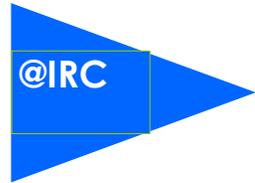


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2009 International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women

ISSUE-IN-FOCUS, NOVEMBER 25, 2009

"We must unite. Violence against women cannot be tolerated, in any form, in any context, in any circumstance, by any political leader or by any government."
-- United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, March 5, 2009
([Read full transcript](#))

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the formal proclamation by the United Nations of November 25 as International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, ushering in a new era of responsibility in the fight to end violence against women. Over the last three decades, the U.S. government increasingly has recognized violence against women as a human rights issue with far-reaching consequences.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton — only the third female in U.S. history to serve as Secretary of State — long has championed respect for women and their full participation in economic, political, and social life. Her famous speech in Beijing in 1995, during which she declared that "human rights are women's rights, and women's rights are human rights," served to inspire women around the globe and since taking office in January 2009 has committed to making women's issues the centerpiece of her term as secretary of state.

Today, on the 10th anniversary of International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women, we look to unite with our global partners in working towards the goal of ending all forms of violence against women once and for all.

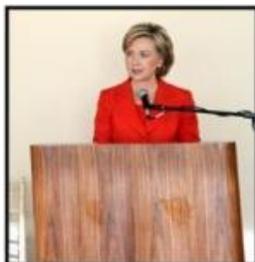
ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



16 Forms of Gender-Based Violence - From November 25 to December 10, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) joins with other rights organizations worldwide to bring greater attention to violence against women, a pervasive and deeply entrenched human rights violation. The 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women involves groups all over the world who speak up for support services for survivors, call for greater prevention efforts, press for legal and judicial reform, and use international human rights instruments to address the issue. Read more about the issue and the UN's efforts to combat gender-based violence [here](#).

Commit - Act - Demand: We Can End Violence Against Women! In celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), millions of people pledged their support for ending violence against women (VAW) and upholding human rights during last year's 16 Days Campaign. This year's campaign builds on that momentum with its theme -- Commit - Act - Demand: We CAN End Violence Against Women! -- and looks to honor groups and individuals who have committed to bringing VAW to the forefront of global attention, to encourage everyone in their various capacities to take action to end VAW, and to demand accountability for all of the promises made to eliminate VAW. Learn more [here](#).

U.S. ACTIONS AND EFFORTS



Combating Violence Against Girls - "The problem of violence against women and girls is particularly acute in conflict zones, but that's not the only place we find it. The UN has done some excellent work in the last years in war-torn areas. And while boys are pressed into service as child soldiers and trained to kill, and often drugged to do so, girls are raped and often forced into becoming sex slaves. And this has happened to thousands and thousands of children. We also know that despite the best efforts of those of us in this room, all too often these acts of brutality and de-humanity do not just affect the individuals, they affect the fabric that weaves us together as human beings." [Read Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton's Opening Remarks at Combating Violence Against Girls Event](#) (September 25, 2009).



Combating Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict - "The dehumanizing nature of sexual violence doesn't just harm a single individual or a single family or even a single village or a single group. It shreds the fabric that weaves us together as human beings, it endangers families and communities, erodes social and political stability, and undermines economic progress. We need to understand that it holds all of us back. Also, our failure as an international body to respond concretely to this global problem erodes our collective effectiveness. So we must act now to end this crisis not only to protect vulnerable people and promote human security, but to uphold the legitimacy of this body." [Read Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton's Remarks on the Adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution to Combat Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict](#) (September 30, 2009).



International Violence Against Women: Major Focus of U.S.

Policy - Education and economic empowerment are among the most important tools to prevent the victimization of millions of women around the world who are suffering from violence, experts told members of the U.S. Congress. Speaking at [an October 21 hearing](#) before the International Organizations, Human Rights and Oversight Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues Melanne Verveer noted that there is a very close relationship between poverty, lack of opportunity, desperation and the low status of women. Read more about the

women's issues to be major focus of U.S. Policy [here](#).



The International Violence Against Women Act (IVAWA) -

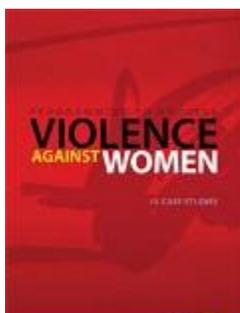
Although it is estimated that one in three women around the world will experience violence in her lifetime, many countries have no laws to prevent it. A report released by the U.N. secretary-general found that 102 United Nations member states have no specific laws on domestic violence. The U.S. Congress is considering "unprecedented legislation" that "firmly establishes the preference of [eliminating] violence against women as a foreign policy priority, and it requires the integration of this goal into every aspect of our diplomatic and developmental policy." Get more background and access resources on the IVAWA [here](#).

HOW WIDESPREAD IS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN?



The most common form of violence experienced by women globally is physical violence inflicted by an intimate partner. On average, at least one in three women is beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused by an intimate partner in the course of her lifetime. (Read [Fact Sheet on Violence Against Women](#))

A MULTIMEDIA EXHIBIT



Ending Violence Against Women - This moving multimedia exhibit documents UNFPA's experience in the field supporting projects that address violence against women in its many forms. Designed as a means to promote understanding among both the general public and development practitioners, it documents approaches that can be used to confront the problem of gender-based violence and offers lessons that can help scale up responses. Projects in Bangladesh, Colombia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Romania, Sierra Leone and Turkey are discussed. ([Launch online exhibition](#) | [HTML version](#))

WEB RESOURCES

Office of International Women's Issues, U.S. Department of State
<http://www.state.gov/s/gwi/index.htm>

Center for Women's Global Leadership, Rutgers
<http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/16days/home.html>

United Nations Population Fund
<http://www.unfpa.org/16days/>

UNiTE to End Violence Against Women
<http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/index.shtml>

Stop Violence Against Women – Amnesty International
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/campaigns/stop-violence-against-women>

United Nations Development Fund for Women
<http://www.unifem.org/>

Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice
<http://www.ovw.usdoj.gov/>



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