

IT'S TIME TO...



**END
VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN**

PSI CAMPAIGN FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

www.world-psi.org/vaw



IT'S TIME TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

In all societies, to a greater or lesser degree, women and girls are subjected to physical, sexual and psychological abuse that cuts across lines of income, class and culture. Trafficking, sexual harassment, workplace violence, female genital mutilation, “honour” killings, femicide and female infanticide form part of this horrifying picture. Violence stops women from enjoying their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Violence against women, whether in the workplace, in the home or in the community is a trade union issue. Women who experience violence suffer a range of physical and psychological health problems, including a heightened risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. Violence can nullify a woman’s ability to take part in economic activity and in public life. Violence against women lowers economic productivity, places an increased burden on public services and hinders social cohesion. Unless governments prioritise the elimination of violence against women and take concrete steps to end gender-based violence, nations will be hampered in achieving their full development potential and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will not be met.

PSI affiliates across the globe are campaigning to raise awareness of the issue, to change societal attitudes and to end violence against women.

SOUTH KOREA – KOREAN HEALTH & MEDICAL WORKERS UNION (KHMU)

The KHMU surveyed 1680 members working in 48 hospitals on workplace violence in hospitals.

The survey found that 15% of respondents had been exposed to sexual harassment and 13.8% had experienced abusive language or physical violence at work. Over 50% of the perpetrators of violence or sexual harassment were doctors.

The KHMU has successfully negotiated in its 2008 collective bargaining agreement:

- ✂ The inclusion of doctors and patients’ families in education programmes on workplace violence and sexual harassment.
- ✂ The establishment of a training system to educate the workforce and those responsible for investigating incidents of violence.
- ✂ Strengthening of the disciplinary framework to eliminate workplace violence.

AUSTRALIA – AUSTRALIAN SERVICES UNION (ASU)

In Australia the ASU is an active partner in the national White Ribbon Day campaign which aims to eliminate violence against women by promoting culture-change around the issue. Strategies include a national media cam-



paign as well as education and male leadership programmes aimed at encouraging men and boys to act to end violence against women. As a result of the campaign's activities the Australian government has recently announced funding for research and analysis of Australian community attitudes toward violence against women: www.asu.asn.au/media/women/20071116_whiteribbonday.html

UNITED KINGDOM – UNISON

UNISON recognises violence in the home as a trade union issue and supports its members by negotiating workplace policies to support and assist workers suffering domestic violence; providing emergency support including financial aid and other assistance through a Welfare Fund; campaigning for better services for victims of domestic violence, including training for public service workers; working with campaign groups to raise public awareness; and lobbying for government action to address the problem and improve services. UNISON has also produced a model workplace agreement on domestic abuse: www.unison.org.uk/women/pages_view.asp?did=100

UNITED STATES – AFSCME

AFSCME has produced a number of publications on domestic violence and workplace violence. They cover the is-

sue from a variety of approaches, from assisting the victim to dealing with a perpetrator of domestic violence to providing advice for union representatives. A special section is dedicated to what unions can do and includes sample contracts and resolutions: www.afscme.org/publications/3113.cfm

COSTA RICA – NATIONAL UNION OF JUDICIAL EMPLOYEES (ANEJUD)

PSI's affiliate, ANEJUD, works closely with the Judiciary Gender Commission and the Technical Secretariat for Gender. A series of leaflets have been developed in the framework of a campaign on domestic violence, these include an information bulletin, a myths versus reality fact sheet and information on where to find help in the case of domestic or workplace violence. <http://www.poder-judicial.go.cr/secretariadegennero/default.htm>.

GHANA

PSI affiliates in Ghana, along with civil society organisations, successfully mobilised and lobbied for legislation outlawing domestic violence. Ghana's Domestic Violence Act was passed in February 2007.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The most common form of violence experienced by women globally is physical violence inflicted by an intimate partner. Several global surveys suggest that half of all women who die from homicide are killed by their current or former husbands or partners (Source: UN Fact Sheet <http://endviolence.un.org/docs/VAW.pdf>). Domestic violence is an issue for everyone – including trade unions. Anyone can be a victim – regardless of culture, age, ethnicity, class, religion, disability or sexual orientation.

The prevalence of domestic violence and of HIV/AIDS is interlinked. Women's inability to negotiate safe sex and refuse unwanted sex is closely linked to the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS. Women who are beaten by their partners are 48% more likely to be infected with HIV/AIDS.

