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Combating  
Gender Based  
Violence in the  
South Caucasus  
Project:  
Armenia

Address:  
AUA Business  
Center  
9 Alek Manukyan St.,  
Room 409  
Yerevan 0070,  
Armenia  
Tel.: (374 10) 51 20 38  
E-mail:  
cgbv.armenia@gmail.com,  
sargizova@unfpa.org

COMBATING  
GENDER BASED  
VIOLENCE  
IN THE SOUTH  
CAUCASUS  
PROJECT (CGBVP)

Is a three-year  
regional initiative  
launched by UNFPA  
in Armenia,  
Azerbaijan and  
Georgia with the  
purpose to create  
enabling  
environment for  
reduction of gender  
based violence in  
these countries and  
to support them in  
fulfilling international  
obligations in this  
field.



## COMBATING GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS PROJECT

# PROJECT CHRONICLES



## SPECIAL ISSUE DEDICATED TO THE "16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE" CAMPAIGN IN ARMENIA 2008

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**IT IS ONE OF THE MOST VIVID FORMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS...**

**IT KILLS MORE YOUNG WOMEN THAN CANCER...**

**IT OCCURS IN EVERY SOCIETY...**

**IT ESCALATES HIV RATE GRWOTH WORLDWIDE...**

**IT PAVES THE PATH TO TRAFFICKING...**

**“IT”**

**IS**

**VIOLENCE**

**AGAINST**

**WOMEN**



# 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE NOVEMBER 25 - DECEMBER 10 ARMENIA

## INTRODUCTION

*This is a special issue of the "Project Chronicles" electronic newsletter published within the framework of UNFPA "Combating Gender Based Violence in the South Caucasus" project in Armenia. It is dedicated to the coverage of activities and events carried out during the "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence" 2008 campaign in Armenia.*

*2008 international campaign dedicated theme of the year to the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to accentuate the fact that Human rights cannot be universal without human rights for women. Since the initial launch of 16 Days campaign in 1991 well over 2000 organizations in approximately 156 countries have participated in it calling for the elimination of all forms of violence against women. In the South Caucasus region the campaign was introduced in the year 2000.*

*Following the successful activities undertaken within the period of 2000-2007, UNFPA Armenia initiated 2008 campaign in Armenia once again to stress the importance of combating gender based violence, discrimination and injustice against women while involving even greater number of participants including state structures, Mass Media, civil society, international community, and general public. The campaign was carried out by joint efforts of the UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC), UNFPA, UNDP, IOM and UNAIDS, as well as Mass Media and a number of foreign and local NGOs working in the field of human rights and women issues. More than 50 organizations followed the UNFPA invitation to join the campaign which encountered approximately 80 events carried out throughout Armenia. This newsletter is to present the most impressive, most significant and interesting parts of the campaign.*

### **WHAT IS THE "16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE" CAMPAIGN?**

The roots of "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence" campaign date back to the 20th century and are based on two historical events. The first took place in Dominican Republic on November 25th, 1960, when the state cruelly executed three Mirabal sisters who were political activists and became a symbol of resistance to Trujillo's regime. The second happened in Canada on December 6th, 1989, when 14 female students were shot by Mark Lepine at the University of Montreal's Faculty of engineering, the assassin who believed that he had not been accepted in the Faculty due to the number of female students. These brutal acts triggered the creation of two end-violence global campaigns: the "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence" and the "White Ribbon Campaign" – a unique initiative by Canadian men. Later, in 1999, the UN officially recognized November 25th as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

The 16 Days campaign runs from November 25 till December 10<sup>th</sup> symbolically linking gender violence and human rights issues and covers a number of important dates, including:

- **November 25**, *International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women*
- **December 1**, *World AIDS Day*
- **December 2**, *International Day for Abolition of Slavery*
- **December 6**, *The anniversary of the 1991 "Montreal Massacre", and*
- **December 10**, *International Human Rights Day.*



## **"16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE" 2008 CAMPAIGN** **ARMENIA**

### **OPENING PRESS CONFERENCE MARKED THE START OF THE "16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE" CAMPAIGN IN ARMENIA**

On November 25, 2008 UN agencies and projects officially announced launching of "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence" Campaign in Armenia. On the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women observed worldwide on November 25, a press conference was held at UN Conference Hall marking the start of the campaign which among other activities, envisaged implementation of awareness raising events throughout 11 Armenian marzes, including Yerevan, from November 25 to December 10, 2008.

