



## What is the United Nations doing to end violence against women and girls?

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's **UNiTE to End Violence against Women** campaign calls for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls in all parts of the world.

**UNiTE** brings together a host of UN agencies and offices to galvanize action across the UN system to prevent violence against women. Through the campaign, the UN is also joining forces with individuals, civil society and Governments.

Some of the UN's many efforts towards putting an end to violence against women in all its forms are highlighted below.

### Influencing laws and policies

- The UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), working with local partners, has supported the adoption of laws against domestic and sexual violence, and rape and family law provisions, in Colombia, Sierra Leone, Vietnam and Zimbabwe, amongst others.
- In Rwanda, support given by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) to women parliamentarians contributed to the drafting of a law criminalizing gender-based violence.
- Through its Safer Cities Programme, UN-HABITAT has undertaken surveys on violence against women in South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, Cameroon and Papua New Guinea, with the aim of assisting policy development and advocacy.
- The UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in the Syrian Arab Republic has provided refugees with access to legal and counselling services to combat gender-based violence.
- In Jamaica, the findings of UNDP research on gender-based violence – which included identification of school-based initiatives and the role of the family to

address gender-based violence – were fed into the country's national action plan.

- The UN Division for the Advancement of Women (part of UN Women) has developed the Handbook for Legislation on Violence against Women. The Handbook aims to provide detailed guidance to support the adoption and effective implementation of legislation that prevents violence against women, punishes perpetrators, and ensures the rights of survivors everywhere.
- The Global Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls – [www.endvawnow.org](http://www.endvawnow.org) – developed by UNIFEM (part of UN Women) in partnership with civil society, provides over 700 practical tools in over 50 languages to assist programmers, policy-makers and advocates working to end violence against women and girls worldwide, including step-by-step guidance for developing legislation.
- In 2010, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), UNIFEM (part of UN Women) and UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict (UN Action) launched a tool for stopping the use of sexual violence as a tactic of war – "Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence – An Analytical Inventory of Peacekeeping Practice" ([www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/)). The inventory captures best practices and represents the first review of efforts by uniformed peacekeepers to prevent, deter and respond to widespread and systematic sexual violence.

### Mobilizing

- **Say NO – UNiTE to End Violence against Women** ([www.saynotoviolence.org](http://www.saynotoviolence.org)) is the social mobilization platform for the **UNiTE** campaign. **Say NO – UNiTE** counts, showcases and facilitates local and national

### Engaging men and boys

Reflecting the priority placed on ending violence against women and girls by Secretary-General Ban, his Network of Men Leaders – launched in November 2009 – supports the work of women around the world to defy destructive stereotypes, embrace equality, and inspire men and boys everywhere to speak out against violence.

## Enhancing information sharing

In March 2009, UN Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro launched the Secretary-General's database on violence against women, the first global "one-stop shop" for information on measures undertaken by UN Member States to address violence against women, as well as available data and statistics. It contains information on services for victims and survivors, and relevant data on capacity-building and awareness-raising activities for public officials, and on the prevalence of violence and the criminal justice sector response to it. The database can be accessed at <http://webapps01.un.org/vawdatabase/home.action>

advocacy efforts towards ending violence against women and girls by individuals, governments, civil society and UN partners. Through an interactive and social media-friendly website, Say **NO – UNiTE** engages people from all walks of life and links local actions to an expanding global network.

- In 2009, UNFPA produced an international photography exhibition called *Congo/Women: Portraits of War*, which compels viewers to acknowledge and respond on some level to the suffering endured by women and girls in the Democratic Republic of Congo and to recognize the human faces behind it. *Congo/Women* has been shown in cities across the United States and continues to travel in the US and Europe. An online slide show which juxtaposes the photographs with reactions of the people viewing them can be viewed online at [www.unfpa.org/congowomen/](http://www.unfpa.org/congowomen/)
- Stop Rape Now (<http://stoprapenow.org/get-cross/>) is a joint effort by a network of UN agencies known as UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict to prevent the use of rape as a tactic of war and respond effectively to the needs of survivors. Its GET CROSS! initiative calls on members of the public, as well as celebrities and other prominent figures at the national level, to submit a photograph of themselves adopting the crossed-armed 'X' gesture, sending the message that sexual terror will not be tolerated. Photos are showcased on the Stop Rape Now website.
- In Cambodia, an estimated 2,485 villagers participated throughout 2008 in community conversation sessions, organized by village facilitators and UNDP, to promote the communities' understanding of social and legal issues related to domestic violence.
- Partners for Prevention: Working with Boys and Men to Prevent Gender-based Violence, is an initiative of UNDP, UNFPA, UNIFEM and UN Volunteers in Asia and the Pacific. The programme works to reduce violence against women and girls in part through a public awareness

campaign to mobilize boys and men to do more to prevent violence, and through supporting local campaigns in local languages.

## Partnering

- UNFPA has supported sensitivity training of medical professionals to meet the health needs of women affected by violence in Ecuador, Lebanon, Nepal, Russia and Sri Lanka, among others.
- In Nigeria, UNIFEM (part of UN Women) and partners have supported police training on violence against women and human trafficking.
- UNICEF (the UN Children's Fund) has developed a manual for football coaches, designed to encourage them to talk to boys about violence against women and girls, in order to promote a culture of non-violence and non-discrimination.
- In Sri Lanka, the Equal Access to Justice Project, supported by UNDP, has provided training to women and men working as 'first respondents' – including welfare officers, crèche attendants, and midwives – to support victims of violence at village level. The programmes have been targeted in areas where relatively high incidences of alcoholism contribute to high rates of gender-based violence, and in former conflict-affected areas.
- In Liberia, UNHCR – the UN Refugee Agency – and its partners supported the establishment of a new community health department and organized community health committees and volunteers. The volunteers participated in awareness-raising sessions on primary health care, reproductive health, sexual and gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS.
- UNFPA used the occasion of the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa for the global release of the Breakaway video-game, which uses football as the medium to address violence against women;: [www.breakawaygame.com](http://www.breakawaygame.com)

## Giving grants to stop violence against women and girls

The UN Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women – managed by UNIFEM on behalf of the UN system – is the only multilateral grant-making mechanism that supports local, national and regional efforts to end violence against women and girls. Since the Trust Fund began operation in 1997, it has distributed more than \$50 million to 304 initiatives in 121 countries and territories.