



*16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence  
25 November - 10 December 2024*

*RECOMMITMENT, ACCOUNTABILITY, RESOURCING  
TOWARDS BEIJING +30: UNiTE TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS*

## Concept Note

### 1. BACKGROUND

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is an annual international civil society led campaign. It commences on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and ends on 10 December, Human Rights Day, highlighting that violence against women is the most pervasive breach of human rights worldwide. The campaign was launched by activists at the inaugural [Women's Global Leadership Institute in 1991](#), and has since mobilized individuals and organizations, including the United Nations and partners worldwide to advocate for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls (VAWG).

In support of this civil society initiative, under the leadership of the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, the United Nations Secretary-General's [UNiTE by 2030 to End Violence against Women initiative](#) (UNiTE) calls for global action to increase awareness, galvanise advocacy efforts and share knowledge and innovations to end VAWG once and for all. Launched in 2008, UNiTE is a multi-year advocacy effort aimed at preventing and eliminating VAWG around the world. UNiTE calls on governments, development actors, civil society, women's rights organizations, young people, the private sector, the media and the entire UN system to collaborate in addressing violence against women and girls.

As the global community approaches the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary review of the implementation of the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#), and following the 2023 SDG Summit's call for accelerated progress toward achieving the 2030 Agenda, VAWG remains alarmingly prevalent across private and public spaces and across all forms of VAWG, including its most extreme

manifestation through the gender-related killings of women and girls (“femicide”). Despite the efforts of women's rights movements to demand justice and accountability, and some notable progress in preventing and responding to VAWG, significant challenges persist in fully addressing the issue.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the UN General Assembly’s designation of November 25 as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, in memory of the Mirabal sisters, who were brutally assassinated on this day in 1960. In 2024, women and girls continue to be murdered because of their gender. Women in the public eye, including those in politics, women human rights defenders and journalists<sup>1</sup> are often targets of intentional acts of violence, both online and offline, with some leading to fatal outcomes and intentional killings.

This year, the UNiTE campaign will aim to mobilize around the priorities of the Beijing +30 review through emphasizing the urgency of strengthening accountability for ending violence against women and girls. It calls for concrete actions, including holding perpetrators accountable, and accelerating action through well-resourced national strategies and increased funding to women’s rights movements.

## **2. GLOBAL CONTEXT OF THE 2024 UNiTE CAMPAIGN**

**Violence against women and girls (VAWG) remains the most prevalent and pervasive human rights violation in the world.** Globally, an estimated 736 million women<sup>2</sup>—nearly one in three—have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner, non-partner sexual violence, or both at least once in their lives. In the past year alone, 1 in 8 women and girls aged 15-49 has faced intimate partner violence<sup>3</sup>. In 2022, on average, more than five women or girls were killed every hour by someone in their own family.<sup>4</sup> If there is no accelerated action, 9 million girls will still marry in childhood by the year 2030<sup>5</sup>. Globally, over 230 million girls and women have undergone female genital mutilation, representing a 15% increase—or 30 million more girls and women—compared to data from eight years ago<sup>6</sup>.

**Interlocking crises including economic crises, COVID-19, conflicts, and climate change are further exacerbating VAWG** with disproportionate impacts on women that experience multiple, intersecting forms of discrimination. It is estimated that 80 per cent of people displaced by

---

<sup>1</sup> UN Women (2023) [Five essential facts to know about femicide](#)

<sup>2</sup> UN Women, [Facts and Figures: Ending Violence against Women](#)

<sup>3</sup> WHO (2024) [Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15– 49 years subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months \(%\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UN Women (2023). Gender-related killings of women and girls: Global estimates of female intimate partner/family-related homicides in 2022. Available at: [Gender-related killings of women and girls \(femicide/feminicide\): Global estimates of female intimate partner/family-related homicides in 2022 | Publications | UN Women – Headquarters](#)

<sup>5</sup> UNICEF, Girls Not Brides (2023) [Despite significant progress, we need to go 20 times faster to end child marriage by 2030, shows new data](#)

<sup>6</sup> UNICEF (2024) [Female Genital Mutilation: A global concern](#)

climate change are women.<sup>7</sup> Humanitarian contexts are also impacting on levels of violence against women: 70% of women experience gender-based violence in humanitarian contexts compared with 35% worldwide.<sup>8</sup> Violence against women and girls in digital spaces is also intensifying with prevalence ranging from 16 to 58 per cent, and younger women are especially affected with Generation Z and Millennials the most affected.<sup>9</sup>

**Women are not a homogenous group and gender-based violence affects some women to different degrees or in different ways**, which calls for appropriate legal and policy responses. In particular, specific identities that are claimed or identified by others can lead to increased risks of facing disproportionate levels of discrimination, exclusion and violence. These discriminatory factors include ethnicity/race, indigenous or minority status, colour, socioeconomic status and/or caste, language, religion or belief, political opinion, national origin, marital and/or maternal status, age, urban/rural location, health status, disability, property ownership, being lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex, and illiteracy.<sup>10</sup>

**Significant progress has been made across the world** with the adoption of laws and policies to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls, including through prevention strategies and intersectoral services to survivors of violence. As of 2023, 104 countries have comprehensive laws addressing domestic violence.<sup>11</sup> [78 per cent of countries now provide budgetary commitments for services addressing violence against women \(VAW\).](#)<sup>12</sup> The impact of such measures has been evidenced, with countries that have enacted domestic violence laws reporting lower rates of intimate-partner violence than those without such legislation (9.5% compared to 16.1%).

