

UPF UK: Report: 12 Years of Action to End Violence Against Women and Girls

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Introduction

For more than twelve years, the Universal Peace Federation - UK (UPF-UK) has marked the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) with sustained advocacy, survivor-centred events, and multi-stakeholder partnerships in Parliament and in the community.

Anchored in UPF's vision of "One Family Under God" and aligned with SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, these programmes have:

Given survivors a dignified public voice

Connected parliamentarians, [Ambassadors for Peace](#), NGOs, faith leaders, youth, and community organisations

Highlighted the global and local dimensions of violence against women and girls (EVAWG)

Encouraged practical initiatives, not just discussion

Regularly coordinated by Margaret Ali with support from others over the years.

This report brings together more than a decade of UPF-UK peacebuilding efforts for EVAWG, from the House of Lords to UPF-UK's community hub at 43 Lancaster Gate, and links them with UPF's wider global network of peacebuilders.

Global Perspective and Guiding Principles

UPF-UK's work is part of a global Universal Peace Federation commitment to end violence against women and girls as a core peace and human rights issue.

The thematic reflection "Women Who Move Communities Toward Safety" highlights how UPF's peace initiatives promote women's safety, dignity and leadership:

In Nepal and Kenya, UPF's South Asia Peace Initiative (SAPI) and Ambassadors for Peace supported women mediators and local leaders to create safe spaces for dialogue, address early marriage, harassment and domestic instability, and prevent conflict from escalating.

At the Africa Summit in Cape Town (2018), political, civic and religious leaders examined structural drivers of violence - weak policing, rural isolation, economic dependence, and gaps in

legal protection - linking EVAW to good governance, interfaith cooperation and community policing.

In Buenos Aires, the Peace Road march brought parliamentarians, youth, disability advocates and faith leaders together to stand publicly for dignity and against discrimination, helping to break stigma around violence affecting women.

UPF on an International level also highlights global role models such as:

Waris Dirie, Sunhak Peace Prize laureate and leading advocate against female genital mutilation (FGM), whose testimony and coalition-building changed law and policy across continents.

Dr Sakena Yacoobi, Sunhak laureate and Afghan educator, who established schools for girls in highly restrictive environments, reducing vulnerability to exploitation and strengthening community resilience.



Alongside these examples, UPF issued a statement for CSW57 and International Women's Day 2013 on the "Elimination and Prevention of All Forms of Violence Against Women and Girls", setting out principles that guide UPF-UK:

Violence is rooted in broken relationships and moral failure; genuine change requires a moral and spiritual awakening.

Humanity is one family under God, and solidarity among men and women is essential to ending violence.

Men and women are equal in value and complementary in role; there must be no gender discrimination.

The family is the primary school of love and ethics, where respect, care and responsibility are

first learnt.

Laws must be supported by education in character, conflict resolution, and service.

Women must be encouraged and empowered to lead in peacebuilding, development and decision-making.

These principles are at the heart of UPF-UK's [peace education](#), interfaith dialogue, and Ambassador for Peace network.

A Decade of Parliamentary Advocacy in the UK

For over a decade, UPF-UK has held annual EVAW/EVAWG events in the UK Parliament or in its HQ, sometimes in partnership with Women's Federation for World Peace - UK (WFWP-UK).

Parliamentary Hosts and Allies

Baroness Sandip Verma, a long-standing host and partner of UPF-UK, has emphasised that Parliament must be used to enact change.

Former House of Lords spokesperson on Equalities and Women's Issues

Ministerial Champion for Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Overseas

Former Chair of UN Women UK's National Committee

Other parliamentary and civic partners have included:

Baroness Pola Uddin

Baroness Meral Hussein-Ece

Sarah Champion MP

Keith Best TD MA, Chair of UPF-UK Board of Trustees, who consistently links EVAWG to human rights, law reform and the Istanbul Convention.

Through these partnerships, UPF-UK:

Connects lawmakers, survivors and frontline organisations

Promotes UN frameworks (UNiTE campaign, SDG 5, Istanbul Convention)

Raises awareness of gaps in law, enforcement and services in the UK and globally

Centring on Survivors and Building Partnerships (2017 - 2019)

From 2017 onward, UPF-UK's EVAW programmes in the House of Lords and at 43 Lancaster Gate have placed survivors at the centre and strengthened alliances:

2017 - House of Lords: Ending Violence Against Women

Speakers included:

James Chespy, White Ribbon Campaign - sharing his own childhood experience and stressing that "it is up to men to change the mindset of other men."

