

Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!

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 2020

Concept Note for engagement

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, indicating that violence against women is the most pervasive breach of human rights worldwide. 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, institutions 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. 2020 CONTEXT

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic on March 11, 2020. Subsequently, violence against women and girls (VAWG), and particularly domestic violence, has escalated around the world.¹ There is evidence that women’s rights organizations (WROs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) are on the front line providing early warning systems and making efforts to adapt VAWG service provision and integrate VAWG into COVID-19 response plans.²

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated key risk factors for VAWG, such as food shortages, unemployment, economic insecurity, school closures, massive migration flows and the threat of civil unrest.³ There has been an alarming increase in multiple forms of violence against women and girls, especially physical, psychological, sexual and economic forms of domestic violence fueled by household economic and food insecurity and confined living conditions due to lockdown and social isolation measures.^{4 5} School closures, financial and food insecurity have heightened the risk of violence for girls including sexual exploitation, harassment, and child marriage.⁶ There are also reports of increased sexual abuse and harassment, both online and offline, and in some settings, an increase in femicides.⁷ Certain harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriages, have been pushed further underground during the pandemic.⁸ Quarantines and social isolation have negatively influenced mental health,

1 UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, COVID-19 and Global Impact on Violence against Women: A Protracted Crisis, (2020)

2 UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, A Bottom-up View of the Shadow Pandemic: Impact of COVID-19 on Violence Against Women Through the Lens of Civil Society and Women’s Rights Organizations, (2020)

3 UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, A Bottom-up View of the Shadow Pandemic: Impact of COVID-19 on Violence Against Women Through the Lens of Civil Society and Women’s Rights Organizations, (2020)

4 UN Women, COVID 19 and Ending Violence against Women and Girls (2020)

5 UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, COVID-19 and Global Impact on Violence against Women: A Protracted Crisis, (2020)

6 UN Women, COVID 19 and Ending Violence against Women and Girls, (2020)

7 UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, A Bottom-up View of the Shadow Pandemic: Impact of COVID-19 on Violence Against Women Through the Lens of Civil Society and Women’s Rights Organizations, (2020)

8 UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, COVID-19 and Global Impact on Violence against Women: A Protracted Crisis, (2020)

increasing the risk of problematic coping behaviors including family violence and conflict.⁹ Limited physical mobility, suspended public transport, and closed or stretched capacity of specialist support services (i.e. SOS hotlines, shelters, crisis centers, legal aid, rape clinical management, sexual and reproductive health services) has hindered the ability of VAWG survivors to access support including first medical aid, justice, health care, psycho-social care and social protection.^{10 11} Shelters and support centers for VAWG survivors are closed or struggling to procure food, maintain hygiene and health care necessary to take cases.^{12 13} Women and girls may assume closure of services means services for violence are not open and being on lockdown with perpetrators can make them feel unsafe to seek help,¹⁴ leading to an under-reporting of violence to formal authorities. Given the existing gender digital divide, women and girls in many countries may not have access to mobile phones, computers, or internet to access services to address VAWG¹⁵ and/or updated COVID-19 information. Perpetrators may use restrictions due to COVID-19 to exercise power and control over their partners to further reduce their access to services and support from formal and informal networks.¹⁶

As clearly set out in the UN SG's report on socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic¹⁷, this is not only a public health crisis, but humanity is running a risk of reversing decades of progress in the fight against poverty and exacerbating already high levels of inequality. The effects on women's rights and exercise of freedom and bodily autonomy are already visible and extensively documented by the first responders in the field.

Ending violence against women and girls is not on pause

Violence against women is in the high focus of the governments as the world is grappling with immediate consequences of the lockdown measures introduced to curb the spread of the virus. [UN Women collected data and information from partners—governments and civil society](#)

9 Amber Peterman, Alina Potts, Megan O'Donnell, Kelly Thompson, Niyati Shah, Sabine Oertelt-Prigione, Nicole van GelderPaterman (Center for Global Development), *Pandemics and Violence against Women and Children*, (2020)

10 Amber Peterman, Alina Potts, Megan O'Donnell, Kelly Thompson, Niyati Shah, Sabine Oertelt-Prigione, Nicole van GelderPaterman (Center for Global Development), *Pandemics and Violence against Women and Children*, (2020)

