



IN BRIEF



# ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

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## What's the Issue?

Violence against women and girls is a grave violation of human rights. Violence happens in public and private places. It has many forms which range from domestic or intimate partner violence to sexual harassment and assault, female genital mutilation, trafficking, sexual violence in conflict and gender-related killing.

The impact of violence ranges from immediate to long-term physical, sexual and mental health consequences for women and girls, including death. It negatively affects women's general well-being and prevents women from fully participating in society. Violence not only has long-lasting consequences for women but also their families, the community and the country at large. It also has tremendous costs, from greater health care and legal expenses to productivity losses, impacting national budgets and overall development.

An unprecedented number of countries have laws and policies against various forms of violence. Challenges remain however in implementing these measures. Many women still lack access to free or affordable essential services in sectors such as health, police, justice and social support to ensure their safety, protection and recovery. Not enough is done to prevent violence, which is the most challenging but also effective way to eliminate violence in a sustainable way.

## Our Solutions

UN Women works to prevent and respond to violence, to increase access to services for survivors and to make private and public spaces safer for women and girls. At the global level we work to advance international policies providing support to the United Nations General Assembly and the Commission on the Status of Women, and ensuring that the post-2015 development agenda includes specific targets to end violence against women and girls.

Agreements at the international level provide the basis for UN Women to support countries in adopting and implementing laws and policies aligned with such international standards. To do this, we partner with Governments, UN agencies, civil society organizations and other institutions to build capacity to prevent and respond to violence and to raise awareness of its causes and consequences.

We provide guidance on preventing violence against women and girls with a focus on changing the attitudes and behaviours which tolerate such violence and perpetuate gender inequality. UN Women does this by identifying good practices and sharing them with relevant stakeholders. We also provide guidance on how to improve the quality of and access to essential services.



## How We Make a Difference

**EXPANDING ACCESS TO SERVICES:** Although progress is being made globally, many women and girls who experience physical and sexual violence still lack access to quality services. Such services include keeping women and girls safe, providing health care for their injuries, responding to their sexual and reproductive health needs, including provision of post-rape care and counselling, and facilitating their access to the police and justice system. UN Women, in partnership with UNFPA and other UN agencies, has developed the Essential Services Programme to improve the quality of and access to services by reaching a global understanding on the range of services and responses required and the corresponding standards for providing such services.

**SAFETY IN PUBLIC SPACES:** To address sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public spaces, UN Women, in partnership with UN-Habitat and UNICEF, implements the Safe Cities Initiative with a presence in over 20 cities, including New Delhi, Rio de Janeiro, Cairo, Kigali, Port Moresby, Quito, Dublin and Sakai. The goal is to reach 35 cities by 2017.

**IMPROVING KNOWLEDGE AND EVIDENCE:** The Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls features detailed guidance on how to implement laws, policies and programmes with access to promising practices, case studies and recommended programming tools from around the world ([www.endvawnow.org](http://www.endvawnow.org)).

**SUPPORTING INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO ENDING VIOLENCE:** UN Women manages the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women on behalf of the UN System to provide support to innovative approaches to stem and prevent the pandemic of violence. Since its inception, the fund has provided grants to 426 initiatives in 136 countries, amounting to a total of USD 116 million.

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**ADVOCACY:** UN Women manages the Secretary-General's campaign [UNiTE to end violence against women](#), which amongst its many activities initiated Orange Day, proclaiming every 25<sup>th</sup> of the month as a day to raise awareness. It has garnered support for other high-profile initiatives from celebrities, including sports stars in Europe, to raise the profile of the issue.

**COMMIT:** an advocacy initiative launched by UN Women in 2012, has prompted 60 countries from every region to make concrete pledges to take action on ending violence against women.

**EDUCATION FOR PREVENTION:** Putting young people at the heart of prevention efforts, UN Women and the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts have developed a non-formal curriculum to end violence against women and girls, designed for various age groups ranging from 5 to 25 years.

### FACTS AND FIGURES - ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- It is estimated that 35 per cent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence. However, some national studies show that up to 70 per cent of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime from an intimate partner.
- Worldwide, more than 700 million women alive today were married as children (below 18 years of age). Of those women, more than 1 in 3—or some 250 million—were married before 15.
- Adult women account for almost half of all human trafficking victims detected globally. Women and girls together account for about 70 per cent, with girls representing two out of every three child trafficking victims.
- At least 200 million women and girls alive today have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting in 30 countries.
- One in 10 women in the European Union report having experienced cyber-harassment since the age of 15 (including having received unwanted, offensive sexually explicit emails or SMS messages, or offensive, inappropriate advances on social networking sites).