



One million men. One million promises.

End violence against women.

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Actor and activist Sir Patrick Stewart to headline Breakthrough launch: 1 million promises from men to take action on violence against women

Ring the Bell campaign goes global March 8: Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings, iconic singer Michael Bolton, hip-hop mogul Russell Simmons, and more, offer public promises

New York — When it comes to violence against women, a crucial cultural shift has begun: **men are thinking of themselves as part of the solution.** [Men stood with women](#) protesting events in Delhi, Steubenville and Cairo; Dallas mayor Michael Rawlings, joined by Cowboys athletes, recently kicked off a citywide initiative [challenging men to stop domestic violence](#). Driving this moment forward, global human rights group [Breakthrough](#) today announces the worldwide launch of the next phase of its “Ring the Bell” campaign to **engage men** in the effort to end violence against women. Over one year starting March 8, 2013, **[One million men. One million promises](#)** will gather **one million promises from men to take concrete action to end violence against women.**

Acclaimed actor and activist Sir Patrick Stewart (*X-Men*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*) will host the event launching the campaign and offer his own promise. A survivor of domestic violence, Stewart has been a vocal advocate against domestic violence and for men’s engagement to end the [global pandemic](#) of violence against women.

“The truth is that domestic violence and violence against women touch many of us. This violence is not a private matter. Behind closed doors it is shielded and hidden and it only intensifies. It is protected by silence – everyone’s silence. Violence against women is learned. Each of us must examine — and change — the ways in which our own behavior might contribute to, enable, ignore or excuse all such forms of violence. I promise to do so, and to invite other men and allies to do the same,” Stewart said.

One million men. One million promises, in partnership with the UN Secretary General’s [UNITE campaign](#), the UN Women’s [COMMIT](#) campaign, the Clinton Global Initiative and many other

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groups worldwide, will launch on March 8, coinciding with International Women’s Day and the 57th session of the [United Nations Commission on the Status of Women](#), with a kick-off event at the ONE UN New York Hotel. Led by Breakthrough, coordinated live and social media events (#ringthebell) will take place in New York, Delhi, Johannesburg, Rio de Janeiro, Kathmandu, and Stockholm, calling on men worldwide. Make your own promise [here](#).

Stewart, Rawlings, multi-Grammy Award-winning singer [Michael Bolton](#), and other male leaders will attend the launch to offer their promises to take action to end violence against women. Other leaders and celebrities, including [UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon](#), New York City Mayor **Michael Bloomberg**, Virgin Group founder **Sir Richard Branson**, former NFL quarterback and college hall-of-famer [Don McPherson](#), comedians **Lewis Black** and **Dean Obedallah**, Political Director to Russell Simmons and Global Grind Co-President **Michael Skolnik**, Greenpeace International Executive Director [Kumi Naidoo](#), Comic Relief CEO **Kevin Cahill**, actors [Amitabh Bachchan](#) and **Rahul Bose**, author and model [Steven Santagati](#); Google India Managing Director **Rajan Anandan**, Indigo Airlines president **Aditya Ghosh**, musician [DJ Spooky](#), and more – including V-Day/One Billion Rising founder **Eve Ensler**, UN Women head [Michelle Bachelet](#), and sitarist **Anoushka Shankar**— have already joined the *One million men. One million promises* movement. (See videos of celebrity promises [here](#).)

“Effective laws, courts, and cops are essential, but they are not enough. We need to change the *culture* that excuses and enables violence against women — and that requires everyone, including men,” said Breakthrough founder, president and CEO Mallika Dutt. “If we work together to change norms, attitudes and actions, we can trigger the global tipping point we need. With men as partners and leaders, I believe that *this* generation can build a safer world for all.”

One million men. One million promises is the first initiative of the global “Ring the Bell” campaign, which began in India in 2008 as [Bell Bajao](#) (“Ring the Bell” in Hindi). Through multimedia and on-the-ground engagement, Bell Bajao called on men to ring the doorbell — literally or figuratively — to interrupt overheard domestic violence. Bell Bajao made the “private” matter of violence against women a public problem and reached more than 130 million people through media, along with 7.5 million on the ground, and trained more than 75,000 young people to stand up for women’s rights. The campaign has since been adapted in and expanded to China, Vietnam, Pakistan, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Nepal, Canada, and more.

