

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

--

**MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY  
FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN  
25 November 2005**

Violence against women remains pervasive worldwide. It is the most atrocious manifestation of the systemic discrimination and inequality women continue to face, in law and in their everyday lives, around the world. It occurs in every region, country, and culture, regardless of income, class, race or ethnicity.

Gender-based violence is also damaging to society as a whole. It can prevent women from engaging in productive employment, and girls from attending school. It makes women more vulnerable to forced and unprotected sex, which plays a key role in the spread of HIV/AIDS. It takes a deep and enduring toll on the entire family, including and especially the next generation. That is why this year's *16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence*, starting today, will be used by Governments, United Nations entities and civil society activists to focus on the detrimental consequences of violence against women on the well-being of the world as a whole.

At the World Summit in September, leaders pledged to redouble efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and the girl child. We know that this requires us to change the mindset, still all too common and deep-seated, that violence against women is acceptable. That means leadership in showing, by example, that when it comes to violence against women and girls, there are no grounds for tolerance and no tolerable excuses. On this International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, let us rededicate ourselves to that mission.