

MEDIA RELEASE

SVSG and Anoamaa 2 District Unite Communities to Address Domestic Violence through Awareness, Law, and Partnership

*26-27 January 2025
Solosolo, Samoa*

More than 100 participants of Alii & Faipule, Tina ma Tamaitai, Tupulaga Talavou and Malosi o le Nu'u from the villages of Eva, Salelesi, and Solosolo gathered at the EFKS Hall in Solosolo to participate in a two-day community awareness workshop organized by the Samoa Victims Support Group (SVSG) under its UN Trust Fund Project, in partnership with the Anoamaa 2 District.

The workshop aimed to strengthen community understanding of Gender Based Violence (GBV) and domestic violence (DV), including drug-related DV, while reinforcing the importance of Samoan values, Christian principles, the justice system, and village leadership in preventing violence and protecting families.

Day 1 – Strengthening Values, Faith, and Community Roles (26 January 2026)

Day 1 marked the official opening of the workshop and brought together community members, village leaders, women, and youth from the three villages of Eva, Salelesi, and Solosolo. The strong turnout reflected the district's commitment to addressing domestic violence and strengthening family and community wellbeing.

The programme commenced with a formal welcome followed by a sauniga lotu, led by Rev. Peniamina of the Assemblies of God (AOG) Church, setting a respectful and reflective tone for the training. In his message, Rev. Peniamina delivered a powerful and thought-provoking reminder to participants, emphasising unity, peace, and mutual respect within families and communities. His message, "We don't fight each other," challenged participants to reflect on how conflict, violence, and harmful behaviours undermine the foundations of the Aiga Samoa, Christian values, and communal harmony.

The opening session reinforced the importance of addressing domestic violence not only as a legal or social issue, but as a moral, cultural, and spiritual responsibility. Participants were encouraged to see themselves as agents of change within their families, villages, and churches, and to uphold values of love, respect, and protection for women and children. This strong spiritual and cultural grounding provided a solid foundation for the discussions and learning that followed throughout the workshop.

SVSG Chairperson and lawyer, Ms Maposua Tanya Toailoa, acknowledged the district and

explained the purpose and objectives of the UN Trust Fund Project, emphasizing its focus on addressing Gender Based Violence through prevention, awareness and community empowerment. Her message was strongly supported by district leadership, including Lemusu Seumanutafa, Puluu of Eva village, who encouraged participants to actively engage and take ownership of family safety within their communities.

SVSG's first presentation highlighted the organization's work within the context of Aganuu ma Agaifanua (Samoan culture), Christian beliefs, and the values of the Aiga Samoa, reinforcing the shared responsibility of families and villages in protecting women and children.

Participants provided positive feedback, noting that the session was informative, engaging, and a timely reminder of their roles and responsibilities in promoting safety and harmony in families and villages.

Day 2 – Understanding the Legal Framework, Law Enforcement, Court System and Support Services (27 January 2026)

Day 2 focused on strengthening community knowledge of legal frameworks & processes, court proceedings and referral pathways through presentations by key national stakeholders.

The Samoa Police Service outlined their role in responding to domestic violence and gender-based violence, including emergency response, reporting procedures, investigations, and safety measures. Police emphasized the critical role of the Alii ma Faipule in prevention, early intervention, and collaboration with authorities.

The Ministry of Justice and Courts Administration (MJCA) explained court processes, access to justice, protection orders, and available support services, helping participants better understand how victims are supported through the legal system.

SVSG also presented on its range of services, including counselling, available refuge for women & children, processes for protection orders, advocacy, and referrals.

SVSG Chairperson Ms Maposua Tanya Toailoa further explained the SVSG Community Law Centre wherein participants were introduced to new legal advisory services ensuring fast & accessible legal assistance for women and families facing GBV. Key laws were outlined that guided SVSG's work, reinforcing the importance of legal awareness and collaboration between communities, Police, and the courts.

An interactive question-and-answer session allowed participants to seek clarification, share experiences, and discuss challenges and successes in addressing domestic violence at the village level.

Moving Forward Together

The workshop reinforced the message that eliminating domestic violence, drug abuse, and related gender-based violence (GBV) requires collective action and sustained collaboration. Strong partnerships between communities, the Alii ma Faipule, the Samoa Victims Support Group (SVSG), the Samoa Police Service, and the Ministry of Justice and Courts Administration (MJCA) remain critical to achieving lasting change.

SVSG acknowledges with gratitude the ongoing support and leadership of the Member of Parliament for Anoamaa 2, Afioga Laufo Fonotoe Pierre Meredith, and his Committee, whose continued commitment has been instrumental in strengthening community engagement and advancing prevention efforts within the district. Their active involvement, alongside the positive participation and feedback from the Anoamaa 2 communities, reflects a growing and shared commitment to building safer families and resilient communities, grounded in Samoan culture, Christian values, and the rule of law.

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Ensuring that victims of crime and those in need are well supported to be safe and in control to restore their lives

2016: With and for Girls Award – Star Foundation of London

2017: Innovation & Excellence Team Award – Samoa Public Service

2018: Finalist, International Children's Peace Prize 2018 – Kids Right Foundation of Amsterdam, Netherlands

2018: Human Rights Champion in Samoa – UNESCO

2019: Innovation for Sustainable Development Award – Commonwealth Secretary-General

2020: Nominated Person(s) of the Year – Samoa Observer

2021: Outstanding Contributions to Human Rights Promotion & Protection – Samoa Office of the Ombudsman/NHRI

2023: Healthy Islands Best Proposal Award – World Health Organization

2026 Noble Peace Prize Nomination