

**SAY NO – UNiTE**  
End Violence against Women

Let Us  
Count You In!

[www.saynotoviolence.org](http://www.saynotoviolence.org)

### **UNIFEM's Say NO - UNiTE Initiative Reaches its First Milestone**

#### **183,132 actions registered showcasing efforts to end violence against women and girls globally**

*New York, 2 March 2010* — Today, at the 54th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York, UNIFEM announced the first Say NO milestone – 183,132 actions recorded through this global advocacy and communications platform towards ending violence against women and girls. This tally far surpasses the initial goal for Say NO of stimulating more than 100,000 actions by International Women's Day. Launched in November 2009 as a web platform to facilitate, showcase and count efforts to address gender-based violence by individuals, governments and civil society, Say NO is a direct contribution to the UN Secretary-General's Campaign to end violence against women.

Citizens of more than 190 countries have used the web-based platform for advocacy and outreach and participated through its related social media initiatives in the last four months. "The actions that have been pouring in on the Say NO platform are nothing but inspiring. In Thailand, youth are learning about preventing violence against women in schools, in Tajikistan, martial arts tournaments have sensitized young members about violence against women, and in Austria on the International Day to End Violence against Women, the government and parliamentarians said NO in a public expression of political will. Together, these initiatives weave a rich tapestry of solutions to end one the probably most wide-spread human rights violation", said UNIFEM Deputy Executive Director Moez Doraid at an event where the announcement was followed by a discussion with partners from around the world.

Actions have come in from the smallest villages of Pakistan to the streets of Vienna, from Vanuatu to Uganda. In Kenya, the group Men for Gender Equality Now traveled across the country to mobilize their communities against discrimination, and in Brazil members of trade unions demanded 24 hour access to trained police to report gender-based violence. In Chile, men and women joined a national walk against violence and Togo started a media campaign targeted to change attitudes.

Religions for Peace, a global inter-faith network of developed and distributed a toolkit for awareness and prevention of violence against women and girls among faith-based communities. In Burundi, the city's jogging clubs distributed information materials in the capital Bujumbura, and in Baguio City, Philippines, a Men's Summit brought together men from different walks of life to strategize on ways to end domestic violence. In the United States, Amnesty International USA, Family Violence Prevention Fund and Women Thrive, along with thousands of activists, are gathering signatures in support of the International Violence against Women Act (IVAWA).

"It is central that politicians are engaged in strengthening women's rights and ending violence against women. Today as a Chair of the Committee on Women's Rights I can see that we have actually made a difference – violence against women has a much

# SAY NO – UNiTE

## End Violence against Women

Let Us  
Count You In!

[www.saynotoviolence.org](http://www.saynotoviolence.org)

higher profile as a policy issue at the EU level”, said Eva-Britt Svensson, member of the European Parliament at today's event. Ms. Svensson spearheaded a Declaration of the European Parliament that calls for a Year of Zero Tolerance on Violence against Women in the context of Say NO.

Using Say NO as a platform to highlight their efforts, Girl Guides and Girl Scouts are organizing vigils and poster competitions to involve their peers. “Girls worldwide say NO to violence against women. It is easy to work with Say NO— you can change your Facebook status to let others know about the campaign, you can organize in your own ways to Say NO to violence against women and girls!” said Maria Jose Proano and Nefeli Themeli, young delegates of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts from Ecuador and Greece, as they announced their individual commitment to engage their peers from different countries through non-formal educational activities and a poster competition on violence against women and girls.

Say NO - UNiTE has garnered the support of 186 official partners representing millions of members, who are working on the ground to end this pandemic. It has also mobilized critical funding towards programmes and efforts to end violence against women worldwide. The luxury watchmaker Omega spurred actions on the platform through a challenge grant of US \$50,000 that will go to women's organizations on the ground, while Zonta International, a longtime partner of UNIFEM, has recorded a contribution of US \$ 100,000 for the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women. The Trust Fund is managed by UNIFEM on behalf of the UN system and supports women's organizations and projects around the world. "Zonta International's strategy on ending violence against women - Z ISVAW - is about changing personal and political knowledge, attitudes and behavior that contribute to discrimination and violence. The UN Trust Fund supports projects across the world towards this end, and Zonta understands that the Trust Fund is a perfect match for its mission," said Dianne Curtis, President Elect of Zonta.

Based on country data available, it is estimated that up to 70 percent of women and girls experience physical or sexual violence from men in their lifetime. The UNIFEM initiative Say NO-UNiTE demonstrates that there is a groundswell of activity on ending violence against women around the world. Today's accomplishment compels us to look towards a future free of violence against women and girls with renewed conviction. Even as you read this story, women from San Francisco to Congo are organizing to meet at bridges during the International Women's Day on 8 March to demand support for ending violence against women, and Million Women Rise is organizing a march in London on March 6 that you can join in person or virtually.

There are many ways to take action and become part of this thriving global network committed to make ending violence against women and girls a reality everywhere. Take one action today!

**Link:** <http://www.saynotoviolence.org/around-world/news/say-no-unite-reaches-first-milestone>