**Despite many countries passing laws to address VAWG, weak enforcement and discriminatory social norms hamper elimination.** New concerns arise from an intense global backlash against gender equality and women's rights, and the persistent normalization of VAWG in all spaces. Impunity remains a concern, with only a small fraction of cases resulting in prosecution and conviction of perpetrators.<sup>13</sup> The rapidly growing access and use of information and communication technologies (ICT) has further impacted gender equality and women's rights, exacerbated existing forms of violence, and created new ones.

---

<sup>7</sup> UNHCR (2020). *Global Trends in Forced Displacement*. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/media/global-trends-forced-displacement-2020?deliveryName=DM113247>

<sup>8</sup> OCHA (2016), *World Humanitarian Data and Trends 2016*. Available at: <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/world/world-humanitarian-data-and-trends-2016>

<sup>9</sup> UN Women, (2022) [Accelerating efforts to tackle online and technology facilitated violence against women and girls](#)

<sup>10</sup> CEDAW Committee, General Recommendation on Gender-based Violence Number 35

<sup>11</sup> World Bank Group (2024). [Women, Business and the Law 2024](#)

<sup>12</sup> This percentage is based on data validated and submitted by 120 countries as part of the review of the SDG 5.1.1 indicator.

<sup>13</sup> In 2022, administrative data from member states on the number of persons arrested, prosecuted and convicted for rape show that between 0.10 to 32.52 per 100.000 population had been convicted for rape. UNODC data on Violent and Sexual Crime. Available at: <https://dataunodc.un.org/dp-crime-violent-offences>

**The good news is that VAWG is preventable and there is more evidence than ever before about what works.**<sup>14</sup> Comprehensive, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, that are supported by dedicated funding, including to women’s rights organizations, are the most effective for eliminating VAWG.

These approaches must prioritize survivor-centered holistic support, gender-responsive policing and justice systems, and primary prevention efforts. Addressing the root causes of violence against women and girls is essential, which includes transforming harmful masculinities, challenging discriminatory social norms, and eliminating structural gender inequalities and stereotypes.

Evidence shows that the presence of a strong and autonomous feminist movement is the single most critical factor to drive policy change in ending violence against women both in transnational contexts and in domestic policy. For example, movements like *Ni Una Menos* in Latin America, and *Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa* and *Voces de la Ausencia* in Mexico, have been pivotal in raising awareness about femicide, pushing for justice, and demanding stronger accountability from law enforcement. These movements have continuously advocated for legal reforms and increased public attention to the issue of femicides. Yet, women’s rights organizations and feminist movements remain severely underfunded.<sup>15</sup>

### **3. 2024 CAMPAIGN’S THEME AND ADVOCACY OBJECTIVES – “Towards Beijing +30: UNiTE to End Violence Against Women and Girls”**

With the clock ticking towards 2030, when the world has committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, including the eradication of VAWG, this year’s theme, **“Towards Beijing +30: UNiTE to End Violence Against Women and Girls”** calls on all duty bearers, especially States and private sector companies, to take action around the ERAW priorities of the review of the thirty years of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and Political Declaration: recommitment, accountability, resourcing. This includes implementing comprehensive strategies in partnership with women’s rights organizations, allocating necessary budgets, and actively reporting on progress to end impunity and prevent violence against women and girls, with a particular urgency regarding its most extreme manifestation, femicide.

Key advocacy objectives are:

- To call upon Member States to accelerate action to ratify and implement international and regional conventions, and implement laws and whole-of-government National Action Plans to end VAWG, with adequate resources;

---

<sup>14</sup>The [RESPECT Women Framework](#) is a comprehensive framework with evidence-based strategies that have demonstrated positive results in the prevention and response to violence against women.

See additional recommended key resources and programing guidance, in the annex.

<sup>15</sup> While the last five years have seen an overall increase in overall development assistance (ODA) funding, according to OECD analysis, funding to end violence against women has fallen 13% between 2018-2019 and 2020-2021. Further, according to OECD analysis, 99% of gender-related ODA does not reach local women’s rights organizations and feminist movements.

