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## 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence and White Ribbon Campaigns In Armenia November 25 - December 10



### INTRODUCTION

This publication has been produced within the framework of UNFPA's "Combating Gender Based Violence in the South Caucasus" Project in Armenia. It covers activities and events carried out by various organizations (UN agencies, international and local NGOs, etc.) in 2009 during the "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence" campaign in Armenia.

Following the success of the previously conducted 16 Days of Activism Campaigns in Armenia, UNFPA organized 2009 efforts under the slogan "**Commit, Act, Demand.**" This helped emphasize the need for more commitment and actions to be taken for the elimination of violence against women, and that everyone should demand the protection of human rights, including women's rights.

The 16 Days of Activism Campaign of 2009 was carried out by joint efforts of the UNFPA, UNDP, UNDP, and UNHCR. Mass media and a number of foreign and local NGOs working in the field of human rights and women issues also contributed.

The current publication presents the most impressive, significant, and interesting insights 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 the Dominican Republic on November 25, 1960, when the state cruelly executed three Mirabal sisters who were political activists. These sisters became a symbol of resistance to Trujillo's regime. The second occurred in Canada after the shootings of when 14 female students were shot by Mark Lepine at the University of Montreal's school of engineering December 6, 1989. The assassin believed that he had not been accepted in the faculty due to the number of female students. These brutal acts triggered the initiation of two global campaigns to end violence: the "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence" and, a unique initiative by Canadian men, the "White Ribbon Campaign." Later, in 1999, the UN officially recognized November 25th as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

The 16 Days of Activism Campaign runs from November 25<sup>th</sup> through December 10<sup>th</sup>, symbolically linking gender violence and human rights issues while covering 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.

## WHAT IS “THE WHITE RIBBON” CAMPAIGN?

The White Ribbon Campaign (WRC) is the largest effort in the world of men working to end violence against women (VAW). In over 55 countries, campaigns are led by both men and women, with a focus on educating men and boys. In some countries it is a general public education effort focused on ending violence against women.

### ***How did the WRC campaign get started?***

In 1991, a handful of men in Canada decided they had a responsibility to urge men to speak out about violence against women. Wearing a white ribbon would be a symbol of men's opposition to violence against women. With only six weeks of preparation, 100,000 men across Canada wore a white ribbon, while many others were drawn into discussion and debate.

### ***What does it mean to wear a white ribbon?***

Wearing a white ribbon is a personal **pledge to never commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women and girls**. Wearing a white ribbon is a way of saying, “Our future has no violence against women.”

### ***What is the goal of WRC? How is this accomplished?***

The main goal of WRC is ending violence against women in all its forms. We accomplish this in five ways:

- Challenging everyone to speak out and think about their own beliefs, language, and actions;
- Educating young people, especially young men and boys, on the issue through the educational resources we produce;
- Raising public awareness of the issue;
- Working in partnership with women's organizations, the corporate sector, the media and other partners to create a future with no violence against women; and
- Supporting White Ribbon Campaigns with our experience, resources and networks.

**Source:** *The White Ribbon Campaign Official Website* on <http://www.whiteribbon.ca>





## OPENING PRESS CONFERENCE OF THE “16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE” 2009 CAMPAIGN IN ARMENIA

On November 25<sup>th</sup>, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, Press Conference was held at the UN Armenia Office to mark the start of “16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence” and “White Ribbon” Campaigns in Armenia.

The event featured speakers representing RoA Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of Armenia (MLSA), (responsible partner and the leading state authority in the field of promoting gender equality and equity in Armenia), UNFPA (the UN coordinating agency for the 16 Days of Activism Campaign), and UNDP.

Ms. Maria Dotsenko, UN Department of Public Information (UNDPI) representative welcomed the audience and talked about international dates observed within the scope of the campaign that related to gender-based violence (GBV) and human rights issues.



*Speakers from left to right: Ms. Jina Sargizova, UNFPA CGBV Project Coordinator, Ms. Maria Dotsenko, UNDP Representative, and Ms. Lala Ghazaryan, MLSA Head of Family, Women and Children Issue department.*

Ms. Lala Ghazaryan, MLSA Head of Family, Women and Children Issues Department presented the current challenges in the field of combating GBV and focused on some crucial aspects of cooperation between the RoA government and the UN in the field of promoting gender equality and combating GBV in Armenia.

