



**United Nations Secretary-General's Campaign
*UNiTE by 2030 to End Violence against Women***

**16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence
25th November - 10 December**

Concept Note

1. BACKGROUND

The [16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence](#) is an international campaign that takes place each year. It commences on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to 10 December, Human Rights Day. It was originated by activists at the inaugural [Women's Global Leadership Institute in 1991](#) and continues to be coordinated each year by the [Center for Women's Global Leadership](#). It is used as an organizing strategy by individuals and organizations around the world to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls.

In support of this civil society initiative, under the leadership of the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, the United Nations Secretary-General's *UNiTE by 2030 to End Violence against*

Women campaign (UNiTE Campaign), calls for global action to increase awareness, galvanise advocacy efforts and share knowledge and innovations.

Launched in 2008, the UNiTE Campaign is a multi-year effort aimed at preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls around the world. UNiTE calls on governments, civil society, women's organizations, young people, the private sector, the media and the entire UN system to join forces in addressing the global pandemic of violence against women and girls. The campaign builds on existing international legal and policy frameworks and works to synergize the efforts of all UN offices and agencies working to prevent and end violence against women and girls.

2. MAIN PRINCIPLES OF UNITE CAMPAIGN ADVOCACY

- **Honour and acknowledge women's movements** and their leadership in the 16 Days of Activism and in preventing and ending violence against women and girls in general.
- **'Leave No One Behind'**: apply a human rights-based approach and focus attention on the most underserved and disadvantaged groups of women and girls in efforts to prevent and end violence against women and girls.
- **Survivor-centred**: take a respectful and 'do no harm' approach to the telling and retelling of survivor stories, only with their permission and under conditions in which they have agreed. This principle is vital for the engagement of survivor advocates in activism. All UNiTE partners must ensure that survivor advocates rights, safety, dignity and confidentiality are upheld.
- **Multi-sectoral**: everyone in society has an important role to play in ending violence against women and girls and we all must work together across sectors to address the various aspects of violence against women and girls.
- The **colour orange continues to be a key tool unifying all activities**, with buildings and landmarks lit and decorated in orange to bring global attention to the initiative.

3. **BROADER UMBRELLA**



Next year, 2020 will see an important milestone for the issue of gender equality and work on preventing and ending violence against women and girls, *25 years of the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action*.

The 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing marked a significant turning point for the global agenda for gender equality. The *Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action*, adopted unanimously by 189 Member States at this conference, is today an agenda for women's empowerment and it is considered the key global policy document on gender equality. It sets strategic objectives and actions for the advancement of women and the achievement of gender equality in 12 critical areas of concern: Women and poverty, Education and training of women, Women and health, Violence against women, Women and armed conflict, Women and the economy, Women in power and decision-making, Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, Human rights of women, Women and the media, Women and the environment and the girl-child.

On the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, UN Women's **"Generation Equality: Realizing women's rights for an equal future"** campaign demands equal pay, equal sharing of unpaid care and domestic work, an end to sexual harassment and violence against women and girls, health care services that respond to their needs, and their equal participation in political life and in decision-making in all areas of life. The UNiTE Campaign will align its advocacy activities with the broader umbrella of the *Generation Equality* campaign to support broader advocacy for gender equality with its specific lens on preventing and ending violence against women and girls.

4. **THEMATIC FOCUS**

Work on preventing and ending violence against women at the global, regional and national levels shows that there is widespread impunity on sexual violence and rape. This is why the UN Secretary-General has decided that starting 25th November 2019 and for the next two years the *UNiTE Campaign* will focus on a rape as a specific form of harm committed against women and girls, in times of peace or war. The UN System's 16 Days of Activism activities will begin on 25th November under our 2019 global theme:

Orange the World: Generation Equality Stands against Rape!

In 2015, a new global development agenda was accepted by all countries and is applicable to all. Through its 17 goals, the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, an agenda for global action for the next 11 years, addresses the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social, and environmental. The Agenda recognizes gender equality and the empowerment of women as a key priority and pledges that “no one will be left behind.” Goal 5 of the agenda aims to “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” and includes specific targets to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. However, all goals are integrated and indivisible, therefore their achievement is also fully dependent on ensuring parallel and interconnected implementation of the efforts to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls.



Rape as a very specific physical form of violence against women and girls is rooted in a complex set of patriarchal beliefs, power and control that continue to create a social environment in which sexual violence is pervasive and

normalized. Such “culture” is perpetuated with the use of misogynistic language, objectification of bodies, and glamorization of violence. Behaviours commonly associated with rape include victim-blaming, sexual objectification, trivializing rape, denial of widespread rape, or refusing to acknowledge the harm of sexual harassment or assault. In recent years, the voices of survivors and activists, through campaigns such as #MeToo, #TimesUp, #Niunamenos, #NotOneMore, #BalanceTonPorc and others, have put the spotlight on this issue and have reached a crescendo that cannot be silenced or ignored any more.

