

# *Domestic Abuse and Violence International Alliance*

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*Sent via Express Mail and Email*

## OPEN LETTER TO UN WOMEN REGARDING THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

October 11, 2022

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

Dear Ms. Bahous:

The Domestic Abuse and Violence International Alliance is an NGO consisting of organizations from countries around the world.<sup>1</sup> DAVIA's mission is to ensure that domestic violence and abuse policies and programs are based on science and inclusive.

There is little doubt that violence and abuse affect both men and women. As you know, the recent trial of Johnny Depp and Amber Heard revealed the tragic nature of abuse, both physically and emotionally. The Depp-Heard trial allowed people to see that men, too, can be victims of abuse and violence.

On one occasion, Heard threw a bottle at Depp, severing the end of his finger. Later, Heard taunted her victim by saying, "Tell them, 'I, Johnny Depp, a man, I'm a victim of domestic abuse,' and see how many people believe or side with you."<sup>2</sup> The trial was followed by millions of persons around the world, with most being sympathetic to the plight of Johnny Depp.

Indeed, hundreds of population-based studies conducted around the world have documented the problem of domestic violence against men. One study conducted in the United States analyzed responses from 11,370 persons in the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. The study found that in cases of non-reciprocal violence, the female was the perpetrator in 70% of cases; and among relationships with any partner violence, half (49.7%) were reciprocally violent.<sup>3</sup>

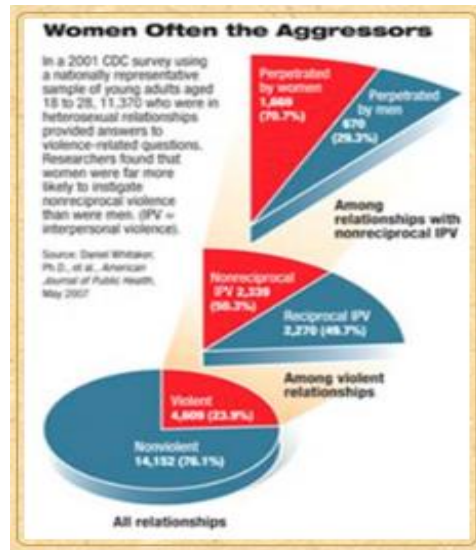
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<sup>1</sup> <http://endtodv.org/coalitions/international/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://annsivers.com/blogs/news/johnny-depp-and-amber-heard-relationship-and-legal-battles-timeline>

<sup>3</sup> <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/10.2105/AJPH.2005.079020>

This image summarizes the key findings of this milestone study:



In previous years, statements issued by UN Women for International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women only addressed the fraction of cases involving a male perpetrator and female victim, thereby fostering a depiction of the domestic violence issue that is incomplete, biased, and potentially harmful.

In the words of domestic violence researcher Murray Straus, “the past 25 years has seen a systematic denial of evidence about perpetration of PV [partner violence] by women. This denial is troublesome for social scientists because it threatens the integrity of science, and for practitioners because it threatens the effectiveness of prevention and treatment efforts.”<sup>4</sup>

The undersigned groups are now writing to share the following concerns about the claims made by UN Women as part of its annual International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women:

### Harmful to Men

The Partner Abuse State of Knowledge Project, a compilation of over 200 peer-reviewed studies conducted around the world, concludes that “Past year rates [of domestic violence victimization are] somewhat higher among men,” compared to women.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, observances that do not highlight this fact contribute to a broad range of civil rights violations against men:

1. Abused men often are refused assistance by domestic violence service agencies.<sup>6</sup>
2. Police may arrest the male victim rather than the female perpetrator.<sup>7</sup>
3. False abuse stereotypes serve to enable and justify false allegations.<sup>8</sup>
4. Abuse myths feed into distorted, derogatory stereotypes of men.”<sup>9</sup>

<sup>4</sup> <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2009-03449-011>

<sup>5</sup> <https://domesticviolenceresearch.org/pdf/FindingsAt-a-Glance.Nov.23.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://equalityforboysandmen.org/how-ms-magazine-helped-stanley-green-a-man-whose-wife-seriously-injured-him/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://endtodv.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Misconduct-in-Police-Response.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://endtodv.org/coalitions/davia/ifad-2022/>

<sup>9</sup> [https://bettinaarndt.substack.com/p/trashing-men-in-the-movies?r=iqrldm&utm\\_campaign=post&utm\\_medium=web&fbclid=IwAR3K3Rd6yCSzaocY7ueI9ItK5kT\\_4XGTagcUS-DOWNbhRhVxmfiShHk98XY](https://bettinaarndt.substack.com/p/trashing-men-in-the-movies?r=iqrldm&utm_campaign=post&utm_medium=web&fbclid=IwAR3K3Rd6yCSzaocY7ueI9ItK5kT_4XGTagcUS-DOWNbhRhVxmfiShHk98XY)

## Harmful to Women

The neglect of domestic violence against men is also harmful to women, for two reasons:

One of the key findings of the study cited above was that “reciprocal intimate partner violence was associated with greater injury than was nonreciprocal intimate partner violence regardless of the gender of the perpetrator.” Ignoring women’s role in reciprocal domestic violence leaves women vulnerable to subsequent escalation of the conflict and possible injury.