Following Ms. Ghazaryan’s speech, Ms. Jina Sargizova, UNFPA Coordinator of “Combating Gender Based Violence in the South Caucasus” project and 16 Days of Activism Campaign in Armenia, talked about its origin, as well as that of the White Ribbon Campaign. Ms. Sargizova focused on the importance of active male involvement in combating GBV. She stressed that more commitment and actions are needed to eliminate violence against women and more people, women and men, should demand the protection of human rights, including women’s rights. Ms. Sargizova wrapped up her speech by presenting a calendar of events, which featured a number of activities scheduled to take place in Yerevan and ten other marzes during the campaign. Activities included conferences, public hearings, PSA airings, film screenings, meetings, and seminars with NGOs, CBOs, students and local government representatives. The planned activities focused on cultural and national aspects of violence against women, including domestic violence (DV), human trafficking, and the HIV/AIDS twin pandemics, men’s participation and role in anti-violence campaigns.

At the end of the press conference, a message of the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki Moon, on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women was read to the audience. The UN Secretary-General addressed the worldwide community and governments, in particular, with the following words: *“In every country, women and girls continue to be plagued by violence, causing tremendous suffering. Such violence undermines development, generates instability, and makes peace that much harder to achieve. We must demand accountability for the violations, and take concrete steps to end impunity. We must listen to and support the survivors.”*

## PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (PSA)

In 2008, a PSA on the topic of Domestic Violence (DV) against women prepared by UNFPA CGBV project in view of the 16 Days of Activism Campaign. This PSA drew a wide response and contributed to increased level of attention and interest towards the problem of violence against women among the population. Particular attention was given to this PSA due to the fact that it was produced by a group of all-male professionals who presented their perspective on the DV problem in a stunning and breathtaking video<sup>1</sup>.

Two important occurrences helped lay the foundation for producing another PSA in support of the White Ribbon Campaign. First off, the PSA had a positive impact on efforts to increase public awareness on GBV issues. Secondly, NGOs and journalists participated in constructive cooperation on the issue. Both of these supported the campaign's focus on the importance of male involvement as well as perspective in combating GBV.



The PSA introduced a White Ribbon Campaign Ambassador, the young athlete and 2009 European Champion, Greco-Roman Style wrestler, Arsen Julfalakyan, who condemned violence against women by clearly stating that “A Strong Man Will Never Abuse a Woman”. This message became the leading motto of the campaign and events organized by UNFPA CGBV project in Armenia.

The PSA portrayed a story of a boy, who witnessed a violent altercation between his parents. The child, deeply depressed from this scene, decided to take a camcorder that he received as a gift and went out into the streets interviewing men and recording their thoughts and opinions on violence against women. When all opinions that denounced violence against women were recorded, the boy presented the tape to his father. The final scene of the PSA featured the banner and a recorded message from the White Ribbon Campaign Ambassador who made his condemning statement in support of combating violence against women.

This year's PSA was prepared by a group of male-professionals who made yet another progressive step in the field of advocating against GBV violence. They pictured the men as heroes of the story (the boy, the passersby interviewed by him, and the White Ribbon Campaign Ambassador) who directly addressed their messages to the audience of onlookers.

The PSA was broadcasted on LCD screens in Yerevan metro stations 20 times a day and was aired on major (AR TV, H1, H2, Yerkir Media, and Yerevan) and regional TV channels of Armenia.

It was reproduced in DVD format and distributed during press conferences, information meetings, film screenings, and round table discussions that took place throughout Armenia within the framework of the 16 Days of Activism and White Ribbon campaigns in Armenia.

## BE INFORMED: 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

“16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence” Campaign 2009 focused on the importance of male involvement in combating GBV.

UNFPA CGBV project invited the young athlete, 2009 European Champion in Greco-Roman Style wrestling, Arsen Julfalakyan, to become the 2009 White Ribbon Ambassador in Armenia in order to highlight the importance of men's involvement in anti-GBV movement. The athlete condemned violence against women by clearly stating: “A Strong

<sup>1</sup> In January 2009, the PSA won Na/Ne award as the Best Social Advertisement within the framework of the annual media competition “A Couple of Words about women” announced by the British Council and OSCE.

Man Will Never Abuse a Woman". This statement became the leading message of the campaign and events organized by UNFPA CGBV project in Armenia.

The athlete's image and his message were portrayed in a set of visual products used as awareness raising materials during the campaign. A PSA, two large outdoor banners and hundreds of posters were produced by UNFPA CGBV Project in cooperation with "Internews" NGO and "Altera" Ltd.