While the names, times and contexts may differ across geographic locations, women and girls universally experience rape, sexual violence and abuse. Exact numbers of rape and sexual assaults are notoriously difficult to confirm due to frequent latitude and impunity for perpetrators, stigma towards survivors in communities and their subsequent silence. Furthermore, sexual violence and rape have been used against women and girls as a deliberate tool in conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda, as well as other conflicts. In Myanmar, where more than half a million Rohingya have fled the country, rape and other forms of sexual violence have been used as part of the efforts to displace populations. In Syria, sexual violence has been used to extract information from women, and to coerce surrender from male relatives.

1. CONSENT

In general, there are four main ways to analyze consent in relation to sexual acts:

- *Affirmative consent*: Did the person express overt actions or words indicating agreement for sexual acts?
- *Freely given consent*: Was the consent offered of the person's own free will, without being induced by fraud, coercion, violence, or threat of violence?
- *Capacity to consent*: Did the individual have the capacity, or legal ability, to consent?
- Everyone has the right to sexuality without violence and as part of that, the positive sexuality begins with *enthusiastic consent*. This means being as excited and into someone else's enjoyment as we are excited and into our own enjoyment. Only yes means yes – and yes should come from an engaged and enthusiastic partner.

5. UNITE CAMPAIGN STRATEGIC ADVOCACY AREAS

Starting 25th November 2019 and for the next two years, the UNiTE Campaign efforts will aim to highlight the issue that has been identified as one of the key challenges in prevention and eradication of rape and sexual harassment – the issue of *consent*.

Twenty-three per cent of female undergraduate university students reported having experienced sexual assault or sexual misconduct in a survey across 27 universities in the United States in 2015. According to a survey released in October 2019, at 33 major universities, about one-quarter of undergraduate women say they have been victims of sexual touching or penetration *without consent* since starting college. The survey documents the disturbing prevalence of sexual violence at prestigious public and private schools in the United States.

The traditional definition of rape includes the *lack of consent* to sexual activity. The UNiTE Campaign will call on all relevant actors to guarantee that woman and girls are protected from rape and all forms of sexual violence by ensuring that the absence of consent is the central component of the definition of the incriminated acts of sexual abuse - rape, marital rape, acquaintance/date rape, all forms of sexual harassment - as well as to take into account the power relationship between perpetrator and victim. A few *suggested resources*:



- Legislation Handbook: https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2012/12/unw_legislation-handbook%20pdf.pdf?la=en&vs=1502 (p.24)
- Istanbul Convention: <https://www.coe.int/fr/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168008482e> (Article 36.2)
- Virtual Knowledge Centre Legislation Guidance: <https://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/453-definition-of-sexual-assault-and-other-elements.html?next=437>

2. RAPE AS A WEAPON OF WAR

"Sexual violence in conflict is a threat to our collective security and a stain on our common humanity..."

Together, we can and must replace impunity with justice; and indifference with action."

UN Secretary-General
António Guterres

The next year will mark another milestone for the work on ending violence against women and girls: *20 years of the United Nations Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security*. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution on 31 October 2000 which was a milestone in addressing violence against women in situations of armed conflict. Recognizing the need to fully implement laws that protect the rights of women and girls during and after armed conflict, it calls for special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence in armed conflict. It also emphasizes the responsibility of all States to put an end to the impunity of perpetrators.

Since 2000, the Security Council has regularly addressed the question of women, peace and security, and paid particular attention to the question of violence against women in situations of conflict. It has also addressed violence against women in relation to country-specific situations, for example resolution 1794 (2007). In 2008, the Security Council adopted resolution 1820 (2008) on women, peace and security addressing sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations.

For centuries, **rape has been used as a weapon of war**—possibly the most brutal weapon of war—in order to exercise power and dominance over women and undermine the social fabric of society. It is a method of torture, both physical and psychological, and is a crime, just like murder, and in many cases when discussing rape implemented as a method and weapon of war the United Nations (“UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict,”) asserts that “Rape committed during war is often intended to terrorize the population, break up families, destroy communities, and, in some instances, change the ethnic makeup of the next generation.” *A few suggested resources:*

- <http://www.stopraperow.org/>
- <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/report/s-2019-280/Annual-report-2018.pdf>
- <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/our-work/key-initiatives/>

UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict (UN Action) STOP RAPE NOW unites the work of 13 UN system entities with the goal of ending sexual violence during and in the wake of conflict. Launched in 2007, it is a concerted effort by the UN system to improve coordination and accountability, amplify programming and advocacy, and support national efforts to prevent sexual violence and respond effectively to the needs of survivors.

3. RESPONSE: MULTISECTORAL SERVICES AND SURVIVOR CENTERED APPROACH

The United Nations Joint Global Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence, a partnership by UN Women, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP and UNODC, aims to provide greater access to a coordinated set of essential and quality multi-sectoral services for all women and girls who have experienced gender-based violence.

Comprehensive multisectoral services need to be put in place and made accessible to all survivors of rape and sexual violence. Responses must be survivor-centred, timely and efficient to end the prevailing culture of impunity and foster a culture of justice and support.