11 UNFPA, *COVID-19: A Gender Lens. Protecting Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, and Promoting Gender Equality*, (2020)

12 UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, *A Bottom-up View of the Shadow Pandemic: Impact of COVID-19 on Violence Against Women Through the Lens of Civil Society and Women's Rights Organizations*, (2020)

13 WHO, *COVID-19 and Violence against Women: What the Health Sector/System Can Do*, (2020)

14 UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, *A Bottom-up View of the Shadow Pandemic: Impact of COVID-19 on Violence Against Women Through the Lens of Civil Society and Women's Rights Organizations*, (2020)

15 UN Women, *COVID 19 and Ending Violence against Women and Girls*, (2020)

16 WHO, *COVID-19 and Violence against Women: What the Health Sector/System Can Do*, (2020)

17 SHARED RESPONSIBILITY, GLOBAL SOLIDARITY: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 March 2020

[organizations—in 49 countries in five regions](#) and has mapped impact of COVID-19 on the availability of and accessibility to services for women and girls who experience violence, and measures taken by service providers to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls during the pandemic, despite resource and capacity constraints. Extensive efforts are being invested in shaping national response plans to COVID-19. Through a joint effort of UNDP and UN Women [COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker](#) has been launched to monitor policy measures enacted by governments worldwide to tackle the COVID-19 crisis, and to highlight responses that have integrated a gender lens. It includes national measures that are directly addressing women’s economic and social security, including unpaid care work, the labour market and violence against women.

Civil society organizations and women’s rights organizations are on the frontline of the response to ending violence against women and girls in the context of COVID-19. [UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women \(UN Trust Fund\) grantees informed, through a rapid data assessment exercise](#), about the increased risks of violence and measures being enacted to counter it. You can support this work and ensure that women and girls are not left behind.

3. UN SYSTEM RESPONSE TO INCREASED RATES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

On April 6th 2020, the Secretary-General urged all governments to make the prevention and redress of violence against women and girls a key part of their national response plans for COVID-19¹⁸. The appeal was answered in a statement by 146 Member States and Observers that expressed strong support.

On June 24th 2020, the UN Chief’s call for action has been further accompanied by the [Inter-Agency Statement on Violence against Women and Girls in the Context of COVID-19](#) with the objective to highlight **six critical areas for action**, providing the UN system with the common set of **key advocacy messages** and coordination for action:

1. Make **urgent and flexible funding available for women’s rights organizations** and recognize their role as first responders.
2. Support health and social services to continue their **duty of care to violence against women survivors** and to remain accessible, especially to those most likely to be left behind.

¹⁸ UN chief calls for domestic violence ‘ceasefire’ amid ‘horrifying global surge’
<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/04/1061052>

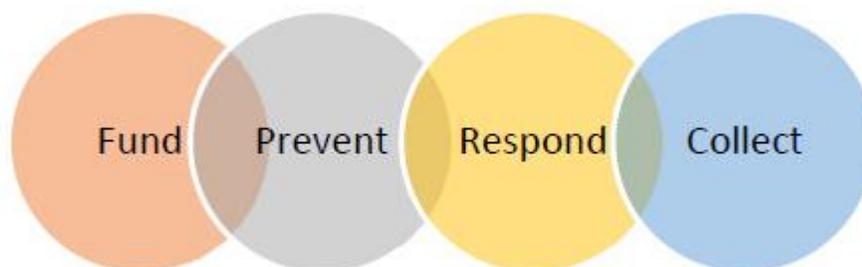
3. Ensure that **services for violence against women and girl survivors are regarded as essential**, remain open and are resourced and made accessible especially to those most likely to be left behind.
4. Place a high **priority on police and justice responses**.
5. Put **preventative measures** in place.
6. **Collect data only if it is clear that it is needed**, it will be used to improve services/programmes and ethical and safety standards can be met.

In further pursuit of response to this urgent context and on the request of the Secretary-General, the UN System has designed a political engagement strategy in order to accelerate concrete policy response to gender-based violence in the context of COVID-19 and promote zero tolerance of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) across all spheres of society everywhere.

