



# OFFICIAL COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

25TH NOVEMBER 2022

## CALL TO ACTION

***“UNiTE! Activism to End Violence against Women & Girls!”***

Gender-based violence against women and girls (VAWG) is one of the worst manifestations of discrimination against women and remains the most widespread and pervasive human rights violation worldwide affecting more than an estimated 1 in 3 women, a figure that has remained largely unchanged over the last decade. According to the latest estimates, more than 5 women or girls are killed every hour by someone in their own family<sup>1</sup>.

Global emergencies, crises and conflict, have further intensified VAWG and exacerbated the drivers and risk factors. Since the start of COVID-19, 45% of women reported that they or a woman they know has experienced a form of VAWG. Natural disasters, many of which are made more likely by climate change, aggravate all types of gender-based violence against women and girls. This was already seen in contexts as diverse as Hurricane Katrina (2005), the earthquake in Haiti (2010), the earthquake in Christchurch, New Zealand (2011), tropical cyclones in Vanuatu (2011), heatwaves in Spain (2008–2016) and bush fires in Australia (2019–2020).<sup>2</sup>

In a context of rapidly expanding digitalization, online and technology facilitated violence against women and girls are exacerbating existing forms of violence and leading to the emergence of new patterns and forms of VAWG.

At the same time, there has been a rise in anti-rights movements including anti-feminist groups resulting in shrinking space for civil society, a backlash against women’s rights organizations and a rise in attacks against women human rights defenders and activists.

In this context, ending gender-based VAWG might seem unimaginable, but it is not. Large-scale reductions in violence against women can be achieved through intensive feminist activism and advocacy coupled with evidence and practice informed multisectoral action<sup>3</sup> and investment. Evidence suggests that strong and autonomous feminist movements are the most critical factor in ending violence against women and girls.<sup>4</sup> This year, through the Secretary General’s UNiTE campaign, UN Women along with UN sister agencies are calling upon governments, and partners to act now to end violence against women and show their solidarity to women’s rights movements and activists through:

- **Increasing long-term funding and support to women’s rights organizations** working on effective solutions to prevent and respond to violence against women.
- **Resist the rollback on women’s rights, amplify the voices of women human rights defenders, and feminist women’s movements in their diversity and mobilize more actors** to join movements to end violence against women and girls across the world
- **Promote the leadership and participation of women and girls** in political, policy making and decision-making spaces from global to local levels including in development, humanitarian and peace processes.
- **Strengthen protection mechanisms** to prevent and eliminate violence, harassment, threats, intimidation, and discrimination against women human rights defenders and women’s rights advocates/activists

*Today, we call upon everyone to play their part. Everyone can make a difference. Be an activist. UNiTE to end violence against women and girls.*

<sup>1</sup> UNODC & UN Women Femicide Brief (2022) Forthcoming

<sup>2</sup> A/77/136 (11 July 2022) Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences, Reem Alsalem, in accordance with Assembly resolution 75/161

<sup>3</sup> Mary Ellsberg, Margarita Quintanilla & William J. Ugarte (2022) Pathways to change: Three decades of feminist research and activism to end violence against women in Nicaragua, Global Public Health, DOI: 10.1080/17441692.2022.2038652

<sup>4</sup> Mama Cash (July 2020) Feminist Activism Works! A review of select literature on the impact of feminist activism in achieving women’s rights. AWID (November 2020) Moving More Money to the Drivers of Change: How Bilateral and Multilateral Funders Can Resource Feminist Movement. Htun, M & Weldon, S.L. (2012) The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combating Violence against Women in Global Perspective, 1975–2005. American Political Science Review. Vol. 106, No. 3 August 2012



**United Nations Population Fund**



**United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime**



**Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs**



**Spotlight Initiative**



**World Food Programme**



**World Health Organization**



**Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**



**United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women**



**United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences**



**United Nations Development Programme**



**International Fund for Agricultural Development**