



# Words to Action:

## Newsletter on violence against women

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- News & Highlights
- Feature Item
- Database Update
- Feature Resources
- Upcoming Events
- About *Words to Action*

### News & Highlights

#### **Fifty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women, UNHQ New York, 2-13 March 2009**

Violence against women was a recurring concern at the session and was addressed in the Commission's panel discussions, outcomes and parallel events.

- The Commission's agreed conclusions on the session's priority theme "The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS" acknowledge the need to address violence against women holistically, including through recognition of its link with other issues such as HIV/AIDS. They encourage the involvement of men and boys in the prevention and elimination of violence against women.
- In its resolution on "Women, the girl child and HIV and AIDS", the Commission expressed concern about the increased vulnerability of women and girls to HIV and AIDS due to a number of factors, including violence against women. It urged Governments to strengthen their legal, policy, administrative and other measures for the prevention and elimination of such violence.
- The Commission agreed on its multi-year programme of work for 2010-2014. "Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls" will be the priority theme in 2013. In 2011, the Commission will evaluate progress in the implementation of the agreed conclusions from 2007 on "The elimination of all forms of violence and discrimination against the girl child".
- As mandated by the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, made a presentation to the Commission and held a dialogue with Member States. [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw53/off\\_statements/Erturk\\_s.pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw53/off_statements/Erturk_s.pdf)
- The Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice held a joint dialogue on "Addressing violence against women through legal reform", on 5 March 2009. In her opening remarks, UN Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro

spoke about the importance of harnessing the power of the law to stop the deadly scourge of violence against women. [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/)

Visit: [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/53sess.htm](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/53sess.htm)

#### **Fortieth session of the United Nations Statistical Commission, UNHQ New York, 24-27 February 2009**

The 'Friends of the Chair' tasked with developing a set of indicators on violence against women presented their report to the Statistical Commission (E.CN.3/2009/13). The Commission adopted the proposed set of indicators as an interim and first step, and asked the Friends of the Chair to continue their work. It also requested the United Nations Statistics Division to undertake further work on methodologies for measuring violence against women. <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/default.htm>

#### **Secretary-General's Campaign "UNiTE to End Violence against Women"**

- New Campaign resources are available, in particular a Campaign poster. The Campaign's *Framework for Action* is now available in booklet form and electronic version. News about the Campaign is documented in the "What's happening" section of the website, and stakeholders are invited to submit information. <http://endviolence.un.org/>, <http://endviolence.un.org/registration.shtml>
- The Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, UNIFEM and the Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) convened a consultation on the Secretary-General's Campaign. Representatives from UN entities and civil society organizations met on 3 March 2009 in New York to discuss ways to contribute to the Campaign, and developed recommendations that will be submitted to the Campaign's high-level steering group. <http://endviolence.un.org/happening.shtml>
- The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) issued seven video clips on violence against women, as a contribution to the Secretary-General's Campaign. [www.eclac.cl/mujer/](http://www.eclac.cl/mujer/)



**8 March 2009: International Women's Day (IWD) – “Women and men unite to end violence against women and girls” – rallies around the Secretary-General's Campaign**

IWD was celebrated at UNHQ with panel discussions, press conferences and a theatre play. It also served as a reminder that violence against women is an obstacle to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

▪ In his traditional message to mark the occasion, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon highlighted the need for laws that say violence is a crime, that hold perpetrators accountable and are enforced.

[www.un.org/events/women/iwd/2009/docs/S-Gs\\_message\\_Intl\\_womens\\_day2009.doc](http://www.un.org/events/women/iwd/2009/docs/S-Gs_message_Intl_womens_day2009.doc)

**“We must work together to state loud and clear, at the highest level, that violence against women will not be tolerated, in any form, in any context, in any circumstance.”**

*Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon  
8 March 2009*

▪ United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon opened the commemorative event at UNHQ. A high-level panel assessed the impact of violence against women and girls in the work place, in the context of armed conflict and in the private sphere. Imrana Jalal, human rights lawyer from Fiji, paid tribute to the many organizations around the world that deliberately used the law to create change.

[www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2009/obv766.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2009/obv766.doc.htm)

▪ Theatre group Tiyatroglobal performed “Mika”, an awareness-raising play on violence against women inspired by the Secretary-General's Campaign, followed by a panel discussion on the role of the arts and culture in preventing and eliminating violence against women.

