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Gender-Based Violence – A Fact Sheet

What is Gender-Based Violence?

Gender-based violence (GBV) is any act of violence or abuse which is directed at someone because of their gender, and most commonly affects women and girls. Violence is 'gender-based' when it is directed against a woman because she is a woman, or when it affects women disproportionately. Violence against women and girls is rooted in unequal power relations between men and women, and the underlying beliefs and values which accompany this, often manifesting as a means of control. It occurs in every culture and context around the world, and no society is immune from it.

Violence against women and girls takes many forms, but can include: **domestic violence and abuse; 'honour based' violence; forced, early and child marriage; sexual violence; female genital mutilation; female infanticide and sex-selective abortion; forced prostitution; stalking and harassment; financial control; and mental, psychological and emotional abuse.** It does not always involve physical violence, and can be carried out by a wide range of people, including partners; family members; members of the community; strangers; armed groups; and the state.

Quick Facts about Gender-Based Violence

Did you know that...

- At least **one in three** women **globally** will experience some form of gender-based violence at some point in their lifetime (*World Health Organisation*).
- More than **700 million** women alive in the world today were married as children (*UN Women*).
- In 2012, **one in two woman** killed in a homicide was killed by a partner, former partner, or family member. **One in 20 men** was killed by a partner, former partner, or family member in this same year (*UN Women*).
- **4.5 million** people worldwide are victims of forced sexual exploitation. **98%** of these are women (*UN Women*).
- **133 million** women and girls alive today are survivors of female genital mutilation (FGM) (*UN Women*).
- Globally, women between the ages of 15-44 are **more likely to be maimed or die as a result of male violence** than through cancer, malaria, traffic accidents or war combined (*Restored*).
- In England and Wales **seven women a month are killed** by a current or former partner in England and Wales 2 (ONS Wales 2015 Crime Survey England and Wales)
- **60 million girls** are sexually assaulted at or on their way to school. (USAID, 2008)

Landmark international legislation

Over the years, different national and international laws and policies have been made, to address gender-based violence. Currently, over 119 countries have passed laws addressing domestic violence; 125 have laws around sexual harassment, and over 52 countries have laws on marital rape. Many international conventions have also been ratified addressing issues relating to violence against women and girls, which often lead national governments to take action on the issue.

Whilst there is a lot still to be done, in terms of laws on gender-based violence, there is hope when we remember the difference that has been made by those who have campaigned over the years.

Here are a few landmark policies that have been made over the last 25 years, since the first ever 16 Days Campaign in 1991.

1993: Violence against women recognized as a human rights violation at the World Conference on Human Rights.

1993: Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women adopted at the United Nations General Assembly.

1994: United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women appointed, tasked with the role of gathering information on the causes and consequences of violence against women; recommending measures for eliminating violence against women; and producing reports on the matter.

1995: Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by 189 UN member states. The document addresses the empowerment of women, gender equality and the human rights of women and girls around the world. Violence Against Women and Girls is significantly featured as one of the twelve areas for priority action in the document.

2000: United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 passed, which focuses on the role of women in peacebuilding, and calls for special protective measures for women and girls in armed conflict, and an end to impunity for perpetrators.

2008: United Nations Security Council Resolution 1820 adopted, dedicated to addressing sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations.

2010: United Nations Secretary-General appoints a Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, to speak as the UN spokesperson and political advocate on conflict-related sexual violence and chair the UN Action against sexual violence in conflict.