



UNAMA & UN WOMEN MARK INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THE START OF 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

KABUL, 25 November 2016 – On today’s launch of “16 Days of Activism,” UN Women and UNAMA call for concerted national and international action by every member of society to help eliminate violence against women.

November 25 is the first of 16 consecutive days aimed at ending violence against women and is the key time to raise awareness on the causes and consequences of gender-based violence and provoke action to end all forms of violence against women.

This year’s launch is marked by the Afghan government’s call for “meaningful and comprehensive actions” across all levels of society to empower communities and individuals to take steps to end violence against women. UN Women and UNAMA, together with Afghan women activists, raise voices together to demand that the prevailing discriminatory attitudes impeding the advancement of women must be challenged in order to end gender-based violence.

This year’s campaign includes media roundtables, theater performances and storytelling competitions and other advocacy activities as part of the shared efforts supporting the development and implementation of legislation, policies and programmes addressing violence against women. The 16 Days campaign is a direct appeal to every woman, man, boy and girl to create positive changes in attitudes, beliefs and behaviors toward women.

“It is essential that Afghan women and girls can fully exercise their freedom and contribute to the building of the nation, without the threat of physical harm,” said Pernille Kardel, the Secretary-General’s Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan. “The public outcry about violence against Afghan women must lead to concrete social and legal change that protects and empowers women and girls,” said Kardel, who is also acting head of UNAMA.

As a state party to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, Afghanistan has adopted national legal frameworks to promote gender equality and end violence against women. These are included in the Constitution of Afghanistan, and the Elimination of Violence Against Women law.

Despite significant progress in the status of women since 2001, a long-standing disconnect continues between formal legal guarantees in domestic laws and realities on the ground. This is borne out in numbers and as highlighted in a recent Afghan government report showing the number of reported cases of violence against women increased last year.



“The most effective way to stop violence against women is to prevent it from occurring in the first place through laws and new social norms,” said Elzira Sagynbaeva, UN Women Afghanistan Country Representative. “We need to champion respectful relationships and promote women as nothing short of equal members of society. The only way we can achieve this is through long-term, sustainable efforts at all levels in society, working with everyone from individual women and girls, to men and boys, and to religious and community leaders.”

The UN is fully committed to support the Government of Afghanistan in fulfilling its legal obligations to prevent, protect against and respond to violence against women across the country. UNAMA and UN Women support a comprehensive approach, which includes equal access to education, new economic opportunities, and improved healthcare for women and girls.

The 16 Days of Activism campaign runs from the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women until World Human Rights Day on 10 December.

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