Other information and visual materials produced by the project within the scope of the campaign included: information brochures on the 16 Days of Activism campaign and GBV, HIV/AIDS, and Trafficking; the White Ribbon Campaign leaflets and posters on 16 Days of Activism Campaign. All information materials were widely disseminated among participants of various events carried out within the scope of the campaign.



### TV AIRINGS

A series of thematic TV airings organized by UNFPA CGBV Project that focused on violence against women, male participation in anti-GBV movement, and gender equality issues, were broadcast throughout Armenia. A number of national and regional TV channels aired interviews on the 16 Days of Activism and White Ribbon Campaigns and reflected on the situation with GBV in Armenia, among these:

- Presentation of the campaign made on the public television channel H1 during the daily program "Good Morning Armenia."
- Interviews on Yerkir Media TV with UNFPA CGBV Project coordinator, which focused on the role of awareness raising campaigns in combating GBV and presented analytical review of articles on GBV published in several local newspapers.
- Interviews with UNFPA CGBV project coordinator on violence against women phenomenon and awareness raising anti-violence campaigns in Armenia were aired on AR TV, as well as on regional TV channels including Vanadzor TV (Lori marz), Gyumri "Tsayg" TV (Shirak marz), "Ijevan" TV (Tavush marz), and "Kyavar" TV (Gegharkunik marz).
- A special issue of the "Social Dialogue" program, aired on the Second Armenian National Channel (H2), was

dedicated to the 16 Days of Activism campaign and main GBV issues in Armenia; and featured participation of UNFPA CGBV Project as well as representative of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of Armenia (government focal point for gender issues).



Speakers from left to right: Ms. Hasmik Khachatryan, hostess of the Social Dialogue programme/MLSA Head of PR Department, Ms. Jina Sargizova, UNFPA CGBV Project Coordinator, and Ms. Armine Tanashyan, MLSA Deputy Head of Family, Women and Children Issues Department

"Social Dialogue" is a program hosted by Ms. Hasmik Khachatryan that aims to raise awareness in the population on the most urgent and pressing social issues.

Within the framework of the 16 Days of Activism 2009 Campaign a special issue of the program was entirely dedicated to the topic of GBV and featured the specially invited guests: Ms. Armine Tanashyan, MLSA Deputy Head of Family, Women and Children Issues Department and Ms. Jina Sargizova, UNFPA CGBV Project Coordinator.

The hostess opened the program by providing general information on the 16 Days of Activism Campaign. Guests of the program were asked to present information on activities carried out in the field of combating GBV in Armenia.

Ms. Sargizova presented UNFPA CGBV Project, its goals and components, stressing that the project mainly targets the creation of an enabling environment to combat GBV in Armenia. Among other issues, she presented a number of initiatives, namely the quantitative survey on the incidence of domestic violence against women and the legal analysis of the RoA legislation from GBV perspective, which are currently implemented within the project. She also shared information on activities carried out during 2009 16 Days of Activism and White Ribbon Campaigns.

Ms. Tanashyan mentioned that awareness raising campaigns on GBV are a good preventive tool, however, they should be supplemented by certain programs aimed at prevention and elimination of GBV, as well as provision of assistance to GBV victims to ensure a holistic approach. She informed that the RoA government brought into focus the issues of gender equality and GBV by adopting "The Republic of Armenia National Action Plan on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing Their Role in Society 2004-2010" (NAP, elaborated as a follow up to the CEDAW, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and Millennium Declaration). She also talked about joint activities implemented in cooperation with UNFPA, and among these: official nationwide survey on the incidence of domestic violence (DV) against women in Armenia, which will serve as a baseline for policy-makers.

The program continued with speakers reflecting on difficulties that people experience when first starting to speak about DV cases, which either they witnessed or heard about. It was pointed out that there is a "wall of silence", which surrounds the DV problem and creating obstacles for collecting information. Types of violence were also discussed and it was concluded that nowadays psychological violence is prevailing in Armenian society. Ms. Sargizova informed on a unique and successful experience of cooperation with faith based organizations (FBOs) and the work conducted with priests of the Armenian Apostolic and Catholic churches. Upon completion of specialized training programs priests will be able to offer psychological assistance to women subjected to violence in their own communities as well as to their family members. Also discussed was the role of police in preventing and processing cases of violence against women as well as the importance of creating special, open-access counseling centers to work with victims of DV and their family members.

