

# International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women - 25 November -

## Why this International Day?

Violence against women is a human rights violation and a consequence of discrimination against women, in law and also in practice, as well as of persisting inequalities between men and women. This violence impacts on, and impedes, progress in many areas, including poverty eradication, combating HIV/AIDS, and peace and security. However, violence against women and girls is not inevitable. Prevention is possible and essential.

## History of the Day

Women's activists have marked 25 November as a day against violence since 1981. This date came from the brutal assassination in 1960, of the three Mirabal sisters, political activists in the Dominican Republic, on orders of Dominican ruler Rafael Trujillo (1930-1961).

On 20 December 1993 the General Assembly, by [resolution 48/104](#), adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women.

In this context, in 1999 the United Nations General Assembly [designated 25 November](#) as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and invited governments, international organizations and NGOs to organize on that day activities designed to raise public awareness of the problem.

## One of the most devastating human rights violations

Violence against women and girls is one of the most widespread, persistent and devastating human rights violations in our world today.

Gender inequality persists worldwide. Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will require more vigorous efforts, including legal frameworks, to counter deeply rooted gender-based discrimination that often results from patriarchal attitudes and related social norms, as stated by the UN Secretary-General, in his latest [report on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals](#).

## Some intolerable facts

Violence against women is the most extreme form of discrimination. According to the aforementioned report, on the basis of data from 2005 to 2016 for 87 countries, 19 per cent of women between 15 and 49 years of age said they had experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner in the 12 months prior to the survey. In the most extreme cases, such violence can lead to death. In 2012, almost half of all women who were victims of intentional homicide worldwide were killed by an intimate partner or family member, compared to 6 per cent of male victims.

Moreover, only just over half (52 per cent) of women between 15 and 49 years of age who are married or in a relationship make their own decisions about consensual sexual relations and use of contraceptives and health services. That statistic is based on available data from around 2012 for 45 countries, 43 of which are in developing regions.

Research also shows that achieving gender equality helps in preventing conflict, and high rates of violence against women correlates with outbreaks of conflict. Despite the evidence, actions for women's inclusion, leadership and protection remain inadequate. In some areas, there has even been a roll back on progress.

Another initiative that has been helping to expose this scourge is the [UNiTE to end violence against women initiative](#) launched in 2008 by the then UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, which is also supported by his successor, António Guterres.

## 2017 Theme: Leave no one behind

UNiTE leads the [16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence](#) campaign, which aims to raise public awareness and mobilize people everywhere to bring about change. Those 16 days go from 25th November to 10th December, which is Human Rights Day. The theme of the campaign for 2017 is "[Leave no one behind: end violence against women and girls.](#)" This theme reinforces the UNiTE Campaign's commitment to a world free from violence for all women and girls around the world, while reaching the most underserved and marginalized, including refugees, migrants, minorities, indigenous peoples, and populations affected by conflict and natural disasters, amongst others, first. As in previous years, the [UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign](#) invites you to "Orange the world," using the colour designated by the UNiTE campaign to symbolize a brighter future without violence. Organize events to orange streets, schools and landmarks!