



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Maik Dünnbier

maik.duennbier@iogt.org

Mobile: +46 721555036

Twitter: [@maikduennbier](https://twitter.com/maikduennbier)

Women and Girls Suffer Alcohol-Related Violence

Global Coalition Calls for Action on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

BERLIN, GERMANY, (November 25, 2013) -- Violence against women and girls is often alcohol-related. But alcohol violence can be prevented if civil society and decision-makers take effective action together.

A global coalition of civil society organizations spearheaded by IOGT International is leading the way in stopping the excuse of alcohol violence against women and girls, in implementing concrete, grass-roots actions for the creation of more alcohol-free, safe environments and in empowering women and girls.

November 25th is the “International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.” It is the day when awareness is raised of the pervasiveness of violence against women and commitments are being made.

Every single day actions are needed for preventing and eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls. Actions are needed everywhere: in public places, the streets, schools, communities, homes, and workplaces. Violence against women and girls happens everywhere! One in three women and girls will experience it in their lifetime, but it is never inevitable.

“In fact, gender-based violence can largely be prevented,” says Kristina Sperkova, Vice President of IOGT International. *“For example, in many places around the world gender-based violence is alcohol related in up to 80% of the cases. This violence can be prevented.”*

Some more facts tell the story:

- In Cambodia 83% of beer sellers are exposed to unwanted sexual contact. In Australia 40% of cases of physical and/ or sexual assault of women are alcohol related.
- In the UK, alcohol is involved in 88% of cases of domestic violence involving dual perpetration of violence and 55% of sole perpetrator cases. In Rwanda focus groups of rural women report alcohol to be the number one factor in domestic violence.
- Across Africa and Asia, in countries like South Africa, India, Uganda, Vietnam and Zimbabwe it was found that ca. 65% of women experiencing Intimate partner violence report alcohol use by the perpetrator.
- In Brazil 70% of the cases of Intimate partner violence are alcohol related. In the USA, mothers convicted of child abuse are three times more likely, and fathers convicted are ten times more likely to be alcoholics.

“Looking at the world through the eyes of women and girls, we must see that our world has an alcohol problem and that if we don’t solve it, we will not achieve equality and freedom,” added Sperkova.

Additionally alcohol is often used as an excuse for otherwise socially unacceptable behavior. Sexist comments, jokes and behavior of harassment are excused when the perpetrator has used alcohol. This way,

social norms are flouted and a culture of discrimination against women and girls is perpetuated. Aggressive alcohol marketing plays its part in the perpetuation of gender stereotypes by portraying women as objects often sexualized and degraded.

IOGT International, together with a global coalition of civil society organizations, commits wholeheartedly to the implementation of concrete actions that deliver change.

“Our actions are simple and linked to grass-roots activism to make a difference for women and girls in the communities,” explains Sperkova. *“We commit to providing alcohol-free, safe environments which open public space to all women. We commit to the promotion of alcohol-free, orange drinks in the spirit of the “#OrangeYourWorld campaign”. We arrange events like silent discos, photo shootings and poster pastings. We arrange meetings with decision-makers and we speak against excuses for alcohol violence.”*

Such is the vision of the global coalition to inspire freedom and allow the local, no matter how remote, and the simple action to unfold to become a global force for good, for freedom and equality of women and girls.

Statements by the global coalition on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women:

World Association of the Clubs of Alcoholics in Treatment (W.A.C.A.T.):

“CLUBS OF ALCOHOLICS IN TREATMENT are a community program where families find a safe environment, where alcohol related problems can be overcome and where violence within the family can be discussed and progressively eliminated. The Clubs` family approach has the immediate effect of changing the lifestyle in the family and also in the community,” said Ennio Palmesino, Chairman of W.A.C.A.T.

East African Alcohol Policy Alliance (EAAPA):

“As we observe the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, EAAPA emphasizes the need to address the strong link between alcohol use and the abuse of women and girls,” said Moses Waweru, chairman of the East African Alcohol Policy Alliance.

“A review of Demographic Health Surveys of 7 Sub-Saharan countries (Borwankar R., Diallo R., and Sommerfelt A.E. 2008) clearly showed a correlation between alcohol abuse and domestic violence. For instance in East Africa, among women from Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda, increasing use of alcohol and drunkenness by husbands, has been found to lead to increases in physical violence.

“As the review recommends, contributory factors to gender-based violence such as alcohol are amenable to interventions. Therefore considering its role as an obstacle to development and catalyst to gender-based violence, the problem of alcohol use must be tackled as part of the strategy to eliminate violence against women and girls,” Waweru added.

Indian Temperance Youth Federation (ITYF):

“The weakening of alcohol regulations in India on state level, has created a favorable atmosphere for all sorts of human rights violations,” stated Thangavel Velandi, National Secretary of the Indian Temperance Youth Federation.

“Due to that millions of women, girls and children of alcoholics have become victims. Hence it is also the prime responsibility of the state governments to provide appropriate support services for all victims.

“Alcohol-violence makes the home as well as public spaces too often very unsafe for women and girls. And this is a grave concern for us because it’s a violation of human rights, an obstacle to equity and equal opportunity for women and girls and it hampers India’s overall development.