Madi Sharma, entrepreneur and survivor of domestic violence - urging participants to "break the silence" and not remain bystanders.

Peter Cox, Croydon Community Against Trafficking - warning that exploitation is "on our doorsteps".

Jody Dontje, young humanitarian and educator - showing how education and youth leadership can challenge cultures of violence.

Sarah Champion MP, offering parliamentary insights and reinforcing the need for coordinated action.

These events demonstrated how UPF-UK's Ambassadors for Peace network and partners can:

Transform personal pain into public leadership

Link survivors' stories to policy, education and community action

2018 - House of Lords: From Victims to Heroines

Speakers such as Caroline Makaka (Ladies of All Nations International), Carole Stone OBE, Jacqueline Onalo, and Raj Holness:

Honoured survivors as "heroines", not only victims.

Called for greater collaboration between NGOs, charities, public services and faith communities.

Shared stories of women who walked long distances for legal help and survived extreme abuse only to then support others in similar situations.

Concrete outcomes included:

UPF-UK and Ambassadors for Peace beginning work on a one-year resilience programme for survivors.

Participants drafting proposals to improve pathways to services and reduce fragmentation.

New collaborations and offers of peer support from attendees.

2019 - Lancaster Gate: Workplace Responsibility and Community Action

At 43 Lancaster Gate, UPF-UK convened survivors, experts and partner organisations:

Survivors shared experiences of miscarriages, HIV, multiple heart attacks, and fleeing abuse across borders, all in a supportive environment.

Chris Green OBE (White Ribbon) highlighted the role of men as allies and the importance of sector partnerships, including sport.

Participants called for greater employer responsibility in responding to domestic abuse and harassment.

A guest described it as "the most empowering evening" and emphasised that gender-based violence is deeply rooted in inequality - a message fully aligned with UPF-UK's values.

Pandemic Response and Online Advocacy

During COVID-19, when domestic violence surged, UPF-UK adapted its peacebuilding and education:

Held EVAWG events under the UN theme "Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!"

Hosted a [Zoom conference on "Domestic Violence During Lockdown"](#), bringing together experts such as Chris Green to:

Highlight increased risks during lockdown

Share support services and helplines

Maintain public visibility of EVAWG despite restrictions

UPF-UK aligned closely with the UNiTE to End Violence Against Women campaign, emphasising:

Funding essential services

Prevention and early intervention

Better data and stronger coordination

Recent House of Lords Focus: EVAWG 2022 - 2024

UPF-UK has continued to deepen this work with high-level, multi-panel programmes in the House of Lords.

At a major recent event, speakers included:

Marie Hanson MBE (STORM Family Centre) - calling for stronger legal consequences, especially when children are abused.

Melissa Morbeck (NO MORE; Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence) - underlining the importance of survivor-led coalitions and acknowledging long-term mental health impacts.

Keith Best TD MA - stressing the significance of the Istanbul Convention and the duty of states to act, regardless of cultural or religious justifications.

Bernie Davies - pointing out that abuse exists even in "halls of privilege" and among professionals, hidden by silence.

Chris Green OBE - urging men to be active allies, including sharing domestic responsibilities and modelling equality at home.

Ahlaam Akram (BASIRA) - exposing harmful legal norms in parts of the MENA region and advocating for reform and women's rights.

Ending Violence Against Women and Girls: How Close Are We?

On October 12th, 2024 at 43 Lancaster Gate, London, W2 3NA, the Universal Peace Federation UK convened an event to highlight the lack of development in the 'Elimination Violence Against Women and Girls'. The Universal Peace Federation UK has long championed this cause through its annual Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls conferences and its active participation in the '16 Days of Activism' campaign between November 25th and the UN Human Rights Day on December 10th. This is also an issue of the UN Sustainable Development Goal Number 5, 'To Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls'.

This conference largely organised by UPF UK Patrons Dr Saima Niaz and Duchess Nivin ElGamal as well as Margaret Ali and Lorna Marah, brought together thought leaders and professionals from diverse fields - including social services, psychiatry, law enforcement, women's support services, legal experts, and the private sector - addressing both the achievements and ongoing challenges in the fight to end violence against women and girls.

