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Nafissatou Seck (left), national UN Volunteer Gender and Gender-based Violence Specialist, presents UNFPA's mandate and flagship initiatives to Senegal's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Me Aissata Tall Sall, during the celebration of United Nations Day on 27 October 2022. © UNV, 2022

Protecting women and girls from violence and abuse in Senegal

In 2022 to date, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme has deployed 47 UN Volunteers addressing issues of gender and gender-based violence in West and Central Africa. These volunteers are placed in seven UN agencies, including the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Women, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and peacekeeping operations. In Senegal, Nafissatou Seck is a national UN Volunteer with UNFPA who dedicates her expertise and skills to the fight against gender-based violence.

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, issued by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993, defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of

liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life".

“ Violence against women continues to be an obstacle to achieving equality, development and peace, as well as to fulfilling the human rights of women and girls. The promise of the Sustainable Development Goals – to leave no one behind – cannot be fulfilled without putting an end to violence against women and girls. Volunteers are key advocates and grassroots ambassadors in this fight. --Veronique Zidi-Aporeigah, UNV Regional Manager for West and Central Africa

Nafissatou helps build the capacity of UNFPA implementing partners on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. Participants in such trainings are personnel of UN entities like the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Women, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and International Organization for Migration (IOM). Others represent civil society and non-governmental organizations such as Plan International, ENDA, and Tostan, as well as the government, including the Ministries of Women and Youth.

Nafissatou has supported the government in the development, validation and implementation of national policy documents aimed at promoting gender equality and eliminating gender-based violence and harmful practices such as female genital mutilation. She has contributed to the national strategy "L'École des Maris", the National Strategy for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation, the National Agenda for the Girl Child, and the second National Plan of Action on Resolution 1325 on Women.

In addition, Nafissatou has developed a module on protection against sexual exploitation and abuse and supported the creation of a map of prevention and support services for survivors of sexual violence. In the long run, this map will also help victims access resources made available by UNFPA and its various partners in their support, like psychosocial follow-up, for example.

“ My assignment has given me the opportunity to help people in need at the community level in my country and I am always encouraged when the beneficiaries testify to the positive impact of my actions on their lives. I am very proud to be a UN Volunteer. --Nafissatou Seck, national UN Volunteer with UNFPA in Senegal

This champion of the fight against gender-based violence is also the focal point of her organization within the thematic group on gender, human rights and inclusion, where she constantly advocates for the inclusion of women, girls and people with disabilities. She ensures that their needs are adequately addressed in the development, planning and implementation of her organization's activities.

One example is the first high-level roundtable organized by UNFPA and the Commission on the Status of Women within the framework of the 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence, which brought together 30 community actors and beneficiaries of UNFPA interventions.

"As a UN Volunteer, I feel that supporting the mandate of my organization in accomplishing its mission is an opportunity for me to use my knowledge and skills for the benefit of my country," Nafissatou concludes.

 **West and Central Africa**

• [International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women](#) • [Gender-based Violence](#)

Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 5: Gender equality](#) [SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals](#)