4. UN POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY, UMBRELLA FOR THE UNITE ACTIVITIES

Building from the UN Inter-Agency Statement on Violence Against Women and Girls in the context of COVID-19, the UN Political Engagement Strategy platform aims to be the primary driver of the UN for the coherent messaging, uniting our efforts, aligning actors on exemplars of concrete policy change, and it can be adapted to contextual realities and imperatives:

Thus, the overall UNiTE campaign activities for the next year will be framed under the conceptual framework of the UN Political Engagement Strategy, outlining the following advocacy focus:



FUND

- ✓ Prioritize funding for a minimum package of essential services that include GBV prevention in COVID-19 fiscal stimulus packages.
- ✓ Make flexible funding available for women's rights organizations working at the nexus of COVID-19 and GBV.
- ✓ Prioritize funding for GBV prevention and response in the Global Humanitarian Response Plan COVID-19 & the UN Socio-Economic Impact Framework.

PREVENT

- ✓ Declare national zero tolerance policy for GBV with a concrete action plan in place.
- ✓ Launch a COVID-19 behavior change social mobilization campaign (attention on system & social norm shifts, positive masculinities, and GBV against women, including those facing intersecting inequalities).

RESPOND

- ✓ Undertake explicit measures so that services for survivors of GBV are maintained as essential during COVID-19 lockdowns, including ensuring a continuum of adequate criminal justice response.
- ✓ Ensure minimum essential services maintained and adopted where they are nonexistent.

COLLECT

- ✓ Collect data for improvement of GBV services and programmes (always ensuring survivor-centered and ethical safety standards).

5. 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 informed consent and under conditions in which they have agreed. This and the empowerment principles are vital for the engagement of survivor advocates/activists on their own terms. All UNiTE partners must ensure that survivor advocates rights, safety, dignity and confidentiality are prioritized and 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.
- **Transformative**: fostering critical examination of gender roles, regimes and practices, while seeking to create or strengthen equitable gender norms and dynamics for fundamental, lasting changes for women and girls.
- **Elevate the voices of young feminists**: while the world's reviewing progress made over the past 25 years since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, it is time to create

platforms to elevate voices of the next generation feminists who are shaping their future now.

- 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.

6. UNITE THEME 2020

“Accompanying the crisis has been a spike in domestic violence reporting, at exactly the time that services, including rule of law, health and shelters, are being diverted to address the pandemic.”

UN Secretary-General's report “Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19”¹⁹

As the world retreated inside houses due to the lockdown measures introduced to curb COVID-19 pandemic, reports from around the world showed an alarming increase in the already existing pandemic of violence against women.²⁰

“Together, we can and must prevent violence everywhere, from war zones to people’s homes, as we work to beat COVID-19“, says António Guterres, UN Secretary-General, in a public appeal to stop violence against women.

The UN System’s 16 Days of Activism activities will begin on 25th November under our 2020 global theme, aligning with the UN Political Engagement Strategy:

Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!

7. GENERATION EQUALITY AND GBV ACTION COALITION

In developing UNiTE actions under the theme Orange the world: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect, it is recommended to build upon other highly relevant ongoing processes. Namely, the two initiatives led by UN Women with high impact potential: the global campaign ‘Generation Equality’ and global leadership initiative on setting the 5-year agenda for ending Gender Based Violence through a coordination mechanism GBV Action Coalition.

¹⁹ https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg_report_socio-economic_impact_of_covid19.pdf

²⁰ <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/issue-brief-covid-19-and-ending-violence-against-women-and-girls-en.pdf?la=en&vs=5006>



The year 2020 is an important milestone for the issue of gender equality and work on preventing and ending violence against women and girls, as we are marking 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.

In support of the Generation Equality global campaign, UN Women is pursuing the endeavour of building **Action Coalitions** to mobilize stakeholders from different sectors of life (public, private and third sector) to engage in active partnerships to accelerate the progress towards the achievement of 2030 SDG agenda and build a gender equal society.

8. CALL TO DONATE TO THE UN TRUST FUND TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund) is the UN-system wide inter-agency pooled funding grant-giving facility specialized in supporting civil society, especially women's rights organizations, to implement initiatives to prevent and end violence against women. The UN Trust Fund was established by the UN Member States and is managed by UN Women on behalf of UN system.

