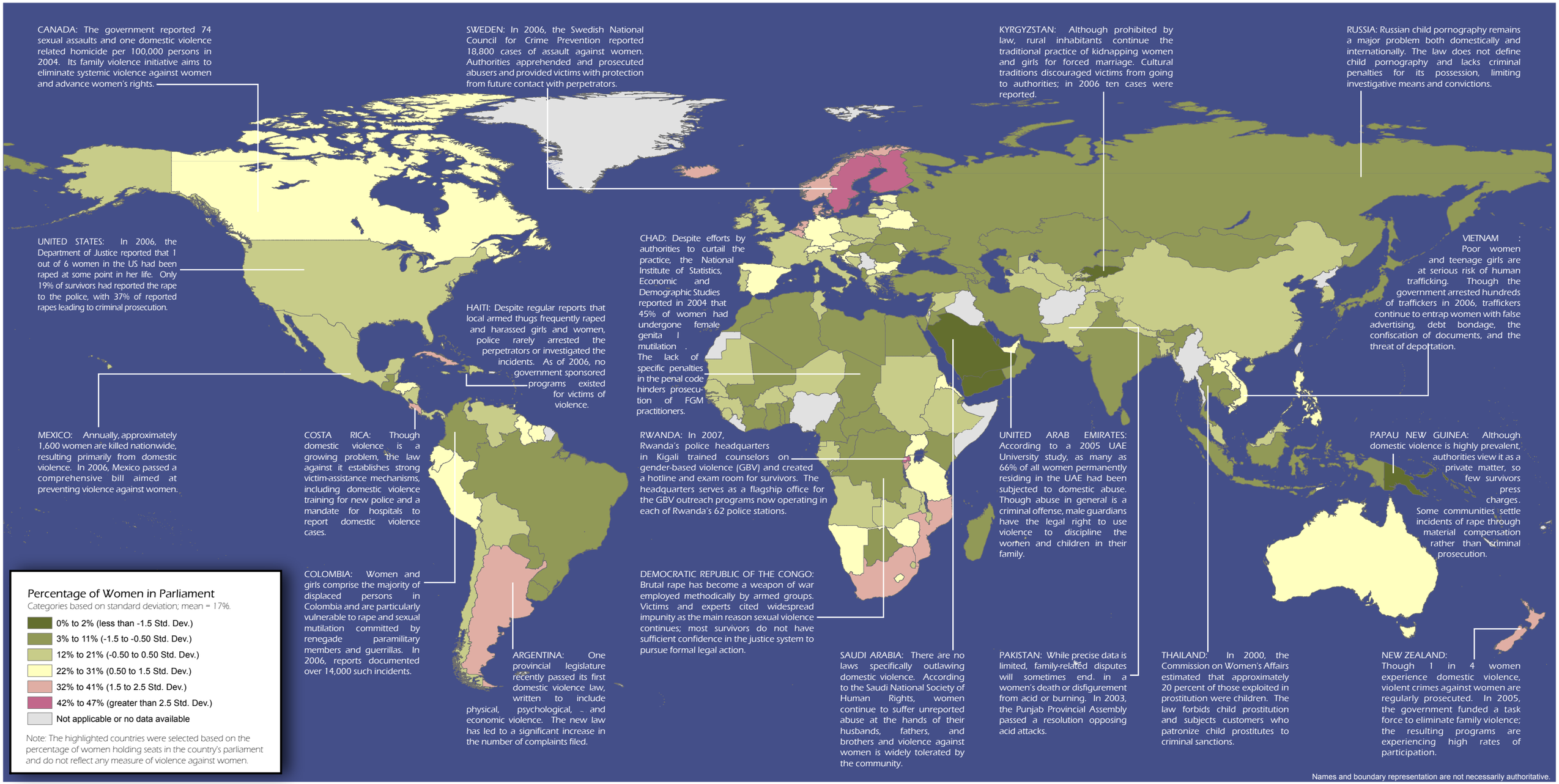
April 16, 2008

A Global Look at Women: Power, Justice and Violence

Violence against women continues to challenge every country on the planet. Legal recourse for survivors, however, varies dramatically across countries and has been correlated with both the strength of a country's judicial system and the level of empowerment and equality women enjoy. While critical gaps in data prevent true comparative analysis, this map displays the percentage of women in each nation's parliament, and highlights a broad spectrum of countries to illustrate the relationships between systems of justice and violence against women.



Notes on Data & Methodology

1. Many challenges face researchers attempting to accurately account for violence against women. Survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) may receive little legal benefit, risk stigmatization, and further endanger themselves by reporting the violence they experienced. As such, GBV is often hard to account for and underreported. Where official data is lacking, US Government researchers have vetted secondary data sources for reliable information. Additionally, while data collection on justice systems is not as sensitive an issue, statistics meaningful for cross-country comparisons are not readily available.
2. On average, approximately 17% of women hold seats in parliament across the globe and the map depicts deviations in either direction of this statistical norm. Highlighted countries were selected for having either the highest or lowest percentage of women in parliament for their geopolitical region. Exceptions to this rule are: the United States and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which were selected, respectively, to emphasize the US's own challenges and draw attention to the use of rape as a tool of war.

Sources

Percentage of Women in Parliament, Human Development Report, United Nations, 2007/2008
Country Highlights, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, United States Government, 2006 & 2007
US Data, NIJ Special Report, United States Government, 2006

HIU
HUMANITARIAN INFORMATION UNIT
U.S. Department of State
hiu_info@state.gov
http://hiu.state.gov