

**PRESS-RELEASE**

**Together for Change: UN Women Tajikistan and UN Agencies Launch Global Call to Action with the launch of 16 Days of Activism Against GBV**

**Dushanbe, 25th November 2024** – UN Women Tajikistan officially launched the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) campaign at Tajik National University in Dushanbe. The event, jointly organized by UN Women Tajikistan and UN agencies including, FAO, IOM, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, and, UN RCO brought together 300 participants from various sectors. Attendees included representatives from government bodies such as the Committee on Women and Family Affairs under Government of the Republic of Tajikistan (CoWFA) and the Committee of Youth Affairs and Sports under Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, UN agencies, development partners, youth organizations, media, and civil society. Notably, 200 students from universities across Tajikistan joined the campaign launch, marking a strong engagement of youth in the fight against GBV. This year’s launch event, themed “Addressing Harmful Social Norms and Promoting Positive Norms,” was divided into three sessions, providing participants with insights into how entrenched social norms sustain gender-based violence.

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is a global campaign driven by civil society to advocate for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls. The campaign begins on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and concludes on 10 December, Human Rights Day. In Tajikistan, GBV remains a significant challenge. According to the [Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law](https://www.bhr.tj/analytics/problemu-nasilia-v-seme-v-tadzikistane-hotat-resit-putem-prinatia-zakona-o-zasite-ot), between 50% and 80% of women and children experience violence. The [UN estimates](https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/03/1134192) that one-third of women in Tajikistan are abused by their husbands or close relatives, with many victims not seeking help.

The opening session of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign began with a powerful speech by H.E. Bunafsha Fayziddinzoda, Chairperson of the Committee on Women and Family Affairs under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan. She emphasized the critical need for collective efforts to address gender-based violence and promote gender equality, stating: ***“The international campaign 16 Days Against Violence reminds us once again that violence is not a specific problem of individuals, but a global threat that requires a determined, co-ordinated and joint effort at all levels. It is our shared responsibility to build a society where everyone feels safe.”***

The event featured engaging discussions and performances that addressed key topics related to GBV:

* Debut of the Song “Hope in Love”;
* Presentation of the UNICEF “Gender Norms and Development Outcomes for Children”
* Sketch Performance by Y-Peer Tajikistan ;
* Presentation by Women Leaders with Disabilities;
* Keynote from Tajik Sportsman and Male Ally on Combatting GBV

Ms. Artur Van Diesen, UNICEF Tajikistan Representative, emphasized the significance of empowering communities to challenge harmful social norms, saying: ***“At the root of violence against women and girls are harmful gender norms. Norms that allow men to think that the use of violence by them is permissible and that prompt women and girls to think they should endure it. We need to raise a generation of boys and men that take a stance against violence. A generation of girls and women who will no longer tolerate it.”***

During her presentation, Ms. Sanavbar Raupova highlighted the unique challenges faced by women leaders with disabilities, stating: ***“The contribution of women with disabilities to an inclusive society is enormous. We should not assume that people with disabilities are not strong or capable enough.”.***

In the second session, Olympic champion, Mr. Timur Rahimov shared his personal experiences in advocating for gender equality and combating GBV. He underscored the importance of campaigns like this in sparking dialogue and change, stating: ***“This campaign inspires all of us to commit to creating a future where everyone is empowered and respected.” He also highlighted the progress seen globally, such as the emphasis on gender parity at the Paris Olympics”*** *while noting the work still to be done.*

The event concluded with a lively quiz session moderated by Mr. Subhon Jalilov. Students showcased their knowledge on gender equality, women’s empowerment, and GBV, actively engaging in discussions. The session also served as an informal monitoring activity, revealing a high level of awareness among the youth on these issues. Winners received prizes from UN agencies, further motivating participation and learning. This impactful event set the tone for the campaign, raising awareness about the links between harmful social norms and GBV, while calling for collective action to foster a cultural shift that empowers women, protects their rights, and promotes gender equality.

*The event was coordinated by UN Women Tajikistan in co-operation with the Committee on Women and Family Affairs under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan. The organization of the event was made possible through significant contributions from UN agencies, including UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, FAO and IOM.*

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| UN Women has worked in Tajikistan since 1999 to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment. Aligned with the country’s national development priorities, UN Women supports Tajikistan’s efforts to implement its gender equality commitments by focusing on women empowerment, ending violence against women and peace and security and engendering humanitarian action. | In addition, UN Women leads the Extended UN Gender Theme Group, which provides a vibrant platform for national and international stakeholders to coordinate gender-specific activities in Tajikistan. As a member of the Rapid Emergency Assessment and Coordination Team (REACT), UN Women ensures that natural disaster-prone Tajikistan takes gender-responsive disaster risk reduction measures.  | C:\Users\User\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Word\51-UN_Women_English_Blue_TransparentBackground_Small.png**UN Women Tajikistan Programme Office**BC "Sozidanie" Dushanbe, Tajikistan48 Ayni street, Block “A”, 8th floorTelephone: +992 44 600 55 26 E-mail: tjkpp@unwomen.org |