Joint Statement on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls

25th November 2026

The 25th November is the United Nations Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG.) As it does every year, this day begins a 16-day period of global action to raise awareness and work towards eliminating these forms of harm. According to UN studies, across the world, one third of all women have been subjected to gender-based violence at some point in their life.

Every day 137 women and girls are murdered by an intimate partner or family member. This means that unless something changes, by the time we mark this day next year, around 50,000 more women and girls will have been killed.

Here in the UK, the government officially recognises VAWG as a national emergency. A quarter of UK women have been subjected to abuse from an intimate partner. VAWG affects women from all backgrounds and walks of life, but women with minoritized identities may face additional barriers seeking support or justice. For example, women with insecure immigration status may be afraid to report abuse for fear of deportation, a fact that is commonly exploited by their perpetrators.

This year we particularly highlight the violence experienced by women who are trafficked or driven into extreme forms of labour exploitation. We lift up the work of women-led and worker-led organisations like Voices of Domestic Workers who have exposed the ways in which the government's restrictive visa policies can trap women in abusive situations at work.

We firmly reject the false claims from anti-immigration protesters that immigration increases the risk to women in the UK. Over 90% of assaults against women are perpetrated by a partner or someone they know well. There is no evidence that increased migration is related to rates of VAWG, and we will not be silent while the language of women's rights is used as a smokescreen for Islamophobic and racist rhetoric and violence that makes migrants and racialised women in the UK unsafe.

In October, Pope Leo invited the presidents of all the Bishops' Conferences around the world to meet in Rome to mark the 10th anniversary of Amoris Laetitia. In this exhortation on love and family life, Pope Francis spoke strongly against domestic abuse and violence against women.

> *Unacceptable customs still need to be eliminated. I think particularly of the shameful ill treatment to which women are sometimes subjected, domestic violence and various forms of enslavement" (Amoris Laetitia, para 54)*

He called on all Catholics to take action to end VAWG. Pope Leo has also called us to be courageous in taking action against abuse. Responding to these problems is a huge task, requiring a unified approach. We need to work together, across divides of gender, faith, or sector. We highlight work that is carried out in partnership with different Church organisations, with other faith communities, or professionals working in secular spaces in a spirit of mutual respect and collaboration.

We invite everyone to join us in action and prayer, using our 16-day calendar as a guide during this period of global action. We can also use the resources and links below to answer the call to action and work towards a world where every woman and child can be safe.