The **UNiTE Campaign** calls for action that focuses on the **provision of services accessible to all survivors of rape and sexual violence**. These include health-care services including post-rape care, emergency contraception and abortion where legal; immediate and effective police responses, psychological support and counselling; legal advice and protection orders; shelter, telephone hotlines, social assistance and the provision of information at the local and national level.

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The Programme identifies the essential services to be provided by the health, social services, police and justice sectors as well as guidelines for the coordination of essential services and the governance of coordination processes and

mechanisms. Service delivery guidelines for the core elements of each essential service have been identified to ensure the delivery of high-quality services, particularly for low- and middle-income countries, for women and girls experiencing violence. Taken together, these elements comprise the “Essential services package”. *A few suggested resources:*

- <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/12/essential-services-package-for-women-and-girls-subject-to-violence>
- <https://www.unwomen.org//media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2014/brief-essential%20services-web.pdf?la=en&vs=2301>
- <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2014/brief-essential%20services-web.pdf?la=en&vs=2301>

6. WORKING WITH SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE ON THE CAMPAIGN

A [Survivor-centered approach](#) is to engage with survivors of violence with respect, where their consent, safety and confidentiality are upheld. Please always keep in mind special care and consideration to survivors of violence to ensure that they have given informed consent for their stories to be used for campaign activities, understand that their story and/or photo will be used in the context of ending violence against women and girls and whether an alias is required.

A [release form](#) is absolutely required for photos of children under the age of 18 and survivors of violence. A parent/legal guardian must give permission for the use of photos or videos of minors, with the exception of situations in which privacy does not apply (public demonstrations and marches or other public events where other press and photographers are taking photos and/or filming).

Please refer to the [Communications and Advocacy Policy Guideline](#) on the UN Women intranet page for more information.

For more information, please refer to [Ensuring survivor-centered and empowering approaches](#).

7. PARTNERSHIPS

All UNiTE Campaign partners, including UN agencies, civil society, private sector, sports associations, youth groups, universities, schools etc. are encouraged to:

- On the 25th November wear the colour orange and “orange” physical spaces including your workplaces, significant monuments in your cities and communities, online spaces such as the websites etc.
- Run an online and offline awareness raising campaign about our three strategic advocacy areas under the theme *Orange the World: Generation Equality Stands Against Rape* every day during the 16 Days of Activism.
- Create opportunities for dialogue between activists and policy makers, private sector organizations and the public. Discuss the need for inclusive policies and programming for preventing and ending rape and sexual violence of women and girls.
- Feature stories from activists and survivor advocates through print and digital platforms.
- Explore creative and innovative approaches, such as through the medium of documentary films, exhibitions, digital and print media. This could be done in partnership with NGOs and partners in the creative arts sectors.
- Tell stories of how your organization is supporting activists and survivor advocates.
- Stimulate public conversations and educate the public on what individuals and organisations can do to end the culture of rape.
- Hold seminars or radio programmes on the concept of consent.

8. ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATIONS MATERIALS

Website

- UN Women online platforms to promote *Orange the World: Generation Equality Stands Against Rape* theme from October onwards. UNiTE focal point teams to share materials from the regions.
- A dedicated editorial *In Focus* section with impact stories, voices of survivors and additional assets for digital outreach will be developed and disseminated to UN Women Regional Offices/Multi Country Offices/Country Offices (ROs/MCOs/COs), the UN System, and key partners, including media outlets ahead of 25 November.
- Media Advisory, press release will also be featured on the website with interactive elements from 25th Nov commemoration event.
- Photos from 16 Days events from around the world will be compiled into a Flickr album and posted online and used on social media as well.

Media

- A press release about 16 Days + media advisory (a combo version) about the Official Commemoration of the 25th November event in New York will be issued the week before. The press release will be issued ahead of 16 Days and can be replicated/ adapted by field offices.
- A closing press release at the end of the 16 Days with a recap of activities/results.
- Media talking points based on key messages from UNiTE and EVAW Section will be drafted by HQ Comms for use by all key Spokespersons: Executive Leadership Team and Regional and Country Spokespeople and adapted by field offices as needed.
- Media interviews, ahead of the 16 Days, with the Executive Director (ED), Deputy Executive Directors (DEDs), and other spokespersons including in the region and country offices.
- Executive Director's Message for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women to be used to pitch op-ed for 16 Days.
- Executive Director's video message to be used on website as well as when needed by broadcast/ online media.

Social Media

- UN Women social media accounts to promote relevant content under the *Orange the World: Generation Equality Stands Against Rape* theme in the lead up and during the 16 Days.
- A dedicated social media package including additional assets for digital outreach will be developed and disseminated to UN Women ROs/MCOs/COs, the UN System, and key partners, ahead of 25 November.

Video

- Executive Director's video message to be used on the website and social and by broadcast media.
- A video featuring quotes from survivors which will be available in English/French/Spanish and different formats for social media.

Special Initiative

- WPP partnership for US market and a few other markets through creative and media space buys (OOH, online media) to highlight different forms of violence women face.

Logo Note:

Supporters of the Campaign can freely use the Campaign logo files available [here](#) as long as they don't use it for commercial purpose.

9. CONTACT

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