



DELIVERING AS ONE UN RWANDA

Safety in a number: Survivors of gender-based violence have a place to call and go for support

As a pastor in Northern Rwanda, Emmanuel* considered himself “the best” husband. Then he attended a Gender Awareness Raising Program in his community. The program taught the men about gender-based violence, and Emmanuel realized that he had been violent with his wife to a degree that was considered illegal.

As part of its work in promoting good governance, UNICEF, UNIFEM and UNDP have, through the One UN Programme, helped to revise and promote laws, such as the Gender Based Violence Bill, which was passed by Rwandan Parliament.



Belline Mukamana, Police Officer and Gender Based Violence Counselor at Kacyiru Police Station, Kigali, part of the government's Gender Based Violence Support Unit, counsels a victim.



Violet Kanarezni, Gender Based Violence Consultant at Kacyiru Police Station, Kigali, counsel survivors and implements program policies.

The bill works to both define GBV, as well as prevent it with educational campaigns and punishments for violators.

And thanks to the UN, there is now a place where women can now go for support: the Gender Based Violence Desk in Kigali with a response vehicle.

Violent Kaberanze, who is a gender consultant at the desk, says the organization provides health, legal and psychosocial support to survivors in Kigali.

“At the gender desk, a survivor of violence has the chance for her case to be investigated and to get to truth about what happened,” Kaberanze says. One of the first cases reported to the desk was about a mother who discovered that her 14-year old daughter had been repeatedly raped by her guardian. Not knowing where else to turn, the mother contacted a UNIFEM Programme Officer who referred her to the Gender Desk hotline.

In 2006, the Gender Desk investigated 1,777 rape cases, referred to it by Rwandan Police, resulting in 803 convictions. The Gender Desk helped to investigate these cases and ensure evidence was available for court proceedings. Investigation is an important task at the desk, as is educating program the responding police officers about GBV.

“As the police are responsible for investigating gender and domestic violence cases, they have to understand gender inequalities and gender-based violence,” says Kaberanze.

“This helps them listen to victims, take violence against women as a security and human rights issue, and be compassionate to them.”

“When I learned that my behavior was not acceptable,” says Pastor Emmanuel, “I changed. And I promised to share what I had learned with the rest of the men in my community and beyond.”



It is estimated that 250,000 women were raped during the Rwandan Genocide in 1994, but today the Rwandan people are reaching out to educate and prevent gender-based violence.

*Name has been changed