[www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/iwd/2009/](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/iwd/2009/)

▪ Around the world, United Nations Information Centres (UNICs) organized numerous celebratory events. Activities ranged from roundtable discussions, press briefings, and outreach programmes to art exhibits and film screenings. Many were organized in collaboration with different stakeholders from government, UN entities and civil society.

[www.un.org/events/women/iwd/2009/commemorations\\_unic.shtml](http://www.un.org/events/women/iwd/2009/commemorations_unic.shtml)

**Secretary-General's database on violence against women launched**

Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro launched the database at UNHQ in New York on 5 March 2009. The database is the first ‘one-stop shop’ for information on measures undertaken by Member States to address violence against women, as well as available data and statistics. For more information, see the ‘Database Update’ section of the newsletter.

[www.un.org/esa/vawdatabase](http://www.un.org/esa/vawdatabase)

**Inter-governmental expert meeting to review and update the “Model strategies and practical measures on the elimination of violence against women in the field of crime and criminal justice” met in Bangkok, Thailand, 23-26 March 2009**

The meeting, organized by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), examined the 1997 model strategies in the light of current developments, research and knowledge. Its recommendations will be presented to the nineteenth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (2010).

[www.unodc.org/unodc/en/justice-and-prison-reform/Expert-group-meeting-Bangkok-2009.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/justice-and-prison-reform/Expert-group-meeting-Bangkok-2009.html)

**The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) launched a “blue heart campaign against human trafficking”**

The campaign aims to rally world public opinion against trafficking and its millions of victims. UNODC Executive Director Costa called on people all over the world to join the Blue Heart Campaign against human trafficking “in order to end enslavement, and achieve women's equality”. This effort also links to the Secretary-General's Campaign “UNiTE to End Violence against Women”.

[www.unodc.org/blueheart/](http://www.unodc.org/blueheart/)

**United Nations Trust Fund on violence against women: 2009 Call for proposals**

The 2009 Call for proposals was launched on 6 March 2009. This year's Call invites initiatives that focus on closing the gap on the implementation of national and local laws, policies and action plans that address violence against women. The deadline for submission of concept notes is 17 April 2009.

[www.unifem.org/gender\\_issues/violence\\_against\\_women/trust\\_fund\\_guidelines.php](http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/violence_against_women/trust_fund_guidelines.php)



## Feature Item: The Secretary-General's Campaign *UNiTE to End Violence against Women*

*"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. The time to change is now. Only by standing together and speaking out can we make a difference."*

*Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon*

On 25 February 2008, the Secretary-General of the United Nations launched his Campaign *UNiTE to End Violence against Women, 2008 – 2015*, with the overall objective to raise public awareness and increase political will and resources for preventing and responding to all forms of violence against women and girls – in all parts of the world. The Campaign's duration through 2015 – the target for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – underscores that violence against women and girls constitutes an obstacle to development.

The Campaign provides a collective platform in an unprecedented level of global mobilization to engage a wide range of stakeholders and link their initiatives to the Secretary-General's efforts. The Secretary-General calls on governments, civil society, women's organizations, young people, the private sector, artists, the media, the entire United Nations system, and individual women and men, to join forces in addressing the global pandemic of violence against women and girls. The Campaign focuses on three key areas, namely: global advocacy; strengthened efforts and partnerships at national and regional levels; and United Nations leadership by example.

The Campaign aims to create a favourable and supportive environment for all stakeholders to fulfill existing policy commitments. Emphasis is being placed on supporting action where it matters most – at country, and especially local and community levels. The Campaign emphasizes the importance of preventing and stopping violence against women through mass public awareness-raising and social mobilization, with outreach to strategic groups, in particular men, young people and faith-based organizations, as well as the human rights community, the media, the private sector, celebrities and other influential spokespersons and opinion-makers, who all have a critical role to play in eliminating violence against women and girls.

The entities of the United Nations system contribute to the implementation of the Campaign through the *Framework for Action: Programme of United Nations Activities and Expected Outcomes 2008-2015*. The *Framework* provides an overall "umbrella" for activities by a multiplicity of stakeholders at global, regional, national and local levels in the course of the multi-year campaign. It identifies five key outcomes as benchmarks for the Campaign, to be achieved in all countries by 2015.

