

# **Domestic Abuse and Violence International Alliance**

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October 27, 2021

Sima Sami Bahous, Executive Director  
UN Women  
United Nations Secretariat  
405 East 42nd Street  
New York, NY 10017-3599

Dear Ms. Bahous:

The Domestic Abuse and Violence International Alliance is an international coalition that consists of 19 organizations from eight countries around the world.<sup>1</sup> DAVIA's mission is to ensure that domestic violence and abuse public policies and programs are inclusive, truthful, and based on science. DAVIA seeks to bring an end to acts or threats of physical violence, the use of coercive control tactics, and parental alienating behaviors directed to a current or former intimate partner.

We are writing first to express our solidarity with the need to work for gender equality, and the necessity of ending violence against girls and women. Until women are free of the oppression that comes from the various forms of violence and abuse, no one can be free.

We are also supportive of the upcoming 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.<sup>2</sup> We stand firmly behind the recognition that domestic violence and abuse are not restricted to any particular group, including LGBTQ+ peoples, non hetero normative people, all migrants regardless of status, and all genders. Ignoring this fact will not only make it difficult, but actually impossible to eliminate all forms of domestic violence and abuse.

Addressing the needs of all victims will allow the international anti-violence effort to become inclusive and effective. We are concerned, however, that the 16 Days campaign's description suggests a sole focus on a single identity group, female victims:

1. The campaign theme is "Orange the world: End violence against women now!"
2. The campaign kicks off on 25 November, which is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.
3. The campaign's website notes the support of the United Nations Secretary-General's UNiTE by 2030 to End Violence against Women campaign.

This female-specific focus does not reflect the extensive research conducted in countries around the world that reveals domestic violence and abuse are not a gender-specific issue.<sup>3</sup> In the United

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<sup>1</sup> <http://endtodv.org/coalitions/international/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/take-action/16-days-of-activism>

<sup>3</sup> <https://domesticviolenceresearch.org/partner-abuse-worldwide/>

***No victim of domestic violence or abuse should be prevented from accessing the support and protection they need,***

States, for example, the Centers for Disease Control reports that each year, there are 4.2 million male victims and 3.5 million female victims of domestic violence.<sup>4</sup>

Fortunately, we are now seeing an expanding acknowledgement of the existence of male victims across the globe. During October's Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the following developments have occurred in the United States:

- Sen. Dianne Feinstein spearhead a Senate resolution for Domestic Violence Awareness Month. She stated, "Millions of Americans, men and women alike, are victims of domestic violence every year."<sup>5</sup>
- Sen. Kyrsten Sinema issued a tweet that stated, "Domestic violence knows no gender. 1 in 4 men in America have experienced similar forms of abuse from an intimate partner."<sup>6</sup>
- The City of Kirkland, Washington honored a male survivor of domestic violence.<sup>7</sup>
- The Valley Oasis Shelter, which has been a long-term advocate for helping both male and female victims, was honored by the Los Angeles Domestic Violence Council.<sup>8</sup>

Similar developments are being seen in other countries:

- In England, a recent article lauded the pioneering work of Erin Pizzey, founder of the first abuse shelter in the world and champion of the needs of male victims of domestic violence.<sup>9</sup>
- In the UK, the ManKind Initiative operates a domestic abuse hotline for men<sup>10</sup>
- In Canada, the Family Shelter for Men and Children is successfully operating in Toronto<sup>11</sup>
- In Ireland, Senator Fiona O'Loughlin recently called on the government to establish an abuse shelter for men.<sup>12</sup>

A similarly compelling argument exists for the need to include LGBTQ communities in the 16 Days campaign. According to the Centers for Disease Control report on Victimization by Sexual Orientation, same-sex couples have high lifetime rates for domestic violence, rape, and/or stalking.<sup>13</sup>

The U.S.-based National Coalition Against Domestic Violence reveals, "Because the majority of the domestic violence awareness movement has focused on heterosexual relationships, members of the LGBTQ community have been largely left out of the movement."<sup>14</sup> As a recent example, a

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/2015data-brief508.pdf> Tables 9 and 11.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.feinstein.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?id=8751A4EF-8387-4C9D-A1AA-12F3B9C351AD>

<sup>6</sup> <https://twitter.com/kyrstensinema/status/1452002952424607751>

<sup>7</sup> <https://equalityforboysandmen.org/city-of-kirkland-invites-male-survivor-of-domestic-violence-to-receive-dv-awareness-month-proclamation/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/CALACOUNTY/bulletins/2f71a67>

<sup>9</sup> <https://thecritic.co.uk/fall-from-grace/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.mankind.org.uk/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://menandfamilies.org/familyshelter/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.kfmradio.com/news/localnews/kildare-senator-calls-for-the-establishment-of-a-refuge-for-men-fleeing-domestic-violence/>

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/cdc\\_nisvs\\_victimization\\_final-a.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/cdc_nisvs_victimization_final-a.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> <https://ncadv.org/blog/posts/domestic-violence-and-the-lgbtq-community>

***No victim of domestic violence or abuse should be prevented from accessing the support and protection they need,***

female New York police officer recently shot her girlfriend in the chest, killing her romantic partner, Jamie Li.<sup>15</sup> If the existence of abuse in the LGBTQ community had been widely recognized with appropriate services, this officer could have sought help and the tragedy avoided.

For these reasons, DAVIA's position is that the upcoming 16 Days campaign should be expanded to address the needs of all groups, including LGBTQ persons, non hetero-normative people, and all genders including cis-gender boys and men.

We urge UN Women to expand the focus of the upcoming 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign. We stand ready to support the campaign and end domestic violence for all.

Sincerely,

*International:*

- Coalition to End Domestic Violence
- International Council on Shared Parenting
- PAS International
- Victims of Immigration Fraud

*United States:*

- Victim to Hero
- Men's Equality
- Domestic Violence Wears Many Tags
- Equality for Boys and Men
- Dads and Moms PAC
- Domestic Violence Counseling Center (Charleston, WV)

*Australia:*

- Mothers of Sons
- One in Three

- Fairness in Child Support

*New Zealand:*

- MENZ Issues

*India:*

- Men HelpLine

*Canada:*

- Canadian Equal Parenting Council

*England:*

- Parental Alienation UK

*Ireland:*

- Mens Voices Ireland

*Portugal:*

- Igualdade Parental

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<sup>15</sup> <https://nypost.com/2021/10/18/nypd-cop-in-fatal-love-triangle-quietly-arraigned-by-ag/>