Second, 44% of lesbian women have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetimes, according to the Centers for Disease Control. In contrast, 35% of heterosexual women and only 26% of gay men have experienced such forms of abuse.<sup>10</sup>

The seriousness of the problem is illustrated by the case of Yvonne Wu, who became caught in a same-sex love triangle. A member of the New York Police Department, Wu discovered her ex-girlfriend with her new love interest. Wu opened fire, shooting Li in the chest and mortally wounding the new girlfriend. Wu was arrested and charged with murder.<sup>11</sup>

The societal neglect of female-perpetrated violence makes it difficult for women, especially women involved in situations of reciprocal violence or same-sex relationships, to get counseling before the situation spirals out of control.

## Harmful to Families

According to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the family is the “basic unit of society” that plays a “key role in social development” and is “entitled to receive comprehensive protection and support.”<sup>12</sup>

But negative domestic violence stereotypes, repeated over the course of years, serve to engender suspicion and fear between intimate partners, and undermine respectful marital relationships. In particular, such stereotypes serve to marginalize and discourage the shared parenting efforts of fathers.<sup>13</sup>

In the event of marital separation, some parties are known to engage in attempts to display to the child unjustified negativity aimed at the other parent, a strategy known as “parental alienation.”<sup>14</sup> Parental alienation, whether committed by the mother or father, is considered to be a form of child abuse.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</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>11</sup> <https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/nypd-cop-in-deadly-love-triangle-charged-with-murder-attempted-murder/3324746/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.un.org/development/desa/family/about-us.html>

<sup>13</sup> <http://endtodv.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/False-Allegations-Harm-Families.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> <https://youtu.be/wjr18zGKW8>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/parental-alienation>

## Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states,

“Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex,....”

Unfortunately, claims made during previous International Days for the Elimination of Violence Against Women serve to violate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, undermine the goal of gender equality, and serve to harm men, women, and families.

On November 18, the Domestic Abuse and Violence International Alliance (DAVIA) will be observing the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Men.<sup>16</sup> An online video explains the purpose and aims of the observance.<sup>17</sup>

The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Men will complement and amplify the message of the UN Women’s International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. The DAVIA events, to be held in countries around the world, will highlight the fact that *men and women engage in domestic violence at similar rates*.

Therefore, the undersigned 46 organizations located in 16 countries around the world hereby request that the 2022 observance of International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women be expanded to disseminate information that is scientifically accurate and consistent with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, with particular attention paid to the problems of domestic violence against men and reciprocal domestic violence between partners.

Thank you for your consideration, and we hope you will kindly advise us of your decision by Monday, November 14 at [DAVIA@endtodv.org](mailto:DAVIA@endtodv.org).

Sincerely,

### *International Organizations:*

- Coalition to End Domestic Violence
- International Men’s Day
- International Support Network of Alienated Families
- Victims of Immigration Fraud

### *Argentina:*

- False Allegations Observatory

### *Australia:*

- Domestic Violence Awareness Australia
- Fairness in Child Support
- Men’s Rights Agency

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<sup>16</sup> <https://endtodv.org/coalitions/davia/idevam-2022/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OXXdkOiyEUY>

- Mothers of Sons
- One in Three

*Bulgaria:*

- Parents from Bulgaria

*Canada:*

- Canadian Equal Parenting Council

*Denmark:*

- Parental Alienation Awareness Organization EU

*India:*

- All Bengal Men's Forum
- Men HelpLine

*Ireland:*

- Medical Practice of Brian O Sullivan
- Men's Voices Ireland

*Israel:*

- By Your Side

*Lesotho:*

- MenEngage Lesotho

*Lithuania:*

- Association Against Parental Alienation

*New Zealand:*

- MENZ Issues

*Nigeria:*

- Boys Mentoring Advocacy Network

*Portugal:*

- Igualdade Parental

*United Kingdom:*

- Attachment and Forensic Services, Ltd
- Children and Family Party
- False Allegations Watch
- Family Attachment Consultancy
- Parental Alienation UK
- Parental Alienation Awareness UK

*United States:*

- Center for Prosecutor Integrity
- Coalition to End Domestic Violence
- Colorado Coalition for Boys & Men
- Colorado Parental Alienation Support
- Domestic Violence Wears Many Tags
- Dads and Moms PAC
- Equality for Boys and Men
- Family Access — Fighting for Children’s Rights
- Men and Women for a Representative Democracy
- Men’s Equality
- Michigan for Shared Parenting
- NCFM-Women Against False Accusations
- Silvers Publishing, LLC
- Victim to Hero
- Wisconsin for Children and Families
- Women for Democracy in America

*Uruguay:*

- Varones Unidos

Cc: UN Missions