The press conference featured speakers representing Armenian legislative body (National Assembly), Ministry of Labor and Social Issues of Armenia, MLSI (responsible partner and leading governmental actor in the field of promoting gender equality and equity in Armenia), and donor community represented by UNFPA, UN leading agency in 16 Days campaign for the year 2008.

The speakers stressed the importance of national commitment to combat gender based violence (GBV) and to protect women's rights under international documents signed and ratified by Armenia including UN Declaration on Elimination of Violence against Women, UN CEDAW, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the UN Convention against transnational Organized Crime, and etc.



*Speakers from left to right:  
Ms. Jina Sargizova, UNFPA; Mr. Artsvik Minasyan, MP, and Ms. Lala Ghazaryan, MLSI*

During the press conference a calendar of events was distributed to the audience represented in the first place by Mass Media, civil society and governmental structures. The calendar envisaged a number of activities, such as conferences, press conferences, public hearings, PSA airings, film screenings, meetings and seminars with NGOs, CBOs, students and local government representatives, which were to take place in Yerevan and marzes during the campaign. The planned activities focused on different aspects of violence against women, including domestic violence, trafficking and HIV/AIDS twin pandemics.

The press conference concluded with reading the Statement of Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General, on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, who particularly stressed that "All of us – men and women, soldiers and peacekeepers, citizens and leaders – have a responsibility to help end violence against women. States must honour their commitments to prevent violence, bring perpetrators to justice and provide redress to victims. And each of us must speak out in our families, workplaces and communities, so that acts of violence against women cease."

## **MASS MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE “16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE” CAMPAIGN IN ARMENIA, 2008**

*The start of the campaign was widely announced through local Mass Media and included coverage by public and regional TV channels’ News programmes, airing of Public Service Announcements (PSAs), newspaper articles and publication of “Women and Politics” thematic newspaper.*

### **TV AIRINGS**

One of the issues of “Good Morning, Armenia” TV programme on H1 Armenian Public Television was dedicated to overview of the “16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence” campaign in Armenia, and featured Ms. Jina Sargizova, UNFPA CGBV Project and 16 Days campaign Coordinator as a guest speaker. The programme began with introduction of GBV problem and its worldwide dimensions, the way it is manifested almost in every society. Ms. Sargizova introduced the 16 Days campaign, its concept and global movement in support of the campaign which takes place every year starting from November 25, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and ending on December 10, International Human Rights Day, symbolically linking issues of violence against women and human rights protection. The insight was then provided into the reasons for placing the issue of violence against women on the top of population agenda and as a primary concern in the field of gender based violence.

As mentioned by Ms. Sargizova *“We are talking about violence phenomenon while putting in the spot light violence against women and girls since this is the most commonly spread form of gender based violence worldwide. We call it “gender based violence” due to the fact that it is based on deeply rooted stereotypes and the way of thinking about social norms, ways of conduct and roles assigned to women and men. This way of thinking results in violence perpetuated against persons who do not behave and express themselves corresponding to dominating socio-cultural stereotypes. Unfortunately, women today are suffering from all types of violence, including domestic violence, sexual abuse at work places, and trafficking”.*



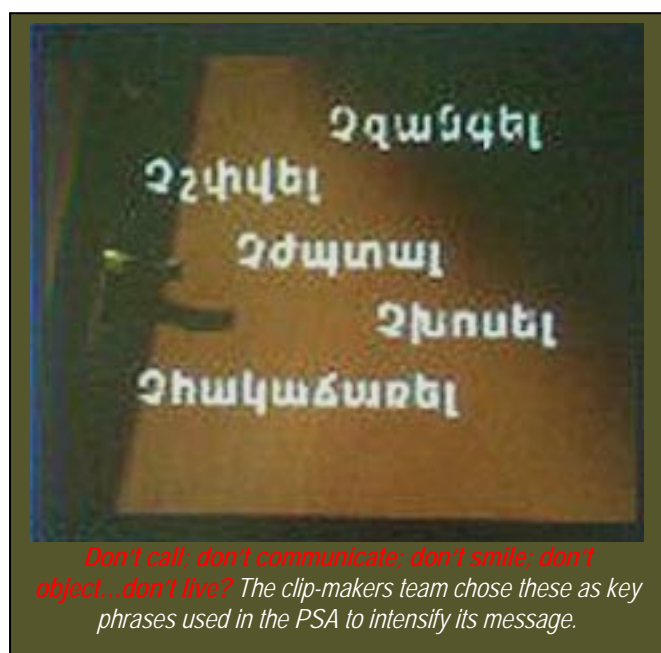
*Ms. Jina Sargizova, UNFPA CGBV Project Coordinator, hosted in the studio of “Good morning, Armenia” programme*

