

UN urges action so women and girls everywhere can live free from all forms of violence

22 November 2017 – Achieving gender equality and the full empowerment of women is the answer to ending violence against women, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres said Wednesday, calling for collective global action on this cause.

“Violence against women is [fundamentally about power](#),” Mr. Guterres said in his remarks alongside UN Women Executive Director, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, at a special event held at UN Headquarters in New York to commemorate [International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women](#), which is annually observed on 25 November.

“It will only end when gender equality and the full empowerment of women will be a reality,” he stressed, adding that his policy on gender parity in the United Nations is one step towards achieving this goal.

Mr. Guterres noted that every woman and every girl have the right to a life free of violence, but this right is violated in a variety of ways in every community, with more than one in three women worldwide face violence throughout their lifetime.

This violence, the most visible sign of pervasive patriarchy and chauvinism, directly impacts women’s physical and psychological health. It affects whole families, communities and societies. While it continues, States will not achieve the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, a master plan to end poverty and save the planet, adopted by them in 2015.

“There is increasing recognition that violence against women is a major barrier to the fulfilment of human rights, and a direct challenge to women’s inclusion and participation in sustainable development and sustaining peace,” said Mr. Guterres.

The United Nations is committed to addressing violence against women in all its forms, he stressed, citing such initiatives as the [UN Trust Fund](#) to End Violence Against Women, which has successfully awarded \$129 million to 463 initiatives across 139 countries and territories over the past 20 years.

These also include the [Spotlight Initiative](#) recently launched by the UN and the European Union, as well as the [UN Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Global Initiative](#), which seeks to help end sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public spaces.

Mr. Guterres is also addressing the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse inhouse by launching a new, victim-centred approach to the offenses committed by those serving under the UN.

While noting that these initiatives should help deliver transformative change, he said much more remains to be done.

“It is time for united action from all of us, so that women and girls around the world can live free from all forms of violence,” he said.

[Everything you need to know about the 16 Days of Activism against Gender based Violence](#)

Led by [UN Women](#) and partners, hundreds of events will be held worldwide, including marches, flashmobs, concerts, and football and rugby games. Iconic buildings will be lit up in orange to galvanize attention during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence from 25 November to 10 December, when the world marks [Human Rights Day](#).

The 16 Days campaign takes place under the umbrella of the Secretary-General’s campaign [UNiTE to End Violence against Women](#) by 2030. Orange has been designated as the colour of the UNiTE campaign as it symbolizes hope and a violence-free world.

This year’s theme for the campaign is ‘Leave No One Behind: End Violence against Women and Girls.’

AUDIO: Marking International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, Secretary-General António Guterres said every woman and girl had the right to a life free from violence, while more than one in three are victims of a violent act at some point in their lives.