Domestic violence is a workplace issue that can cause increased absenteeism, poor timekeeping and deterioration in a worker's performance. Along with the physical and emotional suffering, the economic costs of domestic violence are considerable. In the UK the government estimates the total cost of domestic violence to services including health, social services, housing and the criminal and civil justice systems at £3.1 billion, while the loss to the economy is £2.7 billion. In the USA domestic violence costs US\$4.1 billion per year in direct medical and health care services, while productivity losses account for nearly US\$1.8 billion.

In nine Latin American countries, a rapist who marries his victim stays out of jail.

Source: World Bank

WHAT CAN TRADE UNIONS DO?

- ⌘ Negotiate policies that are supportive of women dealing with domestic violence, including leaves of absence, transfers, workplace security, confidential counselling and paid time to attend court hearings; as well as employer-paid legal assistance and other types of assistance programs for use by abused members.
- ⌘ Run workshops or training sessions for union representatives on how to recognise signs of domestic violence and how to respond sensitively to members who are being abused at home.
- ⌘ Provide emergency support, including financial aid and/or other assistance for members who are victims of domestic violence.
- ⌘ Urge governments to take action to address domestic abuse and to improve the services on offer to the victims.
- ⌘ Lobby governments to introduce or strengthen laws that ensure that victims of domestic violence have full access to adequate and effective legal redress and access to health information, protection and services.
- ⌘ Form or join a coalition to campaign against violence against women - many PSI affiliates are part of such coalitions together with civil society organisations (women's groups; community based organisations; non-governmental organisations). Join in campaign activities to raise awareness of the issue and challenge attitudes.
- ⌘ Appoint "White Ribbon Ambassadors". These are generally prominent men from many fields who promote and further the campaign, by speaking out against violence against women and advocate positive, non-violent relationships with women.



Women aged 15 - 44 are more at risk of death and disability through domestic violence than through cancer, motor accidents, war and malaria.

Sources: United Nations and Council of Europe

One in every three women worldwide is likely to be beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime and one in five women will become a victim of rape or attempted rape.

Source: United Nations

VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE – WOMEN AT SPECIAL RISK

Each year 2 million girls between ages 5 and 15 are introduced into the commercial sex market.

Source: United Nations
Population Fund

Sexual harassment and violence in the workplace are common and constant threats to working women's lives and livelihoods. Violence at work is not merely an episodic, individual problem but a structural, strategic problem rooted in wider social, economic, organisational and cultural factors. Violence at work is detrimental to the working environment and to the quality of services provided.

Several factors appear to increase a workers' risk of suffering violent treatment at the workplace. Chief among these are sex, age, precarious and insecure employment and sectors at 'special risk'. For example, a UK study found that the risk of health care workers experiencing violence is **16** times greater than the risk for other service workers and that health care workers are more likely to be attacked at work than prison guards, police officers, transport workers, retail or bank employees. Women are concentrated in many of the high-risk occupations, particularly as teachers, social workers, nurses and other health-care workers. Women working within private households (domestic workers), including those providing health and social care services, are often particularly at risk of violence. The continued segregation of women in precarious, low-paid and low status jobs, while men predominate in better-paid, higher status, more secure jobs and supervisory positions, contributes to the problem.



WHAT CAN TRADE UNIONS DO?

- ⌘ Negotiate policies that make it clear that violence is NOT part of the job and explicitly prohibit sexual harassment, bullying and violence in the workplace.
- ⌘ Negotiate policies that promote equality between men and women in the workplace, including adequate maternity protection and pension rights, equal access to promotion opportunities and equal pay for work of equal value.
- ⌘ Address occupational segregation in the workplace, which usually results in more women occupying low-paid, low-status positions.
- ⌘ Encourage anti-violence programmes specifically addressed to combating violence at work
- ⌘ Review disciplinary procedures to ensure that they deal adequately with the issue of violence.
- ⌘ Develop safe reporting procedures for violent incidents that offer adequate protection for the victim.
- ⌘ Ensure that those responsible for receiving and investigating reports of violence are properly trained to handle them with appropriate sensitivity.
- ⌘ Make sure that violence against women is on the health and safety agenda.
- ⌘ Lobby governments for the repeal of laws that explicitly or implicitly discriminate against women.
- ⌘ Lobby governments for the implementation of laws that promote equality between women and men in the workplace.

Sixty million women who should be alive today are 'missing' because of gender discrimination which leads to sex-selective abortion and female infanticide.

Source: Unicef

VIOLENCE WITH IMPUNITY

THE 'GLOBAL MARKET' IN WOMEN AND GIRLS

Over 4 million people around the world are trafficked every year. According to International Labour Organisation (ILO) figures, women and girls make up 56% of people trafficked for economic exploitation and 98% of the 1 million people trafficked into the global sex industry.