Concluding the program, the hostess drew the attention of the audience to the ethical aspects of violence against women, while stressing that GBV is a completely intolerable phenomenon and incompatible with life styles of modern societies.

## RADIO BROADCASTS

During the 2009 "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence" Campaign in Armenia radio media became one of the key information channels involved in its coverage, and provided an overview of the events and activities conducted from November 25<sup>th</sup> to December 10<sup>th</sup>.

Among the most interesting radio airings that focused on the campaign were the following:

- *Radio Liberty broadcast that provided a detailed analysis of the situation with GBV in Armenia and a brief overview of the 16 Days of Activism campaign.*
- *A special issue of the radio youth program "LyunSe" broadcasted on the National Radio of Armenia that featured an interview with UNFPA CGBV Project coordinator; and touched upon various topics of the 16 Days of Activism and White Ribbon Campaigns, which included its origins, GBV phenomenon and tolerance issues, as well as provided analytical overviews of the situation with GBV in Armenia.*

The youth program of Public Radio "LyunSe" is on air every day from 16:10 till 16:57. It was founded in 2004, and since then the program has been telling about the world from the perspectives of young people who are eager to voice their concerns, ideas, and achievements. LyunSe is a radio program has a distinguished character, which is best

reflected in the “Find your light not to become other’s shadow” motto selected by its young enthusiastic staff members.

On November 27, 2009, LyunSe hosted UNFPA CGBV Project Coordinator, Ms. Jina Sargizova. After briefly introducing his special guest, the host of the program asked Ms. Sargizova to further explain the concept of gender-based violence and the purpose of the respective campaigns.

Ms. Sargizova informed that the campaigns, in the first place, aimed at raising awareness on GBV, prevailing types of GBV, and negative consequences of this phenomenon for both, for an individual, and society as a whole.

She pointed out that our biased perceptions of a “real man” or a “real woman” rooted in gender stereotypes are at the core of GBV phenomenon. “However”, she continued, “social roles of men and women change as time goes by...and we must acknowledge that gender norms, roles and functions of women and men are transforming over years. Thus, we can’t judge and abuse others because that they don’t correspond to our vision of gender norms and roles that we assign to them”. The program continued with an overview of prevailing GBV types and related statistical data in the world and in Armenia, as well as difficulties associated with collecting data regarding GBV phenomenon.



Concluding the program, speakers talked about important dates marked within the framework of the 16 Days of Activism campaign, as well as participation of Arsen Julfalakyan, the White Ribbon Campaign Ambassador for the year 2009. Audio-visual materials designed by UNFPA CGBV Project in view of the campaigns (PSA, banners, posters, information fliers and booklets) as well as activities planned by UN agencies, international and local NGOs, academia, and groups of individuals within the framework of the 16 Days of Activism and White Ribbon campaigns were also mentioned.

At the end of the program, both, the host and the guest agreed that love and respect of people towards each other regardless of sex, race, religion, etc. are the main cure against GBV in modern societies.

## INFORMATION MEETINGS

Within the framework of 16 Days of Activism and White Ribbon Campaigns, awareness raising meetings were conducted by UNFPA CGBV Project in Yerevan as well as marz administration centers of Aragatsotn, Ararat, Armavir, Gegharkunik, Kotayk, Lori, Shirak, Syunik, Tavush, and Vayots Dzor marzes.

The audiences of the meetings were made up of local self-governance and civil society representatives, journalists, as well as refugees, asylum seekers, and women farmers. Information meetings for refugees and asylum seekers were organized in cooperation and with the financial support of UNHCR in the cities of Yerevan and Kapan

During the meetings the participants were presented with information concerning the overview of the campaigns and their origins, as well as forms of violence and GBV issues in Armenian and global contexts. Awareness raising materials were provided to the audiences and made available for further distribution at marz authority buildings, local NGOs, and universities.

Overall, 30 information meetings were held within the scope of the campaign with more than 1200 people in attendance.



## EVENTS FOR YOUTH



Within the scope of numerous events carried out during the 16 Days of Activism and White Ribbon Campaigns, particular attention was paid to involving youth in various awareness raising activities related to GBV and gender equality issues. In order to attract attention of teenagers, special meetings with film and PSA screening sessions were included in the agenda.

Different PSAs and documentaries on Domestic Violence, Men Against Violence and Gender Equality, as well as “Northern Country” and “Human trafficking” movies were presented to the target youth groups during these meetings to encourage discussion and sharing of concerns regarding GBV and gender equality issues.

