



Protecting Immigrant Women and Girls from Violence

Layli Miller-Muro's Bio

Layli Miller-Muro is the Founder and Executive Director of the **Tahirih Justice Center**, a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting women from human rights abuses through the provision of legal aid and public policy advocacy (www.tahirih.org). Ms. Miller-Muro founded the organization in 1997 following her involvement in a high-profile case that set national precedent and revolutionized asylum law in the United States. Fauziya Kassindja, a 17-year-old girl who had fled Togo in fear of a forced polygamous marriage and a tribal practice known as female genital mutilation, was granted asylum in 1996 by the US Board of Immigration Appeals. This decision opened the door to gender-based persecution as grounds for asylum. Using her portion of the proceeds from a book she and Ms. Kassindja co-authored about the case (*Do They Hear You When You Cry?* Delacorte Press, 1998), Ms. Miller-Muro established Tahirih.

Prior to joining Tahirih as Executive Director in 2001, Ms. Miller-Muro was an attorney at the law firm of **Arnold & Porter LLP** where she practiced international litigation and maintained a substantial pro bono practice. Prior to joining Arnold & Porter, Ms. Miller-Muro was an attorney-advisor at the **US Department of Justice, Board of Immigration Appeals**. The author of numerous articles on female genital mutilation, immigration law, and human rights abuses against women, Ms. Miller-Muro is frequently asked to lecture at universities and conferences throughout the world. She has appeared as a commentator about female genital mutilation, the International Marriage Broker industry, US immigration policy, and women's right on Fox News, CNN, BBC, NBC Nightly News, PBS, CNBC, NPR, the New York Times, and the Washington Post. She is an invited participant at Renaissance Weekend, a former Term Member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and a member of Leadership Greater Washington.

Ms. Miller-Muro received her JD (summa cum laude) and MA in International Relations from American University and B.A. (Phi Beta Kappa) from Agnes Scott College. Under her leadership, the Tahirih Justice Center was awarded the prestigious 2007 Washington Post Award For Excellence in Nonprofit Management. In addition, Ms. Miller-Muro has been honored with the 2007 EXCEL Award, the 2005 Soroptomist Award, the 2004 DC Bar Association Young Lawyer of the Year Award, the 2004 and 2002 Public Leadership Education Network (PLEN) Mentor Award, the 2004 Wendy Webster Williams Award of *The Georgetown Journal of Gender and the Law*, Feminist Majority Foundation Award (2000), African's Children's Champion Award, Africa's Children's Fund (1999), Young Alumni of the Year Award, Agnes Scott College (1998), Voices of Courage Media Award, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children (1998), Human Relations Award, Agnes Scott College (1993), and Woodrow Wilson Princeton Community Service Award, Princeton Alumni Association (1990).