



**REPUBLIC OF KENYA  
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND GENDER**

**OFFICE OF THE CABINET SECRETARY**

**PRESS RELEASE**

London, 9<sup>th</sup> September, 2020

**COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT AND NO MORE FOUNDATION LAUNCH CAMPAIGN  
AGAINST DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE ACROSS 54 COUNTRIES.**

The Commonwealth Secretariat and NO MORE Foundation on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020, launched a new campaign designed to help tackle the immediate crisis of the rapid increase in domestic and sexual violence due to the impacts of COVID-19, while also providing support for governments, organizations and individuals to confront this issue through longer-term prevention strategies and support.

**First digital portal of its kind**

The launch that was held at a special virtual event was attended by representatives and advocates from across the Commonwealth and represented nearly one-third of the world's population. At the event, the partners unveiled the first pan-Commonwealth digital portal designed to support governments and civil society in identifying and implementing joint solutions while also providing individuals with concrete actions they can take to support both the campaign and those affected by domestic violence.

The new 'Commonwealth Says NO MORE' campaign is launched at a time when organizations across the globe have seen calls to hotlines for victims of abuse and demand for support services rise from between 25 and 300 per cent during COVID-19 lockdowns. Even before the pandemic, it was noted that one in three women across the world are beaten or sexually abused within their lifetime, making it a leading cause of death in woman and girls.

**Commonwealth Says NO MORE pledge**

As part of the initiative, leaders, celebrities and individuals globally are taking the 'Commonwealth Says NO MORE' pledge towards ending domestic and sexual violence. Ahead of the launch, many shared video messages endorsing the effort and encouraging other people across the 54 Commonwealth countries to get involved. Among them were Kiribati President Taneti Maamau, Antigua and Barbuda's Governor-General Sir Rodney Williams, New Zealand's former Prime Minister Helen Clark, British singer and Royal Commonwealth Society's Ambassador Geri Horner, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina J.

Mohammed, Indian actress and advocate for women's rights Shabana Azmi, Pakistani actress Mahira Khan, Ghanaian actress Joselyn Dumas, British actor Colin Salmon and Australia actor Ryan Johnson.

### **Expert resources and tools**

Commonwealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland, speaking at the launch of the portal, said:

"It is indisputable that while the virus will pass one day, for many women, the ever-present threat of violence will remain. COVID has emphatically exposed just how urgently we need a cure to flatten the rising curve of domestic and sexual violence. Business-as-usual is not an option.

"That is why we are announcing this first-of-its-kind portal, offering an impressive array of expert resources and tools to support concerted action by everyone from governments to private individuals. We must all use this opportunity to redouble our efforts to tackle and end this violence now.

"We need to say NO MORE because if we don't have peace in our homes, we will never have peace in our world."

### **Bringing governments and civil society together**

Addressing the event, NO MORE Global Executive Director Pamela Zaballa said:

"We are excited to take the NO MORE message throughout the Commonwealth. The portal is an important first step in bringing governments and civil society together to end domestic and sexual violence. If we can all commit to speaking out and taking action, we will be able to see real progress in a generation."

Speaking in a video message to the conference, President of Kiribati, Taneti Maamau added:

"COVID-19 measures imposed by governments around the world, further increase the risk for women as homes are no longer the safest place.

"We all have an important role to play. Let's stop the silence on violence and make every home a safe and peaceful land for all women and girls around the globe."

### **A vehicle to prevent violence**

Also contributing Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, said:

"Initiatives such as the Commonwealth New Portal, Commonwealth Says NO MORE, and the UN-EU spotlight initiative, provide a vehicle to prevent violence, provide services to victims, and accountability for those who perpetuate abuse."

### **For more information, please contact:**

**Winnie Mburu**  
**Communications Officer**  
**T: +254 707 032 500**  
**E: winnie@psyg.go.ke**