Film and PSA screenings proved to be an effective tool for gaining and drawing youths’ attention to the problems of GBV, gender inequality, and tolerance issues in modern Armenian society. Movies presented during the awareness raising meetings were also useful for providing a comparison to the experiences of other countries.

Overall, 12 information meetings for youth with PSA and film screenings were conducted in Yerevan and 10 marzes of Armenia.

## MARCHES TO STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

On November 25<sup>th</sup>, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the **Women's Resource Center** in Yerevan joined the worldwide movement of organizations to raise awareness about the issue of gender-based violence (GBV).

On the morning of November 25, 2009 a group of activists from the Center were stationed in different parts of the city while wearing red and white t-shirts with the slogan "Don't be silent." During the day, the activists surveyed more than 200 people on the streets of Yerevan, asking questions about violence against women in Armenia. Citizens of all ages, women and men were asked to answer the following questions:



- *Do you think there is violence against women in Armenia?*
- *What is violence against women?*
- *What are the reasons of violence against women?*
- *How can we end violence against women?*

Opinions were very diverse, sometimes even contradictory. While interviewing people in the streets, the activists were also distributing flyers on violence against women, inviting people to take part in different events occurring in the city during the 16 Days of Activism campaign and most importantly engaging pedestrians into interesting discussions.

In the afternoon, the peaceful march started from the Women's Resource Centre towards Sharl Aznavur square. Posters were held with messages on gender-based violence which read, "Real men don't beat", "Stop violence against women at home, in the workplace and in the streets." During the march, flyers were distributed to the public. The event ended with a candle lighting ceremony in support of women-victims of violence.

## EXHIBITION AND FILM SCREENING AT MOSCOW CINEMA



Another event organized by the **Women's Resource Center** within the framework of the campaign was a collective exhibition, which opened on December 5<sup>th</sup> at "Moscow cinema" second floor and lasted till December 7<sup>th</sup>.

At the opening of the event, Ms. Anahit Bakhshyan, Member of the RoA National Assembly and Ms. Marie Yovanovitch, the US Ambassador to Armenia welcomed the participants. The exhibition continued with a screening of a series of documentaries on GBV, among other feature films prepared by UNFPA and postscored into Armenian within the framework of UNFPA CGBV Project.

The following documentaries were screened: "Women on the front line: Find a word for it, Congo," UNFPA, 2007, 22 min., Arm. with Eng. subtitles; "Silence," by Deniz Ceyhan Arman, 2007, 9 min., Turkey; "Zone of silence," by Mariam Ohanyan, 2009, 16 min, Arm. with Eng. subtitles; "Marital rape," by Carole Rousopoulos, 30 min, French with Arm. subtitles; "Women on the front line: Showing the red card, Austria," UNFPA, 2007, 22 min, Arm. with Eng. subtitles.

## DRAMA PERFORMANCE ON THE TOPIC OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



**Women's Rights Center NGO (WRC)** marked the start of the "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence" campaign by launching a premiere of *Soul Bruises*, a drama, which featured a group of young artists who portrayed the story of Nina, a woman who's treated with hostility by her husband, which ultimately ruins the family life. She is at odds with her mother-in-law and suffers from deeply rooted fear of physical and psychological abuse, which she witnessed during childhood.

*Soul Bruises* was based on real life stories collected from women who sought psychological support and help from the WRC.

## ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON GENDER EQUALITY AND THE STATE OF WOMEN IN ARMENIA

Within the framework of the 16 Days of Activism 2009 Campaign, **Armenian Center for National and International Studies (ACNIS)**, held a roundtable discussion on gender equality and the state of women rights in Armenia.

After welcoming the participants, ACNIS Director Richard Giragosian presented a brief overview of the issues. He explained that the present event dedicated to topics of gender equality and women's rights marked the opening of a larger, ACNIS "Gender Project," aimed at advocating for increase rights and opportunities for women in Armenia.

Following Giragosian's opening speech, Ms. Jina Sargizova, UNFPA "Combating Gender-Based Violence in the South Caucasus" project coordinator, provided a detailed overview of UNFPA activities in this field. Ms. Sargizova pointed out a number of significant problems, including lack of awareness, absence of effective legislation, and inadequate institutional capacity in Armenia to address the issue of GBV.

The next speaker, Ms. Tsovinar Harutyunyan, the senior democratization assistant for the OSCE Office in Yerevan, presented OSCE efforts in the area of promoting equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men. A prominent attorney in Armenia, Tiruhy Nazaretyan, addressed the issue of women's rights in the workplace and highlighted the fact that for the same job and performance of same tasks, women are most often paid less than men.