Key celebrity and luminary quotes

“The truth is that domestic violence and violence against women touch many of us. This violence is not a private matter. Behind closed doors it is shielded and hidden and it only intensifies. It is protected by silence – everyone’s silence. Violence against women is learned. Each of us must examine — and change — the ways in which our own behavior might contribute to, enable, ignore or excuse all such forms of violence. I promise to do so, and to invite other men and allies to do the same.” — **Sir Patrick Stewart**

“Today I promise to continue my work in defense of women and children who experience domestic violence, human slavery, and sex trafficking. I swear to encourage and recruit other boys and men who stand up to bullies and stalkers, rapists and oppressors. I commit — as a man and as a father and grandfather of girls — to advocate that men stand with survivors and

work with women to stop what I believe to be domestic terrorism. I affirm that I will not stop in my efforts to inspire other men to stand up, speak out and demand an end to violence against women and children. I know we can build a peaceful world in my granddaughters' lifetime. Let's start now. Join me and Breakthrough's One million men. One million promises and make your promise today." — **Michael Bolton**

"Imagine a world of happy and healthy families. Imagine a world of non-violence and peace. Here's how we get there: Treat women and girls with respect. Join me to make a promise today to help stop violence against women. One million men making one million promises to promote equality — that can change everything". — **Russell Simmons**

"Listen Guys, enough with the idiotic violence toward women. You want to beat on someone do it to yourself. And take it like a man." — **Lewis Black**

"Make no mistake: men's violence against women is a men's issue — It's our problem. And I'm here to say we've had enough of women being disrespected, and we won't tolerate it any longer. It's not only about not being violent; it's about changing a culture that says 'violence is okay.' I promise to stop laughing at jokes we've all participated in. I promise to speak out against domestic violence. And I'm asking men in Dallas — and everywhere — to do the same. Let's make our homes, and our cities, safe for all." — **Mike Rawlings**

"Yesterday I was at a clinic we run in Africa called Bhubezi Clinic and there were 40 women in the room. Somebody asked the women if any of them had ever been raped, and there was laughter amongst the women. We asked why they were laughing. The women said, 'Ask the question: Has anybody in this room not been raped?' Not one woman put up her hand. As men, we all have something to give. We all have the power to do our own part to stop the global pandemic of violence against women and girls. It is holding us all back. We can all be leaders here, in ways small and in ways grand — in Africa, in Europe, around the world, in our own homes and circles. So join me and become one of the million men making one million promises to help end the violence against women." — **Sir Richard Branson**

"I promise that in everything Greenpeace does, we will work to promote freedom of violence for women. When women are safer, our planet is safer. The two words that are critical to Greenpeace are "green," protection of the environment and "peace," promotion of peace, and it's for that reason that we strongly make this promise. It is everyone's job, men and women, but particularly men because we are the perpetrators of violence in the main, that we step up and take action. Please join me and Breakthrough's One million men. One million promises campaign and please make your promise today as to what you will do to advance peace and security for women on our planet." — **Kumi Naidoo**

"At Comic Relief we promise to help women and girls get their rights recognised and support them to reach their full potential. We will do this by funding organisations which understand and address the rights of women and girls and tackle the violence, abuse, and harmful traditional practices against women. We promise to continue supporting women and girls to drive this work and represent their own interests. To address gender inequalities, we work with both women and girls and men and boys at all levels to bring about positive changes in families and communities,

and ultimately, in society, to help break the cycle of poverty, exploitation and abuse. Comic Relief wishes the Ring The Bell all the best on International Women's Day." — **Kevin Cahill**

"Men can and must be leaders and partners in ending violence against women. They already are. Men listen to men; they have the power to create safe and healthy spaces. Right now, men are pushing each other and themselves to change the way they think and act. Right now, men are challenging the habits and norms that perpetuate violence. And through Ring the Bell, millions of men will take that message to millions more. Ring the Bell is raising the voice of civil society in unison with the heads of state who are joining the COMMIT Campaign. I urge men in all walks of life, all cultures, all communities, all countries, to step up and make your promise count. Join me in ringing the bell to end violence against women." — **Michelle Bachelet**

"One billion women and those who love them rose with us in February. I was deeply moved to see thousands of men join in the rising. I have never understood why violence against women is a women's issue. It turns out we don't rape ourselves. I know as surely as I know anything that when the majority of men, who do not commit violence, rise with us with the same intensity and commitment, the violence will end. Keep on Rising. Ring the bell. Join One million men. One million promises and make your promise today." — **Eve Ensler**

To download images, click [here](#).

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About Breakthrough

Breakthrough (www.breakthrough.tv) is a unique global human rights organization that creates cutting-edge pop culture and innovative education to inspire new generations of leaders to act for change. We work out of centers in India and the U.S. — the world's largest democracies — to end violence against women and promote human rights.

About Sir Patrick Stewart

An acclaimed actor who has made his mark internationally on both stage and screen, Sir Patrick Stewart is also a tireless activist and supporter of numerous human rights causes. In the UK, Stewart is a Patron of Refuge, an organization which provides a range of high quality services for abused women and children and advocates for improvements to domestic violence policy and practice, and the implementation of new legislation. Refuge helps to prevent domestic violence through campaigning, education, training and research. He is a Patron for Dignity in Dying, which campaigns for greater choice, control & access to services at the end of life, advocating providing dying adults with the choice of an assisted death, within upfront legal safeguards, and for universal access to end-of-life care. Sir Patrick is also a Patron of Combat Stress, an Ambassador for the United Nations Association – UK and a longtime supporter of Amnesty International, particularly in promoting their Violence Against Women campaign.