### **Five key outcomes, to be achieved in all countries by 2015**

- 1) Adoption and enforcement of national laws to address and punish all forms of violence against women and girls, in line with international human rights standards.
- 2) Adoption and implementation of multi-sectoral national plans of action that emphasize prevention and that are adequately resourced.
- 3) Establishment of data collection and analysis systems, and the collection and analysis of data on the prevalence of various forms of violence against women and girls.
- 4) Establishment of national and/or local campaigns and the engagement of a diverse range of civil society actors in preventing violence and in supporting women and girls who have been abused.
- 5) Systematic efforts to address sexual violence in conflict situations and to protect women and girls from rape as a tactic of war and full implementation of related laws and policies.



## Words to Action: Newsletter on violence against women

In its first year, the Campaign focused on advocacy and awareness-raising, and on mobilizing resources to support various activities. A Campaign logo and poster have been developed and are available in the official languages of the United Nations. A Campaign website has been launched and related media documents have been disseminated, and a United Nations communications plan is in place. All stakeholders are invited to register their Campaign contributions on the website under “what’s happening?”

The Secretary-General has encouraged the Heads of United Nations entities to actively contribute to the Campaign and to implement activities, within given timelines and resources. To help emphasize the national focus of the Campaign, the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme is inviting Resident Coordinators to lead their Country Teams to further the campaign at the local level. United Nations Information Centres/Services are also supporting the Campaign through targeted activities at the national level.

As part of his Campaign, the Secretary-General is creating a Network of Men Leaders to spearhead advocacy and action at the community, national, regional and global levels. The Network will include members from diverse backgrounds, including political, religious and civil society, as well as arts and sports celebrities. Several global leaders, including Nobel laureates and sitting and former Prime Ministers have accepted to join the Network, which is expected to be launched in the course of 2009.

The Campaign is contributing to a renewed momentum for action to prevent and address all forms of violence against women and girls. The International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, 25 November 2008, and International Women’s Day, 8 March 2009 – whose theme “Women and Men United to End Violence against Women” was chosen in support of the Campaign’s objectives – have been key moments for Campaign-related activities in all parts of the world. On both occasions, the Secretary-General spearheaded the call for action. One highlight at United Nations Headquarters was the presentation to the Secretary-General of the play *MIKA*, which the theatre group Tiyatroglobal dedicated to the Campaign. The powerful and moving play is a testimony to the role of artists in raising awareness and challenging stereotypes that harm women.

During the 2009-2010 period, the Campaign Secretariat, which is currently run by the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, will intensify awareness-raising, and form and strengthen partnerships to promote national action in the five key outcomes of the Campaign. Three main avenues will be pursued.

- With governments: Promote the adoption and/or implementation of legislation and of national action plans; strengthen political will; and advocate for increased resources for work on violence against women
- With civil society: Form partnerships to encourage implementation of effective awareness-raising strategies
- Network of Men Leaders: Following its launch by the Secretary-General, support the network to establish its influence at the national and community levels and support members in their advocacy efforts and mobilization of political will.

While the Campaign has brought renewed attention to the issue, it is important to underline that the Campaign does not supplant existing initiatives to address violence against women. Instead, the Campaign aims to bring greater recognition to these efforts, to harmonize them and support them by ensuring better coordination across individual efforts. Work to address violence against women has been going on for many years. But never before has there been the catalyst of the United Nations Secretary-General’s leadership to harness these efforts into a common global commitment for action.





## Database Update

On 5 March 2009, Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro launched the Secretary-General's database on violence against women, hailing the database as the first global 'one stop shop' for information on measures undertaken by Member States to address violence against women.

This publicly accessible and searchable database, developed in response to General Assembly resolution 61/143, provides information on all aspects of Member States' work to address violence against women, including:

- Legal frameworks;
- Policies, strategies and programmes;
- Institutional mechanisms;
- Preventive measures and training;
- Research and statistical data; and
- Other measures undertaken, such as engagement in international/regional initiatives, and the creation of specialized police, prosecutors, and courts.

Upon launching the database, DSG Migiro noted "I know that decision makers look for good practices or examples from other countries. This is important when developing an action plan, working on a new law or setting up a stronger coordination mechanism. Non-governmental organizations, for their part, take advantage of success stories from around the world to lobby parliamentarians and ministers. This database will encourage exchange on initiatives and ideas, and the transfer of promising practices. It will facilitate learning and show how progress is being made. The database will also help us understand what remains to be done. I hope it will inspire all of us to redouble our efforts to put in place the policies, services and other measures necessary to tackle violence against women."