Following this, other important international days observed within the framework of the campaign were presented, including December 1, *World AIDS Day*, December 2, *International Day for Abolition of Slavery*, December 6, *The anniversary of the 1991 “Montreal Massacre”*, and December 10, *International Human Rights Day*. The important links between HIV/AIDS, trafficking and violence against women were highlighted. It was mentioned that more than 50% of HIV-infected women were subjected to Domestic and Sexual violence, and about half of all HIV/AIDS infected in the world are women. Trafficking was cited as another growing global issue of concern as more and more people, mostly women and girls, are being kidnapped, or deceived with false promises of job, education and other opportunities abroad, and trafficked, for the purpose of sexual slavery in the first place.

Ms. Sargizova demonstrated information materials produced within the framework of the campaign and cited telephone hot lines for all those who need assistance and protection against violence, including gender based violence and trafficking. The programme concluded with review of the ongoing legal initiatives in the field, namely elaboration of draft **LAW ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE** and a draft **LAW OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA ON THE PROVISION OF EQUAL RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND MEN**. A PSA dedicated to the topic of Domestic Violence (DV) was demonstrated. As a final note, speakers shared a common hope that the state and the entire society would realize the importance of protecting and promoting human rights, including women's rights, all levels, starting from the basic foundation of our society, a family.

## PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

In view of the 16 Days campaign UNFPA CGBV project prepared a thematic Public service Announcement (PSA) on Domestic Violence (DV) issue in Armenia which was aired on public and regional TV channels during the campaign alongside with other thematic PSAs<sup>1</sup> addressing gender issues (gender equality, anti-trafficking, etc.) and produced by other UN agencies and international organizations in the field.



Production and airing of the mentioned PSA became an important milestone in implementing communication strategy of UNFPA CGBV project. Yet, the creative process behind preparation of this PSA has also become a new and unusual experience for all-male team of media experts from "Internews" media support NGO involved in the PSA project within the framework of the campaign. They had a chance to take a look at the problem of Domestic Violence from a male perspective which resulted in a very realistic and frank script of the PSA scenario. Although the team avoided demonstrating any scenes of humiliation and violence, they nonetheless managed to present the problem in the closest to the reality context by properly choosing key phrases and

constructing the strategic message of the PSA.

The PSA was aired on the following TV channels:

city	name	city	name
Gavar	"Kyavar"	Martuni	"Zangak"
Aparan	"Nig-Aparan"	Sevan	"STV1"
Armavir	"ALT TV"	Artashat	"Anna"
Armavir	"Noy Hayastan"	Echmiadzin	"Echmiadzin"
Charentsavan	"Lusalik"	Nor-Hachin	"Achin TV"
Abovyan	"Abovyan"	Hrazdan	"Hrazdan TV"
Vanadzor	"Vaba TV"	Abovyan	"Narek TV"
Vanadzor	"Mig TV"	Alaverdi	"Ankyun Gumarats 3"
Spitak	"STV"	Vanadzor	"Lori TV"
Tashir	"Tashirk"	Stepanavan	"Fortuna TV"
Goris	"Last"	Kadjaran	"Kaputjikh"
Sisian	"Syuni TV"	Kapan	"Sosi"
Ijevan	"Ijevan"	Noyemberyan	"Qamut"
Gyumri	"Shant"	Dilijan	"RTV"
Gyumri	"Tsayg TV"	Gyumri	"Shirak"
Gyumri	"Gala"		

<sup>1</sup> PSAs are non-commercial advertisement broadcasts on radio or television intended to modify public attitudes by raising awareness about specific issues. In the context of UNFPA they are used to raise awareness on population development (PD) and Reproductive Health (RH) issues.

