

# Men: Enough with our silence. We must act.

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Dear fellow men,

The last weeks have been like the past centuries – too many men continue to murder women, abuse them, harass them, and ignore calls for accountability. Sarah Everard in the UK; Brittany Higgins in Australia; the seven women and one man: Delaina Yaun, Paul Andre Michels, Xiaojie Tan, and Daoyou Feng, alongside four women who have yet to be publicly identified, shot and killed by a man in the US. These are the most visible incidents of misogynistic and racist violence, the ones getting attention – because they took place in the Global North.

We know from the most recent global research that the rates of men’s violence against women continue to be unconscionable **everywhere** in the world. At least 245 million women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from a male partner in the past year, not including those who suffer at the hands of unknown assaulter. The UN estimates that 30,000 women are killed each year by former or current male partners.

The women murdered, harassed, and assaulted around the world must be remembered and receive justice – and men and boys must be part of an urgent global reckoning to end men’s violence against women. **We need men – as allies with women – to do much more to prevent this violence from occurring and to fully partner in putting in place the policies, supports, resources, and global and local action to end it.**

We know from our research, and that of many others, what drives and contributes to men's use of violence against women. The root cause is patriarchy, the historical power – social, economic and political – that men on aggregate hold over women, and how institutions are built to maintain that power. Patriarchy interacts with and is exacerbated by other ideologies of dominance, including white supremacy, capitalism, and colonialism. Patriarchy is not just a vague term: It lives in male politicians who vote against funding services for survivors. It lives in the lack of policies for equal pay and equal work for women, particularly for women who are systematically marginalized. It lives in the workplace that sends an offending executive or celebrity out the back door while a survivor signs a non-disclosure agreement.

Men who use violence are often men who have witnessed and experienced violence growing up. They have been socialized into rigid norms about manhood, and they believe there will be no accountability for their actions. They believe this because they have seen other men use violence against women and get away with it. To understand what drives men's violence against women is never to excuse these actions; It is by understanding this cycle that we learn how to disrupt it.

About one-third of the world's men have used physical or sexual violence against a female partner. That figure is disturbing, informative, and most crucially, a call to action. It is disturbing because this abuse of power by so many men causes women around the world to lose their lives, or to face psychological, economic, physical, and social consequences. It is informative because it tells us that men's violence against women is not natural, nor inevitable. It provides hope that this violence is not something we have to accept as part of the human condition. And the reality that one-third of our fellow men have used violence against women is a call to action – for all of us, and specifically for the two-thirds of men around the world who may not use violence, to do more to call out those who do.

**Our silence as men is untenable. It is immoral. It is part of the problem. Our silence as men who do not use violence is to let violence happen. In our silence, we are responsible.** Whether as a policymaker, an employer, a parent, and/or an individual seeking to take responsibility to demand change, take action:

1. **Vote to change the system.** Vote for progressive, feminist women politicians – particularly for progressive women from historically marginalized groups. Vote for laws that support preventative measures against violence, that fund shelters and mental health and health services for survivors.
2. **Speak out against sexist language, policies, and laws.** When you hear other men make a demeaning, sexist, racist, and/or violent comment about a woman, don't let it slide. Speak up, and tell them it's not okay.
3. **Raise our sons differently.** Encourage the boys in your life to share their feelings in constructive ways, to respect girls and women, to form healthy connections, and to seek help when they need it. Raise our daughters to believe in their voices and to use them; and teach all of our children to demand safety, respect, and full equality, particularly for those who are systemically marginalized and oppressed.

4. **Critically consume and create non-sexist media, and call it out when it is misogynist – because you know when it is.** Whether you're a parent and/or a content-creator, do your part to critically consume and/or create content that does not glorify, condone, or excuse men's violence against women; and that does support and promote men's care and connection. Use social media and other platforms to call out hate, misogyny, racism, and sexism when you see it.
5. **Educate children about consent and relationships.** Teach children from a young age about respect, bodily autonomy, consent, and healthy relationships. Most importantly, show children what healthy relationships look like, by modeling healthy, respectful, and equitable connection.
6. **Ensure that workplaces have effective, safe, and anonymous reporting and real protection for women survivors.** Ask your workplace about their harassment policy, ensure that women – and all employees – have a safe, confidential space to report harassment, or discrimination; and that there are mechanisms in place to respond.
7. **Advocate for better gun control policies and safety in public spaces.** Data tells us that countries with stronger gun control policies have lower rates of femicide, as do countries with better public safety; Do your part to influence legislation where you are.
8. **Support and validate women's stories and experiences.** If a woman in your life trusts you to share experiences of violence or harassment, listen, validate her experience, and ask if there's anything you can do to support her.
9. **Support young people who have experienced violence.** Work to ensure that children and youth who have experienced or witnessed violence have access to psychological support systems to process and heal from their trauma so that we break cycles of violence.
10. **Donate to domestic violence survivor services, and make sure your state, local, or national representatives vote to fund them adequately.** Donate to services that protect and support survivors of violence, and advocate for consistent, public funding for survivor services.

This is not an exhaustive list of actions that men can take, nor is it enough. Brave women around the world, many of them survivors of men's violence, have been outraged for decades at men's violence against women, and have been leading this activism. It's time for us as men to follow their lead.

We invite you to join us Sunday, March 21: 14:30 – 16:30 EDT for a webinar hosted by The WOW Foundation: “Another Pandemic – Male violence Against Women” to explore institutional sexism; discuss what men can do to change cultural attitudes; and tackle the need for governments, the media, civil society, and religious and educational spaces to face the realities of misogyny directly and take action. RSVP [here](#).

Sincerely,

Gary Barker  
President & CEO  
Promundo-US

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