In September the UN Trust Fund launched a special 2020 Call for Proposals for the funding envelope of USD 11 million and with the focus on response to increased rates of violence against women and girls during the COVID-19 crisis, in response and in support of the UN SG's Political Engagement Strategy. The Call for Proposals is the UN-system lead example in the

implementation of the Political Engagement Strategy call to increase funding to civil society organizations as first responders to the needs of women and girls during this crisis and beyond. As such, the funds raised through the digital giving campaign associated with Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect will be directed to resourcing this Call for Proposals.

9. 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 [UN Women Photo Guidance](#) (also available externally [here](#)) for more information.

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

10. 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 and virtual spaces including your workplaces, significant monuments in your cities and communities, online spaces such as the websites, e-signatures, social media accounts etc.
- Run an online and offline awareness raising campaign about our three strategic advocacy areas under the theme Orange the world: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect, every day during the 16 Days of Activism.
- Create opportunities for virtual dialogue between activists and policy makers, private sector organizations and the public. Discuss the need for inclusive policies and programming for supporting survivors of violence during COVID-19.
- 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 raise awareness of the increase in violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Hold virtual seminars or radio programmes to Orange the world: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect and encourage others to take action during this time.

11. SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVATION AND DIGITAL ACTIVISM

In the conditions of lockdown measures and physical distancing, the virtual world has become the main arena of social interactions and engagement. Now, more than ever, individual activism has shifted in the space of social media and online platforms. Embracing the new reality as it's shaping during the pandemic crisis, and with the objective to mark the UN presence in the virtual space, the 2020 UNiTE campaign is focused on establishing links between social media activism and impact on communities in the real world. More concretely, this year's focus is on connecting awareness raising and advocacy with fundraising results, in an effort to translate UN-system campaigning efforts into concrete demand for action resulting in tangible results for the benefit of those in need: women and girls survivors of violence.

The 2020 UNiTE activities, with the focus on social media engagement will call actors at different levels to act upon the SG's Political Engagement Strategy and publicly announce their actions, commitments, pledges by "oranging" their public profiles on websites, social and other media.

You can make a difference during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and protracted state of crisis it has generated across the world; you can support women and girl survivors of violence to stay safe and free of violence.

The Secretary-General's UNiTE Campaign to End Violence against Women (UNiTE Campaign) calls on everyone, from individuals to the private sector, to come together and take action to support survivors and share information to prevent and end violence against women and girls during this unprecedented time. Everyone has a role to play.

Since 2009, the UNiTE Campaign's inspired actions around the world have made a real difference to the lives of women and girls. Now, this collective action is needed more than ever. The UNiTE Campaign continues as a convener and coordinator on actions to prevent and end violence

against women and girls worldwide. Stay tuned for additional practical information from the UNiTE Campaign for use in your local contexts.

Take action!

Whether you own a grocery store, are an individual or part of a governmental response to the crisis. You have a role to play. Under the banner of the UN Secretary-General's *7 Point Call for Action*, you can call for:

- Increase investment in online services and civil society organizations,
- Make sure judicial systems continue to prosecute abusers,
- Set up emergency warning systems in pharmacies and groceries,
- Declare shelters as essential services,
- Create safe ways for women to seek support, without alerting their abusers,
- Avoid releasing prisoners convicted of violence against women in any form,
- Scale up public awareness campaigns, particularly those targeted at men and boys.

Individual

- Orange your social media | let your community know you are there for support, share support resources, information about available services,
- Donate to your local or national shelter or hotline service,
- Orange the world by speaking up against cyber violence,
- Make a personal commitment to not condone or accept violence, and to speak up,
- Have conversations with family and friends about the negative impact of VAWG on individuals and communities,
- Educate yourself about the causes and consequences of VAWG,
- Donate to the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women.

Civil Society

- Ensure women and girls in your community know where to access help and services by using social media and newsletters,
- Advocate for increased funding to ending violence against women resources, including funding shelters and hotlines,
- Invest in building capacity for duty bearers to prevent and respond to cyber violence,

Private Sector

- Invest in technical solutions to aid government and civil society response for survivors such as online and text support,
- Invest in creating safer spaces on- and offline for women and girls,
- Donate to local women's organizations,
- Donate to the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women.

Essential services such as grocery stores and pharmacies

- Post orange signs with your national hotline information near your cash registers
- Make sure individuals know your establishment is a source of safety and information