



Goals of the UNiTE campaign

Violence against women must be prioritized at all levels. It has not yet received the priority required to enable significant change. Leadership and political will is critical.

The most effective way to fight violence against women is a clear demonstration of political commitment by States, backed by action and resources.

Yet, states are failing to meet their responsibility to end violence against women and girls.

To address the problem, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has identified five goals which his **UNiTE to End Violence against Women** campaign aims to achieve in all countries by 2015.

Goal 1

Adopt and enforce national laws to address and punish all forms of violence against women and girls

The lack of effective national laws to end violence against women, or the failure to implement such laws where they exist, is widespread. Impunity for violence against women often results from States' failure to implement international standards at the national and local level.

In many places, laws contain loopholes that allow perpetrators to act with impunity. In a number of countries, a rapist can go free under the penal code if he marries the victim. Many States have no specific legal provisions against domestic violence. Marital rape is not a prosecutable offence in more than 50 countries.

Ending impunity and ensuring accountability for violence against women are crucial to prevent and reduce such violence.

Governments can learn from many examples of good practice.

Some States have enacted comprehensive laws specific to violence against women that provide multiple types of remedy, such as the 1994 Violence against Women Act in the United States, which authorized federal support for training for police, prosecutors and judges; shelters and rape prevention programmes; and a national telephone hotline, amongst other things.

Review and reform of laws have brought significant advances. Psychological and economic violence are now incorporated in the legal definition of domestic violence in a number of countries, including Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and South Africa.

Vigorous arrest and prosecution policies and appropriate sentencing make a statement to society that violence against women is a serious crime. Implementation of laws is enhanced by educating police and judicial officials, such as the training given to police in the Republic of Korea on the laws on domestic violence, procedures in responding to reports and steps to protect victims.

Several countries have minimum sentences for crimes such as rape.

Goal 2

Adopt and implement multi-sectoral national action plans

The implementation of national action plans which are multi-sectoral – involving many parts of government and the community – is key to ending violence against women.

Plans must be adequately resourced and should emphasize the prevention of violence against women and girls, as well as its punishment.

The continued prevalence of violence against women is testimony to the fact that States have yet to tackle it with the necessary political commitment, visibility and resources. Work to end violence against women requires sustained action, backed by adequate resources and strong, dedicated and permanent institutional mechanisms.

Many good examples exist of multi-sectoral initiatives:

- In the United Kingdom, there are guidelines for police, social workers and educators on addressing forced marriages.
- Courtroom procedures that protect the privacy of victims during trial, such as allowing evidence to be given by video link or restricting access to courtrooms during rape trials, are being used more often, including in Finland, Ireland, Japan and Nepal.
- Bringing together health services for victims of domestic or sexual violence in one interagency unit, often called a

“One-Stop Centre,” has been effective. First developed in Malaysia, this model is currently being replicated in much of Asia as well as in other countries.

- Hotlines and helplines, now standard in many countries, provide important access to information and support systems for victims of violence against women
- Legal services for women victims of violence, including free legal services to indigent women, are usually provided by civil society organizations. However, it is good practice for governments to support such projects.
- Access to shelters that meet safety standards are important in ensuring that women fleeing violent situations are protected from further violence.

Goal 3 Strengthen data collection on the prevalence of violence against women and girls

There is compelling evidence that violence against women is severe and pervasive throughout the world. However, there is an urgent need to strengthen data collection in order to inform and influence policy.

The problem of under-reporting complicates data collection. A 2005 WHO study based on data from 24,000 women in ten countries noted that 55% to 95% of women who had been physically abused by their partners had never contacted the police, NGOs or shelters for help. Stigma and fear prevent women from seeking assistance and redress.

Many countries do not undertake systematic data collection on all forms of violence against women. Such information is urgently needed to evaluate how various forms of violence affect different groups of women and to devise meaningful strategies to address such violence.

In addition, there is a lack of information to assess the measures taken to address violence against women and to evaluate their impact.

Goal 4 Increase public awareness and social mobilization

Increasing awareness to change attitudes and influence behaviour amongst people from all walks of life is essential to preventing and ending violence against women.

From individuals to governments to NGOs, people are being mobilized in local, national and international efforts to deal with the problem. Activities range from government campaigns to let women know which laws exist to prevent and punish violence, to global petitions, to community

and village meetings on the adverse effects of female genital mutilation, to projects to engage men and boys in preventing violence against women.

More mobilization is needed, however.

Everyone, everywhere has a responsibility to end violence. Find out more about how you can take action at endviolence.un.org

Goal 5 Address sexual violence in conflict

Rape during conflict is a war crime and a serious violation of human rights and humanitarian law, and has received widespread condemnation.

However, sexual violence during conflict remains vastly under-addressed due to weak national mechanisms for protection and judicial redress and inadequate health and social support services.

Many still view sexual violence as an inevitable, if regrettable, consequence of conflict and displacement – an attitude which encourages impunity for perpetrators and silences survivors. Sexual violence in conflict and impunity for perpetrators’ crimes are amongst history’s great silences.

Although a range of governmental, non-governmental and international initiatives to address sexual violence are being implemented, the scale and complexity of the problem, coupled with coordination challenges, has meant huge gaps in the response.

In September 2009, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1888 on Women and Peace and Security, which demands that all parties to armed conflict take immediate action to protect civilians, including women and children, from all forms of sexual violence. The Council also urged greater measures by States and the UN to end sexual violence in conflict.

Attempts to end and respond to sexual violence must protect and promote women’s rights, as well as empower women. Good practices and existing programmes addressing sexual violence must be reinforced and strengthened.

Women are often leaders in the drive to end sexual violence and to secure peace. Their voices must guide advocacy and programming efforts. The constructive involvement of men and boys is also vital to help prevent and respond to sexual violence in conflict.