## **NEWSPAPER THEMATIC INSERT**

Cooperation with journalists writing on gender related issues have become one of the cornerstones for successful Mass Media campaign carried out within the framework of UNFPA CGBV project in Armenia.

This year a special thematic issue of “Woman and politics” newspaper was published with a financial support of the UNFPA within the framework of the 16 Days campaign and distributed as insert inside the most rated national newspapers: “Hayastani Hanrapetutyun” and “Aravot”, as well as was widely disseminated during events carried out within the campaign.

The front page of the newspaper featured information on the 16 Days campaign, international days observed within its framework and information about the UNFPA CGBV project. Inside the newspaper thematic articles were presented to describe the issue of DV in Armenia from family, legislation, law enforcement, and education perspectives. The newspaper highlighted cooperation between American and Armenian policemen targeting capacity building of Armenian police officers in the field of DV cases investigation and processing. Also, thematic articles shed light on the typical cases of DV in the country shared by victims as well as presented work of legal experts working on elaboration of Domestic Violence law in Armenia. The last page of the newspaper covered topic of trafficking in the country while sharing some statistical data on this form of violence against women according to which in most cases Armenia is listed as the country of origin, and in few cases as recipient country for the victims of trafficking. The newspaper also provided telephone hot lines for all those seeking assistance and refuge from DV and trafficking.



## **SPREAD THE WORD: AUDIO-VISUAL AND PRINTED MATERIALS IN SUPPORT OF THE CAMPAIGN**

This year the “16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence” 2008 campaign heavily relied on the use of audio-visual and printed awareness raising materials produced within the framework of CGBV project. These are observed as important advocacy and communication tools for raising awareness of the population on gender related issues, including violence against women. In order to unify national advocacy efforts within the framework of the campaign, the project designed a logo which reflected on the Human Rights focus of year 2008 campaign, and prepared awareness raising materials which included thematic poster, information brochures in English and Armenian on violence against women, including trafficking and 16 Days campaign, as well as 4 types of thematic bookmarks on 16 Days campaign, HIV/AIDS, Trafficking, and Human Rights. The mentioned materials then were placed in the specially designed folder. Thousands of these awareness raising materials were distributed to the participants of the events carried out throughout Armenia.



*Awareness raising materials distributed at the Conference*

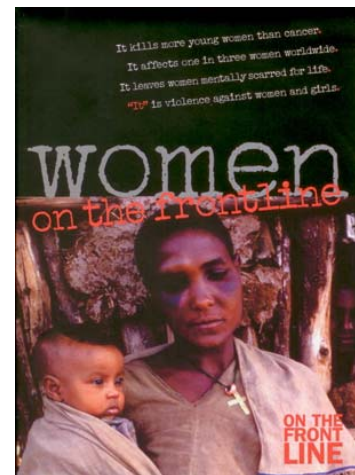


*The 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence 2008 campaign official logo in Armenia*

campaign, as well as 4 types of thematic bookmarks on 16 Days campaign, HIV/AIDS, Trafficking, and Human Rights. The mentioned materials then were placed in the specially designed folder. Thousands of these awareness raising materials were distributed to the participants of the events carried out throughout Armenia.

The cover page of the present Project Chronicles demonstrates a photo-collage composed of various printed awareness raising materials including campaign poster and bookmarks.

Another important contribution to the awareness raising impact of the campaign became translation and postscoring of “Women on the Front Line” movie series which were demonstrated during the campaign to participants from marzes. Many emotional and sincere feedbacks were received from audiences who viewed them and agreed that ongoing demonstration of “Women on the Front Line” movie series also on public and regional TV channels and during awareness raising events is absolutely essential for influencing and shaping opinions on issues of violence against women in Armenia and worldwide.



*Women on the frontline poster*

## **EVENTS FOR YOUTH : MOVIE SCREENINGS**



*Film screening during one of the conducted meetings with students in marzes*

Since youth was one of the prioritized target audiences towards whom UNFPA CGBV project directed strategic messages of the “16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence” campaign, it was essential to design and conduct events for them in a way that would ensure atmosphere of trust, openness and readiness to participate in discussions on the topic of violence against women.