As at 2 March 2009, 61 States had submitted their responses to the questionnaire, which constitutes the primary source of information for the database. At the time of the launch, the responses of 34 States had been entered into the database. The remaining responses are being entered on an ongoing basis. Member States that have not yet submitted their responses are invited to do so at their earliest convenience, and all Member States are encouraged to continue to submit new and additional information and documents for inclusion in the database, as and when they become available.

The database is available online at: <http://www.un.org/esa/vawdatabase>

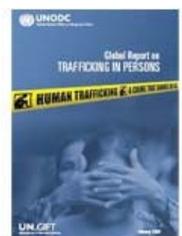
Member States: to update information in the database, please send an email to [vawdatabase@un.org](mailto:vawdatabase@un.org)

## Feature Resources

### **Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), February 2009**

The report offers a global assessment on the scope of human trafficking, and steps taken towards its elimination. It includes an overview of trafficking patterns; legal steps taken in response; and country-specific information on reported cases of trafficking in persons, victims and prosecutions.

[www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/global-report-on-trafficking-in-persons.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/global-report-on-trafficking-in-persons.html)



### **15 years of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences (1994-2009) - A critical review**

The report aims to take stock of the work of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, since its inception. It consolidates achievements and lessons learned, and identifies challenges and potential future directions for the mandate. The report was initiated and guided by Yakin Ertürk, whose mandate comes to an end this year (2004-2009).

[www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/women/rappporteur/docs/15YearReviewofVAWMandate.pdf](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/women/rappporteur/docs/15YearReviewofVAWMandate.pdf)



Yakin Ertürk, Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women



## Words to Action: Newsletter on violence against women

### Other resources:

- *Programming to Address Violence against Women*, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 2009. [www.unfpa.org/public/site/global/lang/en/pid/1913](http://www.unfpa.org/public/site/global/lang/en/pid/1913)
- *UNFPA Strategy and Framework for Action to Addressing Gender-based Violence*, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 2008. [www.unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/publications/2009/2009\\_add\\_gen\\_vio.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/publications/2009/2009_add_gen_vio.pdf)
- *The Multiple Faces of the Intersections between HIV and Violence against Women*, Development Connections, UNIFEM, Pan American Health Organization, Inter-American Commission of Women and the Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network, 2008. [www.dvcn.org/Documents/HIVVAW4.pdf](http://www.dvcn.org/Documents/HIVVAW4.pdf)
- *Intimate Partner Violence: High Costs to Households and Communities*, International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) with funding support from UNFPA, 2009. [www.icrw.org/docs/2009/Intimate-Partner-Violence-High-Cost-to-Households-and-Communities.pdf](http://www.icrw.org/docs/2009/Intimate-Partner-Violence-High-Cost-to-Households-and-Communities.pdf) See also *The Economic Costs of Violence against Women: An Evaluation of the Literature*, Expert brief commissioned by the Division for the Advancement of Women in preparation for the Secretary-General's Study on violence against women, 2005. [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/expert%20brief%20costs.pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/expert%20brief%20costs.pdf)
- *2008 Gender Report Card of the International Criminal Court*, Women's Initiative for Gender Justice, 2008. The report assesses the implementation by the Court of the gender-specific mandates, including in regard to violence against women. [www.iccwomen.org/news/docs/GRC08\\_web2-09v3.pdf](http://www.iccwomen.org/news/docs/GRC08_web2-09v3.pdf)
- The "Inventory of the United Nations system activities on violence against women", prepared by the Division for the Advancement of Women, provides updates for the period of October 2008 to February 2009. [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/v-inventory.htm](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/v-inventory.htm)

### Upcoming Events

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**6-8 April 2009:** First meeting of the Council of Europe's ad hoc committee on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (CAHVIO). The Committee is tasked with developing one or more legally binding instrument(s) to prevent and combat domestic violence and other forms of violence against women and to protect and support the victims. Strasbourg, France. [www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/violence/meetings\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/violence/meetings_en.asp)

**26-28 May 2009:** Expert group meeting on "Good practices in legislation to address harmful practices against women". Organized by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/v-egms-gplahpaw.htm>

### About Words to Action

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*Words to Action* is a newsletter produced by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women. It disseminates information on actions undertaken by Member States and UN entities to address violence against women.

The Division for the Advancement of Women in Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat supports the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations on gender equality and the empowerment of women. For more information, see <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/>

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