The last speaker of the event was ACNIS Analyst Armine Ghazaryan, who focused on the role of women in Armenian politics. Wrapping up the event was a Q&A session that featured a lively exchange of opinions and discussions on GBV related topics among several leading Armenian analysts, experts, and journalists.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSULTATIONS FOR THE VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

**Tatev-95 NGO** specializes in providing psychological counseling and assistance to Armenian families. On December 02, 2009, Tatev-95 NGO announced Open Doors Day for women-victims of GBV who were ready and willing to address psychologists for assistance and advice.

Thanks to the psychological counseling provided on that day women had a chance to share their problems and concerns with a professional psychologist and to discuss possible ways out of their situations and solutions to their problems.

In the future, if there is a need of continuous assistance to GBV victims, the centre will appoint additional counseling sessions. For more severe and complicated cases, the centre will extend its psychological assistance to the victims of violence for a longer period of time.

## HIV/AIDS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM CAMPAIGN



World AIDS Day, observed December 1<sup>st</sup> each year, is dedicated to raising awareness on the AIDS pandemic caused by the continual spreading of HIV infection. Commemoration of HIV/AIDS victims on December 1<sup>st</sup> is a common practice all over the world.

An event devoted to the World AIDS Day was organized by the **National AIDS Center** in collaboration with **SAMSA NGO**, with additional support from the UN Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UNDP, UNFPA and other UN agencies.

The aim of the event was to attract attention of Armenian society to the problem of HIV/AIDS and to inform people, especially youth, about possible means of protection from this disease.

The event consisted of two parts. The first part featured exhibition of Karen Grigoryan's photo collection, which consisted of 50 photo art works. Each piece portrayed a famous Armenian cultural figure as a hero addressing various aspects of HIV/AIDS dangers and causes behind spreading infection.

The second part included screening of the movie *Who Never Lived* and "After party Vakcinology AIDS/HIV is reality" disco.

UNFPA CGBV Project used this event as an opportunity to once again emphasize the links between VAW and HIV/AIDS pandemics and to distribute information materials.

Free informational booklets and fact sheets on HIV/AIDS, condoms, and ribbons were distributed to attendees of the exhibition to raise general public awareness on HIV/AIDS. Also, a condom vending machine (CVM) was placed in the exhibition hall; it was the first attempt ever in Armenia to sell condoms by means of a machine.



"After party Vakcinology AIDS/HIV is reality" disco began with Karen Grigoryan's speech which reflected on the problem of HIV/AIDS in the context of youth and health. The hymn of AIDS Day performed by Sona and Mher

Shahgeldyan marked the start of the disco. During the disco famous Armenian DJ-s: DJ Vakcina, DJ Funk, and DJ Extreme presented their musical program devoted to that day.

Overall, more than 300 people attended the event.

## CONFERENCE ON THE UN INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

December 02, 2009, the International Day for Abolition of Slavery, was marked in Yerevan with participation of representatives of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Armenia, RoA Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Labor and Social Affairs, RoA Police, Armenian Red Cross Association, and Armenian UN Association and the International Youth Bridges Association.

The International Day for Abolition of Slavery is one of the key days being observed in Armenia within the “16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence” campaign.

The UN estimates that annually more than 700,000 women, girls, men and boys are trafficked across borders away from their homes and families into slavery.

Addressing the participants of the event, Mr. Dirk Boberg, UNDP Deputy resident representative, stated that, “Slavery is a booming international trade, less obvious than before, but all around us. The commemoration for abolition of slavery serves as a reminder that contemporary forms of slavery – such as human trafficking, forced prostitution, forced labor and the use of children in the international drug trade – are still flourishing today, largely as a result of vulnerability exacerbated by poverty, discrimination and social exclusion.”



The UN has a central position in regard to the fight against human trafficking. It produced 3 key international Conventions on trafficking in human beings: the Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, also called Palermo Convention (2000); and two Palermo Protocols, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children; and the Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air. Armenia ratified the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in 2003.

UNDP Anti-Trafficking Programme in Armenia, together with government institutions and the civil society, addresses human trafficking issues in the country through capacity building, prevention programs, public-awareness campaigns, as well as provision of direct assistance to the victims. As a part of the awareness raising component, UNDP supports and facilitates local grass-root initiatives to inform vulnerable groups and general society, about the causes and ways to tackle trafficking-related problems.