Based on the previous positive experience of thematic movie screenings with facilitated discussions, the project organized movie screenings for youth, beneficiaries of UNFPA “Reproductive Health Initiative for Youth in the South Caucasus” project, members of “ProMedia-Gender” Journalists’ Support Organization and students of Yerevan State University, University after Hrachay Ajaryan and students of Journalism department of Slavonic University. Movie

screenings featured demonstration of two movies: “Lilya 4Ever”, a story of a young girl from socially vulnerable family who was deceived and trafficked to Sweden, where she committed suicide, not being able to bear inhuman treatment; “North Country”, a story of a single mother who fought against discrimination at the work place, defended her rights in the court as a worker employed in male-dominated mining industry and won the case. During the discussions that followed, the students shared their opinions and in most cases requested further similar events pointing out to the usefulness of audio-visual materials demonstration as an effective tool for raising awareness on violence against women and other gender related issues.

## **EVENTS IN MARZES**

### **PRESENTATIONS HELD AT REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION CENTERS (MARZPETARANS)**

Within the framework of the “16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence” campaign, presentations were conducted in the regional (marz) administration centers of Aragatsotn, Ararat, Armavir, Gegharkunik, Kotayk, Lori, Shirak, Syunik, Tavush, and Vayots Dzor marzes, for the target groups of local authorities, journalists of regional newspapers, and civil society representatives to provide overview of the 16 Days campaign, its origins, as well as all to raise awareness on gender issues in Armenia, including all forms of violence against women.



*One of the participants screening through distributed awareness raising materials at her work place at marzpetaran*

These presentations were organized with the support of the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues and Women and Children Rights Protection departments of the marz authorities. During these presentations awareness raising materials were distributed to audiences who greatly valued the importance of education and information events in this field conducted on the regional levels. As mentioned by one of the participants, "Quite often we are isolated from Yerevan, the capital of the country which is also a capital of information and communication. Events like this help to close existing information and communication gaps and to keep us informed about existing trends in development of social life in our country."



*Medical worker distributing information materials during awareness raising session, Armavir, Armenia*

### **AWARENESS RAISING ON GBV FOR MEDICAL WORKERS (IN COOPERATION WITH USAID/NOVA)**

UNFPA has always considered collaboration and cooperation with other organizations as an important key to success and achievement of outputs of its programmes. Following this course, UNFPA CGBV project conducted awareness raising sessions on gender based violence and 16 Days campaign for medical workers and community members involved in USAID/NOVA projects carried out in communities of Armavir and Aragatsotn marzes. During awareness raising sessions focus was made on the forms of violence against women in Armenia, negative impacts and consequences of violence on women's physical and mental health and, medical treatment which should be provided to victims of

Domestic Violence. Information kits were distributed to participants of awareness raising sessions and made available for further distribution within the framework of ongoing USAID/NOVA projects.

### **MEETINGS WITH STUDENTS**

As a part of its region-wide 16 Days campaign, UNFPA CGBV project also conducted awareness raising meetings for students of regional branches of the State Pedagogical University (in Gyumri), State Polytechnic University (in Goris), and Yerevan State University (in Gavar). During these meetings students had a chance to share their opinions concerning gender based violence issues in Armenia, reasons behind this phenomenon and changes that are needed to take place in the society to eliminate violence against women.

### **PUBLIC HEARING OF DRAFT LAW ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

One of the important activities carried out in the course of the 16 Days campaign in Armenia became Public hearing of the Draft Law on Domestic Violence held on November 27, which was organized by the initiative of the working group of Draft law elaborators' led by "Women's Rights Centre" NGO.

This event became an important preparatory advocacy initiative in support of the future presentation and discussions of the draft law in the National Assembly. Public hearing hosted representatives of the relevant state legislative and law enforcement bodies as well as civil society organizations, working in the field of women's rights protection and promotion, RH and PD issues. During the hearing, participants had a chance to share their opinions and make suggestions and recommendations concerning the presented Draft Law which will be incorporated in the document prior to putting it on the National Assembly agenda.



*At the public hearing of the Draft Law on Domestic Violence*

All participants expressed their preparedness and willingness to provide suggestions and recommendations to improve further the document which hopefully, will become in the future a legally binding document for prosecuting cases of Domestic Violence in Armenia.

