

Who We Are

OUR HISTORY

At the age of 17, Fauziya Kassindja came to the United States seeking protection. She stood up against a forced polygamous marriage and female genital mutilation. She sought asylum in the United States, but instead of finding protection, she spent more than 17 months in detention.

At the time, Layli Miller-Muro, a student at American University's Washington College of Law, heard of Fauziya's case and brought it to the highest immigration court in the nation. Finally, in 1996, Fauziya was granted asylum by the U.S. Board of Immigration Appeals and the groundbreaking decision set a national precedent, establishing gender-based persecution as grounds for asylum.

Following the publicity of the case, Layli received numerous requests for help from women in similar circumstances as Fauziya, but she found few organizations able to assist. Using 100% of the proceeds from the book Layli and Fauziya co-authored, *Do They Hear You When You Cry*, Layli created the Tahirih Justice Center in 1997 to serve immigrant survivors of gender-based violence seeking safety and justice.

Layli led Tahirih as CEO for 20 years before stepping down and passing the baton to Archi Pyati.

ARCHI PYATI, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Since May 2021, Archi Pyati has served as Tahirih's CEO, taking on the task of leading Tahirih in its service to more than 30,000 women, girls, and other immigrant survivors seeking safety from gender-based violence.

Archi was the Chief of Policy and Communications at Tahirih before assuming the role of CEO. As the Chief of Policy and Communications, Archi led the policy team in using survivor-centered policy advocacy to assist clients in securing the rights that they are entitled to, to rebuild their lives.

Archi is also a spokesperson for Tahirih, connecting with lawmakers, media, funders and on coalitions such as the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence.

Before joining Tahirih, Archi served as Deputy Director of the Immigration Intervention Project at Sanctuary for Families in New York, where she ran a pro bono asylum program and worked with survivors to end female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) from occurring in the United States. Prior to joining Sanctuary for Families, Archi was a senior associate with the Human Rights Defenders Program of Human Rights First.

She brings nearly twenty years of experience in immigration law, women's rights, and public policy advocacy to the CEO role. Archi is a graduate of Brown University and the University of Michigan Law School.



Accolades

- Authored half dozen reports and book chapters
- Published in major news outlets such as *The Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *The Huffington Post*, *Ms. Magazine*, and *The Hill*
- Testified before, and briefed Congress more than a dozen times

Gender-Based Violence

WORLDWIDE

Overall, **35%** of women and girls have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence.¹

If present trends continue, **150 million** more children will be married before the age of 18 by 2030.²

Almost **4 million** women and girls are subjected to genital mutilation/cutting annually.³

As many as **5,000** women and girls are murdered every year for being a perceived dishonor to their families.⁴

Over 2,300 transgender individuals are known to have been killed in the last decade in dozens of countries.⁵

IN THE UNITED STATES

On average, nearly **20 individuals per minute** are victims of domestic gender-based violence.⁶

Since 2007, there have been **56,504** cases reported to the National Human Trafficking Hotline.⁷

Between 2000 and 2015, well **over 200,000** children under the age of 18 were married.⁸

In 2018, there were **130** cases of anti-transgender fatal violence across more than 30 states and nearly 100 cities nationwide.⁹

40% of transgender individuals held in U.S. state and federal detention report being sexually abused.¹⁰

IMMIGRANTS ARE AT GREATER RISK

Immigrant women are **2x more likely** to experience domestic violence than the general population.¹¹

72% of abusive partners fail to give their spouses legal immigration status as a tool of control.¹²

78% of agencies said that immigrant survivors of violence have concerns with contacting the police since the enactment of immigration enforcement policies in early 2017.¹³

LGBTQ people are **97x more likely** to report being sexually abused in immigration detention.¹⁴

RESOURCES

¹ United Nations Population Fund, "Annual Report 2018," unfpa.org.

² Girls Not Brides, "About Child Marriage," GirlsNotBrides.org.

³ United Nations Population Fund, "Annual Report 2018," unfpa.org.

⁴ United Nations Population Fund, "State of World Population 2000," unfpa.org.

⁵ Human Right Campaign Foundation, "A National Epidemic: Fatal Anti-Transgender Violence in America 2018," hrc.org.

⁶ National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, "National Statistics," ncadv.org.

⁷ National Human Trafficking Hotline, "Hotline Statistics," humantraffickinghotline.org.

⁸ Amico, Chris; Nolan, Dan; and Tsui, Anjali, "Child Marriage in America: By the Numbers." Frontline, pbs.org, last modified July 6, 2017.

⁹ Human Right Campaign Foundation, "A National Epidemic: Fatal Anti-Transgender Violence in America 2018," hrc.org.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Aguilar Hass, Giselle; Ammar, Noel; and Orloff, Leslye, "Battered Immigrants and U.S. Citizen Spouses," Legal Momentum, Academia.edu, last modified April 24, 2006.

¹² Aguilar Hass, Giselle; Dutton, Mary Anne; and Orloff, Leslye, "Characteristics of Help-Seeking Behaviors, Resources and Service Needs of Battered Immigrant Latinas: Legal and Policy Implications," *Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law & Policy* 7 (2000): 2.

¹³ Tahirih Justice Center, "2017 Advocate and Legal Service Survey Regarding Immigrant Survivors," Tahirih.org.

¹⁴ Human Right Campaign Foundation, "A National Epidemic: Fatal Anti-Transgender Violence in America 2018," hrc.org.