



25 November 2014 – Violence knows no geographic, socio-economic or cultural boundaries. Nor is violence always physical. Worldwide, one in three women will suffer verbal, physical or sexual violence at some point in her life, from rape and domestic violence to harassment at work and bullying on the internet.

Last year, Rebecca Ann Sedwick became one of the youngest members of a growing list of children and teenagers apparently driven to suicide, at least in part, after being maligned, threatened and taunted online, mostly through a new collection of texting and photo-sharing cellphone applications.

In Britain, a number of suicides by young people were linked to ask.fm, and online petitions started there and here to make the site more responsive to bullying. Last April, a British teenage girl was feared to have leapt to her death from a sixth floor apartment block after cyberbullies on ask.fm told her: "kill yourself. You're a dog."

A new iceberg

Today's cases of cyber menace that affects teenagers all over the world is, however, only a tip of a new iceberg. The "conventional" ones involving domestic violence and sexual harassment, for instance, have not disappeared, and violence has not been eradicated. Sexual and gender-based violence remains the most extreme form of the global and systemic inequality experienced by women and girls.

"Women and girls experience violence in all countries and neighbourhoods, but these crimes often remain unreported and hidden", UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon says in his [message](#) for the day. "We must end the silence."

Everyone has a responsibility to prevent and end violence against women and girls, starting by challenging the culture of discrimination that allows it to continue.

16 days for a better world

This year's International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (# [endviolenceday](#)) is centred on a grassroots effort to raise awareness called [Orange Your Neighbourhood](#) (# [orangeurhood](#)).

Women's rights were once thought of as women's business only, but more and more men and boys are becoming true partners in the battle for women's empowerment.

"Two months ago, I launched the [HeForShe](#) campaign; a global solidarity movement for gender equality that brings together one half of humanity in support of the other, for the benefit

"You're ugly, you stink and you deserve to die!"

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of all", says Ban. All over the world, men are taking a stand for gender equality, and nearly 200 000 men have already joined the movement.

From 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to 10 December, Human Rights Day, the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign is a time to galvanize action to end violence against women and girls around the world.

Join the movement – break the silence!

Learn more on the Facebook page "[SayNO-UNiTE](#)".