Women migrants are especially vulnerable to abuse, including trafficking, forced labour and domestic violence. In many countries, women migrants also face discrimination based on race, ethnicity or national origin and have little or no access to social services. Isolation and fear of deportation often prevent undocumented migrant women from seeking legal protection. Few States have enacted laws which would allow undocumented migrant women facing violence to file criminal complaints and make use of protective mechanisms without being questioned about their immigration status.

WOMEN IN CONFLICT ZONES

The rape of women is now so commonplace in conflict zones that on 20 June 2008 the United Nations (UN) Security Council unanimously voted to classify rape as a “weapon of war”. According to a former UN peacekeeping commander, “It has probably become more dangerous to be a woman than a soldier in an armed conflict”. The UN resolution makes a clear link between ending sexual violence and maintaining international peace and security and calls for “the immediate and complete cessation by all parties to armed conflict of all acts of sexual violence against civilians with immediate effect”.

More than 130 million girls and women, mostly in Africa, have undergone female genital mutilation.

Source: Unifem



Studies suggest that a quarter to one-third of the 170 million women and girls currently living in the European Union are subjected to male violence.

Source: Council of Europe

Between 20,000 and 50,000 women and girls were raped in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the war in the Balkans.

Source: World Health Organisation

FEMICIDE

Femicide – the murder of women – has different characteristics from murders of men and often involves sexual violence. Between 40 and 70 per cent of female murder victims are killed by husbands or boyfriends in Australia, Canada, Israel, South Africa and the United States. In Colombia, one woman is reportedly killed by her partner or former partner every six days. Hundreds of women were abducted, raped and murdered in and around Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, over a 10-year period. Most of the killings have not been solved. Victims have in most cases been young women between the ages of 17 and 22. In Guatemala the number of women murdered has doubled since the year 2000, yet less than 20 of the more than 3,000 cases of murdered women have been resolved by the justice system.

WHAT CAN TRADE UNIONS DO?

- ⚡ Find out whether your government has a national plan of action to end violence against women.
 - ▶ If it does, monitor the implementation to ensure that the government is keeping its commitments.
 - ▶ If it does not, encourage the government to draw up an action plan in consultation with trade unions and civil society organisations, based on the Beijing Declaration and Programme of Action and its follow-up.
- ⚡ Call on your government to ratify and effectively implement the following international instruments:
 - ▶ United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women



Violence against women means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, Article 1

- ▶ United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
- ▶ ILO Convention 111 on Discrimination in Employment and Occupation
- ▶ ILO Convention 100 on Equal Remuneration.
- ⌘ Actively recruit and organise migrant workers.
- ⌘ Lobby governments to support changes to the Geneva Conventions and Protocols to allow women who have suffered violence as a war crime to claim asylum.
- ⌘ Lobby for the creation of a stronger UN women's organization that can effectively advance women's human rights and promote gender equality.



RESOURCES

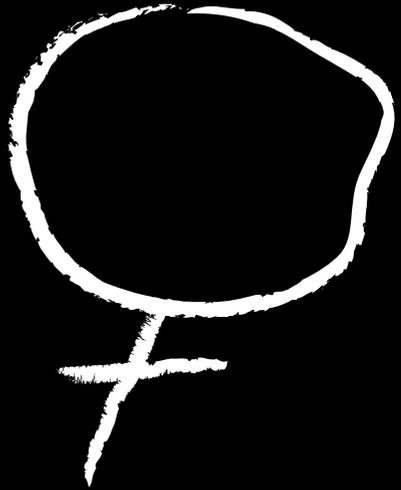
- 🔗 Beijing Declaration and Programme of Action: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/violence.htm
- 🔗 UN Convention on the Elimination of Violence against Women (CEDAW): www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/
- 🔗 UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women: www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/21.htm
- 🔗 UN Secretary-General's In-Depth Study on All Forms of Violence against Women: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/SGstudyvaw.htm
- 🔗 ILO Conventions: www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/convdisp1.htm
- 🔗 UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families: www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/m_mwctoc.htm
- 🔗 UN Security Council Resolution 1820 on Women, Peace and Security: www.un.org/Docs/sc/unsc_resolutionso8.htm
- 🔗 Millennium Development Goals: www.un.org/millenniumgoals/gender.shtml
- 🔗 PSI campaign page: www.world-psi.org/vaw

25 November
UNITED NATIONS DAY
FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN

10 December
INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

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