## WALKATHON FOR A "VIOLENCE - FREE FUTURE FOR WOMEN" SUCCESSFUL !



*From left to right: Ms. Lala Ghazaryan, MLSI, Ms. Christina Grigorian, American Councils, and Ms. Marie Yovanovitch, US Ambassador to Armenia*

Scores of men and women gathered on November 30, 2008 to join the Walkathon for a Violence-Free Future for Women—the first event of its kind ever held to raise awareness about gender violence in Armenia.

Organized with the support of the US Embassy, American Councils, IREX, the American University of Armenia, Armenian Caritas, and the Women's Rights Center, the Walkathon for a Violence-Free Future for Women covered five kilometers of the busiest downtown streets of central Yerevan.

Dressed in T-shirts bearing the "16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence" logo, alumni of U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs, US Embassy staff, and other participants walked

through the streets alongside Armenian members of area NGOs and American ex-patriates, distributing flyers and brochures to passers-by to raise awareness about gender violence. It was amazing to see interested people in the streets talk to the walkathon participants and ask questions about the event and its purpose.

The walkathon started from the IREX office at 16 Vardanants street where the US Ambassador, Marie Yovanovitch, greeted the press and answered their questions, after which the group of men and women headed to the American University of Armenia at 40 Baghramyan Street where all the participants were welcomed to the closing reception of the event.

During the reception Ambassador Yovanovitch; Lala Ghazaryan, Head of the Department of Family, Women, and Children Issues within the Armenian Ministry of Labour and Social affairs; and Susanna Vardanyan, Director of the Women's Rights Center NGO addressed the audience, stressing the importance of raising awareness about domestic violence and addressing the problem both through legislation and through activism.



*Ms. Marie Yovanovitch, US Ambassador to Armenia, giving interview to Armenian journalists*

The minimum amount of donation was 3000 AMD, with which the participants received a free T-shirt, a course map, an invitation to the closing reception with the special guests of the event, and of course a chance to add their voice, energy and determination to the call for equal right for women and protection from violence. The entire amount raised during the walkathon, about 500 USD, will be donated to support victims of domestic violence and trafficking in Armenia.

The walkathon was designed to raise awareness about violence against women in Armenia. This event is part of the worldwide "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence" which is an international campaign between November 25, International Day against Violence against Women and December 10, International Human Rights Day. The campaign has been carried out since 1991. And today over 2000 organizations in 160 countries participate in the 16 days campaign worldwide.



*Walkathon participants*

*Article and photos submitted by American Councils, Armenia Yerevan, 2008*

## PRESS CONFERENCE HELD ON DECEMBER 1, WORLD AIDS DAY

On December 1, 2008 a press conference devoted to the World AIDS Day was held in the UN House. Heads of UN agencies - namely of UNICEF and UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP RR, chairman of the National Assembly Standing Committee, Deputy Minister of Health, Director of National AIDS Center, and a specialized NGO representative were among the speakers.

For the first time the World AIDS Day was organized by the World Health Organization on 1 December 1988. Since that day each year December 1st is commemorated as the World AIDS Day all over the world with the aim to attract the attention of wider sections of the society to the problem of HIV/AIDS, involving new organizations, groups and individuals into the field of prevention. Each year this day is commemorated under different slogans reflecting the vital problems of the current period. Starting from 2005 and during the next years the World AIDS Campaign will be held under the slogan "Stop AIDS. Keep the promise".



*Ms. Consuelo Vidal, UN RC, replying to questions during press conference*

Various preventive projects among most-at-risk populations and youth, treatment, care and support to people living with HIV, PMTCT, voluntary counseling and testing for HIV, blood safety programme, HIV laboratory diagnostics, etc. are implemented with the support of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) and other donor organizations.

The implemented activities are coordinated by the Country Coordination Commission on HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria issues in the Republic of Armenia (CCM), 37 members of which represent 13 governmental, 5 international, 9 local non-governmental organizations, 4 UN agencies, as well as people living with HIV.

## DISCUSSIONS OF DRAFT LAW OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA ON THE PROVISION OF EQUAL RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND MEN HELD THROUGHOUT ARMENIA

The Draft Law on The Provision of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men was discussed during the 16 Days campaign throughout regions of Armenia with representatives of regional authorities and local governments and civil society activists. This Draft Law was prepared in June-November 2008 by a team involving a Member of Parliament and experts from the staff of the RoA National Assembly, Ministry of Justice, representatives of other State agencies and independent experts. 23 laws and 4 draft laws produced in countries of Northern, Western, Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe as well as in Baltic and CIS countries were studied and analyzed by the working group. Recommendations, suggestions and critical notes taken during these discussions have been carefully assessed and taken into account. Participants of the discussions greatly valued efforts of the experts working on the Draft Law. As mentioned by one of the speakers *"This Law has been a long awaited legal document which, while spelling out equity and equality for citizens, both women and men, should have been adopted already after the National Constitution of the Republic of Armenia"*.