- To call for the adoption and implementation of corporate policies on VAWG by the private sector;
- To hold perpetrators to account by strengthening law enforcement and justice sectors, including through gender responsive policing;
- To ensure women's and marginalized groups' meaningful access to gender-responsive justice where they can seek remedies without fear of negative consequences;
- To raise awareness that VAWG is never acceptable and create zero tolerance across society at large;
- To enhance women's rights movements' access to flexible, sustainable, and quality funding to fulfill their missions.

#### 4. MAIN PRINCIPLES OF THE UNiTE CAMPAIGN ADVOCACY

- **Survivor-centred:** Take a respectful and 'do-no-harm' approach to the telling and/or retelling of survivor stories, only with their informed consent and under conditions in which they feel empowered to exercise their agency. This and the empowerment principles are vital for the engagement of survivor advocates/activists on their own terms. All UNiTE partners must ensure that survivor advocates' rights, safety, dignity and confidentiality are prioritized and upheld.
- **Non-discrimination and inclusion - 'Leave No One Behind':** Apply a human rights-based approach and ensure full and meaningful participation of the most underserved and disadvantaged groups of women and girls experiencing intersecting forms of harm in efforts to prevent and end VAWG, while enforcing non-discrimination on the basis of sex, gender and intersecting forms of discrimination.
- **Elevate the voices of young feminists and youth-led organisations:** While the world has been reviewing progress made since the adoption of the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#), it is time to create platforms to elevate voices of the next generation feminists who are shaping their future now.
- **Honour and acknowledge women's movements** and their leadership in the 16 Days of Activism and in preventing and fighting violence against women and girls in general.
- **Whole-of-government and -society strategies to prevent VAWG:** Everyone in society has an important role to play in ending violence against women and girls and we all must work together across sectors to address the various aspects of violence.
- **Transformative:** Fostering critical examination of gender roles, regimes and practices in order to create or strengthen equitable gender norms and dynamics for fundamental, lasting changes for women and girls.

#### 5. KEY ACTIVITIES

The *colour orange* remains a key UN symbol for unifying global activities and drawing attention to the initiative. However, in light of the energy crisis, we encourage partners to explore alternative ways of 'painting the world orange.' Instead of, or in addition to, illuminating buildings

and landmarks in orange for a limited time on November 25, consider decorating buildings, wearing orange, and 'oranging' digital spaces throughout the 16 Days of Activism.

Throughout the 16-day period from 25 November to 10 December, all UNiTE partners—including UN agencies, Generation Equality Forum Action Coalitions, civil society, private sector, sports associations, youth groups, universities and schools—are encouraged to:

- **Be an Ally:** Stand against VAWG by participating in local activities, advocating for survivors, and educating others about the importance of ending violence against women and girls.
- **Speak Out:** Use your voice to challenge harmful norms and support survivors in your community.
- **Engage in Advocacy:** Participate in campaigns and initiatives that push for stronger laws, better enforcement, and more resources to end VAWG.

This can be achieved through actions at all levels during the 16 days, including:

- **Coordinate orange events and activities** at global, regional, country and local levels to promote the need for more comprehensive strategies to end VAWG, greater accountability of perpetrators, and increased support and funding for women's rights organizations.
- **Rollout a digital campaign** focussed on resisting pushback, featuring the work of women's rights activists, survivors, and human rights defenders around the world. Call on all actors to become activists to end violence against women.
- **Call upon stakeholders, partners, and individuals** to register their activism and actions to 'orange the world' and prevent violence against women, mapping out social mobilization events across the globe.
- **Participate and actively promote the online digital crowdfunding campaign** under the theme "**Towards Beijing +30: UNiTE to End Violence Against Women and Girls**" daily throughout the 16 Days of Activism.
- **Stimulate public conversations** by holding virtual seminars or radio programs under the slogan, "**Towards Beijing +30: UNiTE to End Violence Against Women and Girls**" to raise public awareness and encourage individuals and organizations to take action during the 16 days.
- **Engage the media, opinion makers** to explore innovative approaches through various mediums, raising awareness about the urgent need for increased investment in inclusive, comprehensive, and long-term policies, strategies, and resources to prevent and respond to VAWG in public and private spaces. Highlight the importance of investing in autonomous, feminist women's rights movements.

To support these advocacy activities, UN Women and partners have developed **key resources** by sector or thematic area, including on:

- [RESPECT Women: Preventing Violence against Women Framework](#) and [Implementation package](#)
- [Handbook on multisectoral national action plans to prevent violence against women and girls](#)
- [innovation and prevention of violence against women](#)

- [Tackling violence against women and girls in sport](#)
- [Peer-to-peer learning to prevent and eliminate sexual harassment in the UN system and beyond](#)
- [Safe consultations with survivors of violence against women and girls](#)
- [Tackling violence against women and girls in the context of climate change](#)
- [Handbook on gender-responsive police services for women and girls subject to violence](#)
- [Work with men and boys for gender equality](#)
- [Handbook to address violence against women in and through the media](#)
- [Addressing violence and harassment against women in the world of work.](#)