During the event, a short documentary on National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for victims of trafficking, adopted by the Government of Armenia in 2008, was presented. It elucidates the main objectives of the framework document and the role of institutions which, as per NRM, should provide assistance to the victims of trafficking, protect and promote the human rights of trafficked persons. Information materials were distributed to the participants of the conference, including those produced by UNFPA CGBV Project on the occasion of the 16 Days of Activism Campaign and addressing the 16 Days of Activism Campaign, GBV, Trafficking, and the White Ribbon Campaign.

## INFORMATION MEETINGS WITH SCHOOL CHILDREN

Within the scope of events carried out during the campaigns **Women for Development NGO** conducted a series of seminars on the topic of “Gender and Conflict” at Peace Education centers for the students of 7-9 grades from local schools.



During these seminars, over 85 students received information on the 16 Days of Activism Campaign and its origins, as well as gender equality and other related issues.

Discussions that followed the seminar sessions demonstrated a high degree of student interest on the presented topics and willingness of young people to learn more about gender related topics.

During the seminars, information booklets, brochures and thematic leaflets prepared by UNFPA CGBV Project on the 16 Days of Activism Campaign, HIV/AIDS and Trafficking, as well as White Ribbon campaign, were distributed to the participants.

## INTERNATIONAL “KIN” FILM FESTIVAL

Following a well-established tradition of conducting annual international film festivals, which present masterpieces of female film makers, the 6<sup>th</sup> international “KIN” film festival took place in Yerevan from December 1<sup>st</sup> to December 5<sup>th</sup> within the framework of the “16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence” 2009 Campaign. It was organized by **Liza Foundation NGO** that promotes women’s participation in different aspects of cultural life in Armenia.

The purpose of the festival was to help its attendees rethink the place and the role of a woman in modern society and to bring her problems into the spotlight by means of cinematography.

Every year, this festival creates a new world of opportunities for female film makers from Armenia and abroad, and also promotes intercultural exchange between female filmmaker attendees from different nationalities and cultural backgrounds.

The 2009 festival featured 82 films, which represented 18 countries, and consisted of the following parts:

- Contest programme,
- Polish school of documentary movies,
- Programme of Turkish “Filmmore” female filmmakers’ festival, and
- Guest programme.

The festival was attended by a number of famous guests, and among them distinguished filmmakers from Russia, Iran, France, Argentine, and Turkey. Documentaries by prominent Polish female filmmakers, Christina Grizhelovska, Danuta Haladin, Irena Kamenska, and Maria Zmarz-Kozanovich, were also presented during the festival.



*From left to right: guests Inga Kali, Lidija Kotelnikov, and organizers of the festival Mariam Ohanyan (Director) and Narine Jrbashyan (Coordinator).*

As the festival unfolded, meetings and master classes by the invited filmmakers were offered to participants. Discussions and interviews with the festival guests followed the film screenings.

Being recognized as the best film of the festival, *Safe System*, a film by Izabel Zulko won first place. The following films were awarded with diplomas:

1. *Butterfly* by Arthur Poghosyan and Yelena Nemchenko, Russia ;
2. *Tan Bnakichner* by Hasmik Gasparyan, Armenia;
3. *Red Watercolor* by Marianna Abrahamyan, Armenia;
4. *Fenshuy* by Paulina Poonki, Finland;
5. *Music of My Eyes* by Lidia Vitale, Italy;
6. *Waltz of Soul* by Anoush Mirzoyan, Armenia.

Liza Foundation plans to present the best movies of the festival at Armenian art academies of Vanadzor (Lori marz) and Gyumri (Shirak marz) to contribute to development and promotion of film making art in Armenia.

### ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON THE INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

On December 10, 2009 the Office of Human Rights Defender of Armenia (HRDO), with the assistance of the UN Office in Armenia, OSCE Office in Yerevan, and the European Commission Delegation to Armenia, organized a roundtable discussion entitled “The Human Rights Protection in Armenia: Achievements and Challenges,” which was dedicated to Human Rights Day.

The main goal of the roundtable was to assess the current situation on human rights protection in Armenia, as well as to discuss the existing challenges and the possible ways they can be overcome. The roundtable participants were presented with the research results of the application of the UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) in Armenian courts. Also presented were the results of the survey of the HRDO activities in the framework of the National Preventive Mechanism under the Optional Protocol of CAT.