The Draft Law determines the State guarantees for securing equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men in political, social, economic, cultural and other fields of societal life and regulates the relations that emerge in that regard. More specifically, it aims at: - *setting* State guarantees for securing all rights and freedoms, enshrined in the country's Constitution, in the national legislation and in the international law, to citizens regardless of their gender; - *providing* equal opportunities to women and men in all areas of public life and, consequently, at - *progressing* towards full implementation of the gender equality principle, - *preventing* gender-based discrimination and *outlining* appropriate effective measures for bringing perpetrators to justice for any form of discrimination.



*December 2: celebrating International Day for Abolition of Slavery*

## DECEMBER 2: INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

Within the framework of 16 Days campaign in Armenia International Day for Abolition of Slavery was marked by special event held at UN house. It was organized by UNDP Armenia and launched with welcoming speech of Mr. Dirk Boberg, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative.

TV mock trials offer an effective way to help people learn about their rights and to understand the consequences of trafficking. UNDP Anti-trafficking Project in Armenia in collaboration with “Public Teleradio of Shirak” CJSC produced two TV mock trials on trafficking (one on forced labour case and the other on sexual exploitation), that offered the audience an insight into the court proceedings, showed what one may expect from submitting a case to the court, and introduced the language of court proceedings.

During this event airing of two TV mock trials on trafficking was announced to the audience. Airing of the mock trials was provided by the following TV companies:

1. “Ankyun+3” – Alaverdi;	5. “Sosi” – Kapan, Kajaran, Meghri;
2. “Lori” – Vanadzor;	6. “Abovyan” – Abovyan;
3. “Gavar” – Gavar;	7. “Last” – Goris;
4. “Zangak” – Martuni;	8. “Alt” – Armavir.

## **CONFERENCE ON WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS “HUMAN RIGHTS FOR WOMEN – HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL”**

On December 10, 2008 a Press Conference on the occasion of the International Human Rights Day and a Conference on Women Human Rights were organized to mark the round-up of 16 Days campaign in Armenia.

The event opened with the press conference of Ms. Consuelo Vidal, UN Resident Coordinator in Armenia, and Mr. Armen Harutyunyan, RA Human Rights Defender (Ombudsman).

According to Ms. Vidal, Armenia must be more active in the fight against gender inequality. “Our aim is to end all forms of violence against women, including violence in socio-political field and sexual violence and abuse”, she mentioned during the press conference.



*Speakers from left to right: Ms. Consuelo Vidal, UN RC, Mr. Armen Harutyunyan, RA Ombudsman, Ms. Jina Sargizova, UNFPA CGBV project*

In his turn, RA Ombudsman noted that unfortunately, women that address their complaints to the Ombudsman institute don't want to further process their cases on the legal grounds. “Our law enforcement bodies face the same problem and very few cases of Domestic Violence reach the courts. Thus, we have to start a wide scale awareness raising and educational campaign in order for women to understand that protection of their rights starts from their own attitudes and stance regarding violence. If they don't want to protect themselves, don't want to talk about it, then protection of their rights becomes a rather complicated issues”, concluded Mr. Harutyunyan. According to him women should be more daring and cooperative with structures called to protect their rights.

Lots of questions concerning gender and violence against women issues were raised during the press conference by Media representatives and reflected further in the local newspapers and TV news programmes.



*Panel on Trafficking; speaker: Ms. Dziunik Aghajanian  
MFA/ Head of International Organizations Department*

Following the press conference, a message of UNFPA Executive Director, Ms. Thoraya Ahmed Obaid on the occasion of the International Human Rights Day, was presented to the audience. Further on, conference continued in the format of plenary sessions.

