

## Concept note

# 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence 2021 "Orange the World: End Violence Against Women NOW"

## Background

The [16 Days of Activism](#) against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is an international campaign that takes place each year since 1991. It commences on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and ends on 10 December, Human Rights Day, indicating that violence against women is the most pervasive breach of human rights worldwide. 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.

Every year the United Nations Secretary-General's campaign, UNiTE to End Violence against Women (UNiTE), calls for global action to increase awareness and create opportunities for addressing GBV. The United Nations system participates in the 16 Days of Activism Campaign by organising a range of events: marches, exhibits, concerts, sporting events, debates, etc. Every year WFP demonstrates their commitment to ending gender-based violence and gender inequality by commemorating this campaign in all their offices worldwide.

## 2021 context

The Covid-19 pandemic led to a rise in gender-based violence and gender inequality, with much of the previous progress made in gender equality and women's empowerment regressing worldwide. The lack of participation of women and girls in many of the decision-making processes regarding global COVID-19 response furthered gender inequalities at a global scale. The pandemic has resulted in a global economic recession that has affected women harder than men—considering women's increased burden of unpaid care work and limited access to the formal labour force.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, the closing of schools due to lockdowns has left an estimated 11 million girls out of school and in higher risk of child marriage.<sup>2</sup> The 2020 16 Days of Activism campaign discussed the many ways in which the pandemic increased gender-based violence and overall gender inequality. For the 2021 campaign we would like to shed light on the other factors that have contributed to an increase of gender-based violence besides the COVID-19 pandemic: conflict and climate change.

The **3 C's (COVID, conflict, climate change)** have proven to be aggravating factors for poverty and disaster this past year. Surges in natural disasters such as the hurricanes, earthquakes and massive floods have resulted in several casualties, loss of land and livelihoods, and long-lasting devastating impacts. It is proven that climate change is impacting women and girls harder,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://unctad.org/news/gender-and-unemployment-lessons-covid-19-pandemic>

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Keeping Girls in the Picture (2020); United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Family Planning and Ending Gender-based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage: Pandemic threatens achievement of the Transformative Results committed to by UNFPA (2020).

considering their proportionate dependence on threatened natural resources and their higher representation in poverty.<sup>3</sup> Women and girls are also more exposed to becoming climate refugees- those having to abandon their homes in search for a more fertile and liveable land that is less affected by increasing temperatures and droughts.

This past year we have also seen an increase in conflict that has impacted the wellbeing and safety of women and girls, notably in Tigray and Afghanistan. When violence arises from conflict, it is expected for gender-based violence to also increase as a result. Women and girls are usually in a higher threat of suffering sexual and economic violence- in many conflicts such as the armed conflict in Colombia, sexual violence has been used as a weapon within the conflict.<sup>4</sup> Conflict also increases gender-based violence that specifically affects men and boys, such as forced recruitment into armies, child soldiers, or mass politically-driven assassinations. The impact of conflict on gender inequality and gender-based violence shows the need for integrating a gender-sensitive lens into conflict and risk analyses, and further justifies the need for gender mainstreaming in design and programming. It is proven that men are strong agents of change when included in the fight against GBV and can be important actors in mitigating risks and reducing instances of violence against women.<sup>5</sup>

This shadow pandemic that has resulted from COVID-19, along with the most recent humanitarian conflicts and natural disasters have increased the amount of work and efforts needed to combat gender inequalities and violence. Now, more than ever, we must join forces to take a stand against gender inequality and gender-based violence worldwide. The 16 Days against Gender-Based Violence campaign is a strategic opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment and ending gender-based violence, recognizing the inter-linkages of GBV and shocks such as conflict, COVID (inclusive of economic implications), and climate change.

### Campaign Participation

Offices and units are encouraged to participate in this campaign by hosting and partaking in different initiatives. The colour **orange** is used to show support for the 16 days and the fight against gender-based violence. Offices are invited to adapt the campaign theme to their local context and to partner up with other agencies & organizations to host events for the campaign. Colleagues can share their campaign initiatives and photos on the [Gender Community on Yammer](#).

The objectives of the campaign are:

- **Create awareness** – among all employees, offices and partners about GBV and other forms of violence, its root causes, how they have increased during recent crises;
- **Share information** – about actions (programmes, projects, services etc.) that tackle, respond and address GBV and other increased gender inequalities
- **Advocate for gender equality** as means to prevent any risk of GBV.
- **Call for renewed commitment and action**

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/womenin-shadow-climate-change>

<sup>4</sup> <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/sexual-violence-in-colombia-instrument-of-war-114593/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://menengage.unfpa.org/en/resources/sexual-violence-conflict-and-post-conflict-engaging-men-and-boys>

### Key campaign messages

- Covid, conflict and climate change have increased gender-based violence.
- Food insecurity is a factor that aggravates and increases the risks of gender-based violence.
- WFP is working to end gender-based violence by tackling both food insecurity and gender inequality.
- By assuring women's participation in important decision-making processes, we can help prevent gender-based violence.
- In conflict, both hunger and gender-based violence increase. WFP is working to prevent them.
- Climate change and gender-based violence affect women the hardest. By including women in leadership and decision-making processes, we can reduce both.

### Activities

- **Opening ceremony:** WFP November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021
- **Midway event:** IFAD. December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021
- **Closing ceremony:** FAO December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021
- **Social media campaign:** Social media board provided by UN Women, plus individually created communications materials
- **Various virtual events:** panel discussions, presentations, webinars, trainings and other awareness raising initiatives

### Calendar of Events During 16 Days

Event	Date
<b>International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women</b>	25 November 2021
<b>World AIDS Day</b>	1 December 2021
<b>International Day of Persons with Disabilities</b>	3 December 2021
<b>Human Rights Day</b>	10 December 2021