



## 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 aims to prevent and eliminate 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 and punish violence against women. Through the campaign, the UN is joining forces with individuals, civil society and governments to put an end to violence against women in all its forms.

By 2015, **UNiTE** aims to achieve the following five goals in all countries:

- **Adopt and enforce national laws to address and punish all forms of violence against women and girls**
- **Adopt and implement multi-sectoral national action plans**
- **Strengthen data collection on the prevalence of violence against women and girls**
- **Increase public awareness and social mobilization**
- **Address sexual violence in conflict**

Just some of the UN's many efforts towards attaining these goals are highlighted below.

### Goal 1

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

- 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.
- In 2007, capacity-building workshops for judges and

parliamentarians, which focused on violence against women, were organized by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, in collaboration with the UN Division for the Advancement of Women.

- The UN Economic Commission for Africa, in collaboration with the African Union and other partners, has created the Network on Gender-Based Violence/Violence against Women, which reviews global and regional legal commitments and the obligations of States to end violence against women.

### Goal 2

#### **Adopt and implement multi-sectoral national action plans**

- In Jamaica, the findings of UNDP research on gender-based violence – which included identification of school-based initiatives and the role of the family in ending violence against women – were fed into the country's national action plan.
- The UN Population Fund (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 and partners supported police training on violence against women and human trafficking in Nigeria.
- UNICEF 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.

### Goal 3

#### **Strengthen data collection on the prevalence of violence against women and girls**

- Training and reporting assistance for police and civil society organizations has been provided by UNIFEM, UNDP and UNICEF.

## 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>

## 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 \$44 million to 291 initiatives in 119 countries and territories (as of May 2009).

- Efforts to improved data collection and national statistical monitoring on gender-based violence have been supported by UNIFEM in, among other places, Afghanistan, Algeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Mexico, Morocco, Senegal and Venezuela.
- UNHCR – the UN refugee agency – is working with UNFPA and the International Rescue Committee to develop a gender-based violence information management system to improve data collection and information sharing.
- 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.

### Goal 4

#### Increase public awareness and social mobilization

- **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 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 <http://www.unfpa.org/congowomen/>
- 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.

### Goal 5

#### Address sexual violence in conflict

- **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 will be showcased on the Stop Rape Now website and in a large global mosaic at UN Headquarters.
- With reports of widespread rape and other atrocities pouring in from the eastern Kivu provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the UN peacekeeping mission in the DRC – MONUC – sent some 40 teams to the region during 2009 to bolster the protection of civilians. The teams identify early warning signs of potential threats to civilians so that peacekeepers can react rapidly to counter them.
- Through the Global Programme on Strengthening the Rule of Law in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations, UNDP has supported 20 conflict and post-conflict countries to strengthen national capacity to end impunity for gender-based violence.
- In 2009, the African Union/United Nations Hybrid operation in Darfur – UNAMID – conducted a workshop on sexual and gender-based violence in an internally displaced persons (IDP) camp in Tawilla, North Darfur. Thirty women leaders participated in the workshop, which focused on ways of stopping sexual and gender-based violence in their community and on reporting mechanisms. Similar workshops have also been conducted in Al Salam IDP camp, just outside of El Fasher.

## UN Security Council addressing sexual violence in conflict

In September 2009, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1888, which demands that all parties to armed conflict take immediate action to protect civilians, including women and children, from all forms of sexual violence, and urges greater measures by States and the UN to end this scourge.