Diversity of opinions during plenary sessions was ensured through presentation of the same topic from the perspective of different stakeholders, i.e. Government, Civil Society, UN and other donor community. The following speakers took the floor during the sessions:

#### **Panel on “Violations of Women Human Rights - Domestic Violence”:**

- **Ms. Lala Ghazaryan** - Head of Family Children and Women Department, RoA Ministry of Labor and Social Issues;
- **Ms. Karine Saribekyan** – Head of Mother and Child Health Unit, RoA Ministry of Health;
- **Ms. Susanna Vardanyan** – President, Women’s Rights Center NGO;

#### **Panel on “Violations of Women Human Rights – Trafficking”:**

- **Ms. Marina Solakhyan** –Anti-trafficking Project Coordinator, UNDP;
- **Ms. Dzunik Aghajanyan** – Head of International organization’s department, Ministry of Foreign affairs;
- **Ms. Viktoria Avakova** - Project coordinator, UMCOR;

#### **Panel on “Violations of Women Human Rights - Political and Civil Rights”:**

- **Mr. Hovhannes Poghosyan**- Gender and Politics in the South Caucasus Project coordinator, UNDP;
- **Ms. Jemma Hasratyan** – President, Association of Women with University Education;
- **Mr. Alexander Haroutiunyan** - Expert, Human Rights and Public Issues Commission, RoA National Assembly;
- **Ms. Marina Malkhasyan** - Human rights education project coordinator, UNDP;

#### **Panel on “Violations of Women Human Rights – Economic Rights”:**

- **Ms. Tsovinar Haroutiunyan** - Senior Democratization Assistant, OSCE Office in Yerevan;
- **Ms. Lusine Kalantaryan** - Head of Labour and Employment Department National Statistical Service;
- **Ms. Anna Hovhannesyan** - Legislative outreach liaison/expert, USAID/SPSS.

Each of the sessions concluded with Q&A between the guest speakers and other participants of the conference. The materials of the Conference on Women Human Rights will be published and disseminated among interested organizations.

The final outcome of the Conference which wrapped up the “16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence” 2008 campaign in Armenia became a Joint Declaration against Gender Violence. It has been elaborated and signed by the participants of the event. It confirms the joint will of the signatory parties to address the establishment and strengthening of a mutual cooperation between the Government of the RoA, civil society, international and foreign organizations aimed at combating gender violence and promoting the human rights of women.

## **THANKS TO ALL THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE CAMPAIGN IN ARMENIA!**

1. *Ajakits NGO*
2. *All channels of regional television*
3. *All-Armenian Women Union*
4. *American Councils for international education/ACCELS*
5. *American University of Armenia, Turpnjian research center*
6. *Apaga NGO*
7. *Armavir Development Center NGO*
8. *Armenian Assembly of America*
9. *Armenian National Public Television*
10. *Associaton of Women with University Education*
11. *British council*
12. *Caritas NGO*
13. *Charentsavan Community Center*
14. *Democracy Today NGO*
15. *Family and the New World NGO*
16. *Fund Against Law Arbitrariness*
17. *Future is Yours NGO*
18. *Hope and Help NGO/ Vanadzor branch*
19. *International center of Human development NGO*
20. *Internews NGO*
21. *IREX office in Armenia*
22. *Kapan farmers regional association NGO*
23. *League of women voters*
24. *Legal Clinique at the Armenian Open University*
25. *Local authorities in Siunik, Vayots dzor, Ararat, Aragatsotn, Gegharkunik, Tavush and Kotayk Marzes*
26. *Meghvik NGO*
27. *National Institute of Labour and Social Researches, MLSI*
28. *NGO Center/Civil Society Development Organzaition*
29. *OSCE Yerevan office*
30. *Promedia gender NGO*
31. *RoA Ministry of Health*
32. *RoA Ministry of Labor and Social Issues*
33. *Russian community of Gavar NGO*
34. *SAMSA NGO*
35. *Shant TV*
36. *Siunik Peace Club NGO*
37. *Tatev 95 NGO*
38. *UMCOR/Armenia*
39. *UNAIDS*
40. *UNDP*
41. *UNDP I*
42. *UNFPA*
43. *UNHCR*
44. *USAID NOVA Project*
45. *Vivacell*
46. *Women for Development NGO*
47. *Women Resource Center*
48. *Women's Rights Center*
49. *World vision/ Armenia*
50. *Yerevan Center for Gender Awareness Raising Dialogue*