

International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

Message of Ms. Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, Executive Director, UNFPA

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Every day, women and girls are subject to domestic violence, exploitation, sexual violence, trafficking, honour crimes, harmful traditional practices, such as bride burning and early marriages, and other forms of violence against their bodies, minds and human dignity.

As many as one in three women has been beaten, coerced into sex, or abused in some other way.

In the 16 days leading up to Human Rights Day and every day, let us come together to demand an end to the most pervasive yet least reported human rights abuse in the world.

Let us all take a stand and say loud and clear 'No to violence against women'.

In this demand, we are joined by a new network of men leaders led by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as part of the United Nations UNite Campaign to end violence against girls and women. I welcome their leadership and commitment to actively engage men and boys in the cause to end impunity, promote justice and human rights, and end widespread violence against girls and women.

Whether they are policy makers, community or religious leaders, fathers or husbands, uncles, brothers or young boys, they can all do their part to eliminate all forms of violence against women.

I also welcome the recent Security Council resolutions 1888 and 1889 that strengthen accountability to women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations. By condemning sexual violence, calling for a stronger role for women in peacebuilding, and mandating peacekeeping missions to protect women and girls, the resolutions signal a political commitment to address sexual violence as a peace and security issue.

All segments of society must unite for the dignity and well-being of women and girls. Now is the time to build a society based on respect for fundamental human rights and the equal rights of men and women.