RoA Human Rights Defender Mr. Armen Harutyunyan, RoA PM Mr. Tigran Sargsyan, UN Resident Coordinator a.i. Ms. Bushra Halepota, Deputy Head of OSCE Office in Yerevan Mr. Carel Hofstra, Head of EC Delegation to Armenia Mr. Raul de Luzenberger, as well as representatives of Government of Armenia, the National Assembly, judicial system, NGOs, international institutions, and Armenian and foreign leading human rights specialists participated in the event.

During the roundtable the RoA PM Mr. Tigran Sargsyan reaffirmed the intention of the Government of Armenia to continue efforts directed at establishing a favorable environment, in which all citizens of the Republic of Armenia will be able to realize their constitutional rights, based on the provisions of the 30 Articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which are reflected in the Constitution of Armenia.

This roundtable discussion concluded the series of the 16 Days of Activism 2009 Campaign in Armenia.

## PRINT AND E-MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AND WHITE RIBBON CAMPAIGNS

Print and E-media actively reported on the activities carried out within the scope of the campaigns as well as reflected on local and global GBV related issues.

**Aravot Daily** published an article that addressed aspects of violence against women in Armenia and the “16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence” 2009 Campaign launched by the UNFPA. It cited the speakers of a press conference held in the UN CO on the occasion of the start of the campaigns and International Day for Elimination of Violence against Women.

According to Ms. Lala Ghazaryan, MSLA head of the Family, Women and Children Issues Department, those women who periodically are subjected to violence have developed accommodative and tolerant behavior towards all forms of violence that they face. She went on to explain that, “Women can be battered, and yet think that being beaten is normal; they may think, “So what? It is my father (or boyfriend, or husband)...let them beat me; it is not a big deal afterwards. After all, there are even idioms that justify tolerance towards violence against women...If a man knows that he can be called to account for having abused his wife or a child, he would rather behave and avoid battering them”. The article concluded with a brief interview of Ms. Sargizova, UNFPA CGBV project coordinator who shared her positive opinion regarding legislative changes, which would provide legal basis to address issues of GBV in Armenia.

A special issue of “**Woman and Politics**” newspaper was entirely dedicated to the 16 Days of Activism Campaign in Armenia and GBV related issues, including violence against women, observed in local, regional, and global contexts.

The newspaper featured articles dedicated to:

- *The 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN Convention on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (UN CEDAW) and the current situation with implementation of the CEDAW in Armenia;*
- *The 16 Days of Activism Campaign Opening Press Conference and overview of GBV in Armenia;*
- *The White Ribbon Campaign Ambassador, Arsen Julfalakyan;*
- *Gender equality and CEDAW implementation issues, as well as,*
- *Events organized by local NGOs to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.*

[Tert.am](#) featured two articles, “Armenian Athlete Appointed Ambassador in Fight against Violence against Women” and “Women in Armenia Not Ready to Speak about Violence against Them”. The first article featured Arsen Julfalakyan, the White Ribbon Campaign ambassador for the year 2009 and his role in spreading the word about nonacceptance of tolerance towards the phenomenon of violence against women. The second article reflected on the situation with GBV in Armenia and events to be organized within the framework of the campaigns.

[Hetq.am](#) published two articles, one of which reflected on the launching of the 16 Days of Activism 2009 Campaign in Armenia and the DV nationwide survey implemented by UNFPA CGBV Project; and the other presented Arsen Julfalakyan, the White Ribbon Campaign ambassador for the year 2009.

[Lragir.am](#) featured an article dedicated to the overview of the UN Secretary-General “UNiTE to End Violence against Women” global campaign.

# COMMIT



*“Men have a positive role to play in helping to end violence against women. Growing numbers of men have come to the realization that violence against women is an issue that touches their lives in deeply personal ways. And it’s a social problem they can do something about. Change will occur if we each accept personal responsibility to make sure change happens.”*

**Founder of the White Ribbon Campaign Dr. Michael Kaufman**

# ACT

*“In every country, women and girls continue to be plagued by violence, causing tremendous suffering. Such violence undermines development, generates instability, and makes peace that much harder to achieve. We must demand accountability for the violations, and take concrete steps to end impunity. We must listen to and support the survivors. “*

**UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon**

# DEMAND

*“The widespread impunity that exists today not only encourages further abuses and suffering. It also sends the signal that male violence against women is acceptable or normal. It is not. Together, we can and must do more to prevent violence against women, provide services to survivors, and ensure that perpetrators are punished.”*

**UNFPA Executive Director Thoraya Ahmed Obaid**