

## A 16 day of activism: Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) to address gender-based violence and abuse

IFRC-Kabul, Sunday, December 10, 2017



Gender-Based Violence – GBV Campaign, ARCS Secretary General delivering the speech to the audience, 2017

- In 2016, 0.3 million people were conflict displaced that required assistance
- The health of 1.7 million people was affected by conflict
- 0.2 million people were affected by natural disasters
- The public health of 0.7 million people was at risk where 49% of the population were female

The Gender-based violence has been considered as a human rights violation and main obstacle in providing health services, social and economic support to meet the female half of the communities, protect their interests and to give voice to their distinct needs, priorities and capacities.

With presence of many organizations country-wide, initial steps have been taken to prevent and respond gender-based violence. Afghan Red Crescent Society in partnership with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and Norwegian Red Cross marked Gender-Based Violence Campaign “Leave No One Behind: End Violence against Women and Girls” in Kabul in presence of humanitarian actors and the media.

The ARCS Secretary General, Dr. Nilab Mubarez focused on other sorts of violence, “Disability should not result in deprivation of privileges in the organization” said secretary general, Dr. Nilab Mubarez. “Change must start from families and extended to the communities”. She added that “Human insults and disrespect based on disability are considered as violence”. The secretary general asked the ARCS advisors to map wider information on GBV within the organization. She emphasized that violence against women is not the only problem, other sort of violence such as discrimination against disabled persons exists that flourish violence.

The ARCS deputy and acting president Mr. Mirwais Akram talked about discrimination that causes misery and difficulties. “Conflict is a factor of gender-based violence” said Mr. Mirwais Akram.

Shaikh Abdul Salam Abid, a religious scholar said that “Islam denies all forms of violence; a true understanding of Islam is a fundamental way of eliminating violence in society.” He emphasized on empowering women to stand for their rights and make decisions of their lives. “The religious scholars stand beside women to ensure justice is maintained” said Shaikh Abdul Salam Abid.

The IFRC Program Coordinator, Mr. Gaurav Ray said that “The IFRC and the Movement partners takes GBV seriously and committed to work for its prevention. There are policies, strategies, guidance available and we continue working with different programme teams to make sure GBV is integrated into the ARCS programmes.

Sarah Afzali, the ARCS gender and diversity manager said that such events offer a positive force in reducing women and girls’ risk of experiencing GBV.



The ARCS staff, volunteers and IFRC staff participating in Gender-Based Violence – GBV Campaign, 2017

The ARCS as a humanitarian organization, developed a Gender and Diversity policy, Strategy and an Action plan to respond to the needs of families headed by women and to understand the intra-household sharing of humanitarian assistance. Through this effort, the needs and concerns of disabled persons and female beneficiaries will be sufficiently understood and address. The 16 days of activism campaign, which runs every year from 25th November – International Day for the elimination of violence against women – to 10 December – Human Rights Day, seeks to promote and broaden awareness by breaking the barriers of social exclusion by building the capacity of the ARCS staff and volunteers in reducing risk and vulnerability to Gender Based Violence.