As a follow up to the October 12th programme, on 27 November 2024, UPF-UK's held an [EVAWG event in the House of Lords](#), coordinated by Duchess Nivin ElGamal, Dr Saima Niaz, Lorna Marah and Margaret Ali, and hosted by Baroness Verma, bringing together:

UPF leaders (Dr Michael Balcomb, Keith Best)

Business, legal, psychological and media professionals

[Young Achievers Award](#) nominees, showing youth commitment to EVAWG

A Male Panel and a Female Panel. Those on the Male Panel were questioned by Baroness Verma regarding workable initiatives that she could support.

The event emphasised that transformation requires men and women working together, supported by good law, strong institutions, interfaith collaboration and community-level leadership. It inspired a Male Allies of Gender Equality initiative led by Jeremy Blain.

Extending EVAWG into the Community: "Women Supporting Women" (2025)

Building on more than a decade of parliamentary advocacy, UPF-UK is bringing EVAW closer to the community through the "Women Supporting Women" initiative.

On 26 November 2025, UPF-UK will host:

["Women Supporting Women: UN 16 Days of Activism - Elimination of Violence Against Women"](#)

Key aims:

Create a safe, welcoming space to share experiences of violence, resilience and healing.

Strengthen solidarity among women, men, families and allies.

Explore practical ways to prevent violence, support survivors, and build safer communities - consistent with UPF-UK's broader peacebuilding, interfaith and family-strengthening work.

This programme shows how UPF-UK is linking Parliament and community, ensuring that EVAW is not only debated in committee rooms but lived out in local initiatives.

Conclusion: UPF-UK's Ongoing Commitment

Across more than twelve years, UPF-UK's work for the elimination of violence against women and girls is:

Consistent - annual UN-linked programmes in Parliament and the community.

Multi-level - from global UPF statements and Sunhak Peace Prize laureates to UK law, policy and grassroots support.

Survivor-centred - honouring women who turn suffering into leadership and service.

Collaborative - involving Ambassadors for Peace, parliamentarians, NGOs, faith leaders, youth, businesses and men as allies.

Principle-driven - rooted in human dignity, the equality of men and women, strong families, moral responsibility, and the ideal of One Family Under God.

Violence against women and girls remains a serious barrier to peace, development and human rights. Through its parliamentary engagement, community events and global partnerships, UPF-UK will continue to support women's empowerment, human rights and community cohesion as essential foundations of a more peaceful, inclusive and sustainable society.

Explore Further:

[Ending Domestic Violence During Lockdown](#)

[Dr Hak Ja Han - Mother of Peace, A Life Dedicated to Unity, Family, and Global Peacebuilding](#)

[Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls 2023](#)

[Become an Ambassador for Peace](#) - Join a global network of leaders, changemakers, and community builders committed to advancing peace, dialogue, and moral leadership.

#UPF_UK #UPF #EVAWG #EVAW #16DaysOfActivism #UNiTE #OrangeTheWorld
#EndViolenceAgainstWomen #StopGBV #AmbassadorsForPeace

#WomenSupportingWomen #OneFam



⚠ This event has ended

WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN

"SAFE SPACE: EMPOWER, SUPPORT, HEAL"

UN 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM:

ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



Wednesday
26th November
26 of 2025

18:30 – 20:30

Lancaster Gate, London, W2 3NA

- Powerful stories of resilience and empowerment
- Insights from women leaders and male allies
- Discussions on community support, allyship, and digital safety
- Moments of reflection, connection, and celebration

Be part of Women Supporting Women that promotes safety, equality, and dignity for all women and girls. Connect, learn, and take action with your community.

Everyone is welcome! Together, we can create change and stand united.

Elimination of Violence Against Women

£10.00

⌚ Wednesday, November 26, 2025 at 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
GMT

🌐 43 Lancaster Gate
Middlesex
London, Middlesex, W2 3NA

🌐 UN 16 Days of Activism: Elimination of Violence Against Women
📅 26 November
⌚ 18:30 – 20:30

You are warmly invited to join an inspiring evening dedicated to Ending Violence against Women.

💡 What to expect:

- Powerful stories of resilience and empowerment
- Insights from women leaders and male allies
- Discussions on community support, allyship, and digital safety
- Moments of reflection, connection, and celebration

💡 Why attend:

Be part of Women Supporting Women that promotes safety, equality, and dignity for all women and girls. Connect, learn, and take action with your community.

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Together, we can create change and stand united.

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