

Commemorating the International Day of Eliminating Violence against Women

November 25, 2020

The tagline for the International Day of Eliminating Violence Against Women is “Orange the World.” Every year from 11/25 to 12/10 women and girls all around the world, organize with the sole purpose of ending violence against women. The color orange is a symbol of a brighter future free from violence against women and girls. 146 countries have committed to ending violence and making the world a safer place for women and girls. There were many distinguished speakers at this event including UN representatives, The World Bank, The Minister of Foreign Affairs from Australia, the President of Malawi, leadership from Morocco, and a Nobel Peace Prize Winner to name a few.

Dr. Natalia Kanem, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Executive Director

Her speech started in a powerful way. “Enough! Enough to domestic violence, Enough to rape, Enough to trafficking, Enough to child marriage, Enough to female genital mutilation, Enough to assumptions that violence is going to go away on its own, and Enough to not treating this like a full blown crisis. She works alongside Friends of the UNFPA which promotes the health, dignity, and rights of women and girls around the world.

Violence against women occurs in all communities around the world. The UNFPA reached 2.8 million women in 47 countries this past year. They provide 1,430 clinics for women. It’s essential that reliable data is available to the UN and the UNFPA, so that they are able to understand who needs help and the impact of the support they provide. The UNFPA will soon be releasing a dashboard of data that will meet this need for reliable information.

The UNFPA realizes that young women are continually left behind in the conversations to find solutions to ending abuse. Therefore, they are putting young people at the center of their efforts. Young women in poor areas are the most disadvantaged. In Kenya during a 3 month lockdown this year, the UNFPA found that there was a 40% increase in teen pregnancy.

Representative from the Country of Morocco

The King of Morocco has prioritized the end of violence against women during this pandemic. Any forms of violence against women are criminalized. Morocco has funded programs and made spaces available for women who are suffering from abuse. In March, Her Royal Highness announced a national strategy to end violence against women.

Nadia Murad, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and UNODC Goodwill Ambassador, is a leading advocate for survivors of genocide and sexual violence. Nadia was kidnapped by ISIS in their efforts to ethnically cleanse Iraq of all Yazidis. She spoke of how ISIS uses the abuse and capturing of women as a weapon of war. For refugees, violence against women is compounded and they have the additional threat of falling prey to sexual trafficking. Also something to note is when women return home from being held captive there are no resources available to them to help with recovering from this trauma. In many conflict areas around the world we are failing to address this violence and abuse that women are suffering.

Michelle Burgess

UN Representative, New York