baric, AHA Foundation Executive Director  
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*Amanda Parker, AHA Foundation Senior Director  
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