

Press release: The UK steps up to lead global drive to tackle violence against girls and women

Britain is leading the global push to eradicate violence against women and girls in all its forms around the world, announced International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt on International Day to Eliminate Violence Against Women.

Ms Mordaunt set out a new package of UK support to protect women and girls in some of the world's poorest countries from practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), child marriage and domestic and sexual violence.

This extra UK aid is expected to help around 750,000 women and girls globally over the next three years, by increasing access to crucial services like legal assistance, healthcare, counselling, safe spaces for survivors and working with communities to prevent and break the cycles of violence.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

It is truly shocking that violence against women and girls remains one of the most systemic, widespread human rights violations worldwide. The high rates of this crime across the world are a global scandal.

I am proud to say that the UK is leading international efforts across more than 30 countries to eliminate violence against women and girls in all its forms – from ending Female Genital Mutilation and child marriage, to preventing and addressing domestic and sexual violence.

Today we are stepping up our leadership – working closely with women leaders and grassroots charities – to help even more survivors in some of the world's poorest countries overcome the traumas of violence and tackle the root causes of this crime.

DFID will provide up to £12 million to the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women (UNTF) over three years. This vital UK aid will support local, national, regional and cross-border efforts to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls, including sexual and gender based violence in conflict areas.

Aldijana Sisic, Chief of the UN Trust Fund said:

This year's commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women comes at a unique moment

coinciding with the unprecedented mobilisation of millions of voices of survivors of violence behind the #MeToo movement.

Violence against women is not inevitable and it can be ended with a comprehensive and multi-sectoral approach. This is why the UN Trust Fund welcomes the renewed contribution of the UK as well as its ongoing global leadership and support for preventing and ending violence against women and girls and its root causes.

The UK is already leading international efforts to eliminate violence against women and girls in all its forms. UK aid is pioneering 15 innovative approaches to prevent gender based violence across 12 countries, reaching an estimated 100,000 people. For example, in Pakistan and Afghanistan, DFID is helping support schools to better protect children. In Bangladesh, the UK is working with businesses and grassroots organisations to end harassment of women workers in garment factories.

Notes to editors:

- DFID will provide up to £12 million over three years (December 2017 – December 2020) to the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women (UNTF).
- Last year, the Trust Fund supported projects in 77 countries and regions around the world, which directly benefited 250,000 women and girls.
- DFID is leading international efforts across 30 countries to tackle violence against women and girls in all its forms; from ending Female Genital Mutilation and child marriage to preventing domestic abuse.
- In Uganda, UK aid is preventing and responding to domestic violence by changing stigma, discrimination and attitudes about the acceptability of violence. The Raising Voices' SASA! Programme is galvanising local community action, providing training and establishing community charters, by-laws and protocols in churches or mosques. This is leading a transformation in efforts to stamp out domestic violence, with women in the target communities now 52% less likely to experience physical violence from a partner.
- The independent aid watchdog (ICAI) carried out a comprehensive review of DFID's efforts last year towards eliminating violence committed against women and girls. It gave DFID's performance the highest 'green' rating, recognising the crucial contribution UK aid makes around the world.