“Both the state governments as well as the national government need to act swiftly to put in place evidence-based, high-impact alcohol regulations, in order to sustainably tackle the problem of violence against women and girls,” Velandi emphasized.

Alcohol Justice (USA):

“Alcohol increases the likelihood of gender-based violence: men harming women,” said Sarah Mart, Director of Research at Alcohol Justice, based in the United States.

“The alcohol industry blocks effective alcohol policies that would reduce the amount of sexual, physical, and mental violence to women, while it promotes alcohol products with ads that objectify, sexualize, and infantilize women. Looking at it this way, alcohol-related violence against women is a human rights issue. So is preventing it,” Mart added.

“Big Alcohol marketing and advertising is fueling a global pandemic of alcohol over-consumption and harm,” stated Bruce Lee Livingston, Executive Director / CEO of Alcohol Justice.

“Today we join with our global partners to call specific attention to the alcohol-related physical, sexual, and emotional abuse of women and to call for action to support evidence-based strategies to reduce this harm. We demand increased prices, reduced advertising and promotion, and the removal of alcohol products from any free trade agreements.” For more information download the Alcohol Justice [fact sheet on alcohol-related harm in the U.S.](#) For more information on the dangers of including alcohol in [free trade agreements click here.](#)

FOKUS – Forum for Women and Development (Norway):

“In the work FOKUS – Forum for Women and Development does related to violence against women we often see links to alcohol triggering harassment and violence against women. There is a clear connection that we need to deal with,” said Gro Lindstad, Executive Director of FOKUS – Forum for Women and Development.

“Concrete actions are needed from governments, other stakeholders who have the possibility to make a difference. Violence against women is a global pandemic and violence caused by alcohol abuse can be prevented,” Lindstad emphasized.

Active – sobriety, friendship and peace (Europe):

“Societies today aim to nurture a culture oriented towards achieving equality, peace and equal rights. Yet the realization of this aim is facing obstacles in many forms, out of which violence against women and girls is one - an obstacle which is very tightly related to alcohol use, an obstacle which is very often excused because of alcohol use,” said Maja Stojanovska, Secretary General of Active – sobriety, friendship and peace.

“On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, we remind and reflect on the need for more alcohol-free environments. And we call for the rest of the 364 days in the year to be devoted to creating these environments, to inspiring freedom for women and girls,” Stojanovska added.

Note to the editor:

For more information on community action to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls, to stop the excusing of alcohol-violence and to empower women and girls, please see the Inspire Freedom Campaign Community Action Guide: [“Inspire Freedom Campaign – Together for women and girls – every 25th”](#), where more facts and evidence is provided, too. For more information and references, see the blogs on our website.

About IOGT International:

IOGT International is the largest worldwide community of non-governmental organizations with a mission to independently enlighten people around the world on a lifestyle free from alcohol and other drugs.

www.iogt.org

twitter: @IOGTInt

About W.A.C.A.T.:

W.A.C.A.T. works to improve the quality of life on earth, by promoting and protecting the health of all individuals, the families and the communities on this planet, in particular through the prevention and reduction of the alcohol related problems worldwide, by promoting the development and the dissemination of the Clubs of Alcoholics in Treatment (CAT) and of the social-ecological approach to the alcohol related and mixed problems.

www.alcoholnet.net

About East African Alcohol Policy Alliance:

The East African Alcohol Policy Alliance (EAAPA) is an alliance of civil society organizations across East Africa working together to build a comprehensive system of evidence-based policy, legislation and regulatory measures to address alcohol related harms.

Twitter: @_MosesWaweru

About Indian Temperance Youth Federation:

Indian Temperance Youth Federation (ITYF) is a national level temperance movement, consisting of community based groups / NGOs / Youth organizations throughout India, working for the promotion of “Living Drug Free” lifestyle among children and youths.

<http://www.ityf.in>

About Alcohol Justice:

Alcohol Justice, the industry watchdog, promotes evidence-based public health policies and organizes campaigns with diverse communities and youth against the alcohol industry’s harmful practices. Alcohol Justice envisions healthy communities free of the alcohol industry’s negative impact. Alcohol Justice is the only national advocacy, research, media and policy organization that directly challenges the political influence and marketing might of global alcohol corporations.

<http://chargeforharm.org>

Twitter: @AlcoholJustice

About FOKUS – Forum for Women and Development:

FOKUS – Forum for Women and Development – is a knowledge and resource center for international women's issues with an emphasis on the spreading of information and women-centered development cooperation. FOKUS' primary goal is to contribute to the improvement of women's social, economic, and political situation internationally.

<http://www.fokusvinner.no/en/Frontpage-EN/>

Twitter: @FOKUSKvinner

About Active – sobriety, friendship and peace:

Active - sobriety, friendship and peace is a European youth umbrella organization gathering 31 organizations from 24 different European countries. Active engages more than 25 000 young people, all united in what they promote and practice – a lifestyle free from alcohol and other drugs.

Active's work focuses on stimulating the potential of young people through promoting a lifestyle free from alcohol and other drugs and creating free, safe and inclusive environments for all young people and children.

<http://www.activeeurope.org>

Twitter: @ActiveeuropeOrg