

I suffer mentally every day, says Uber rape victim in Women's Day message

Sunday, 8 March 2015 - 2:00pm IST Updated: Sunday, 8 March 2015 - 2:02pm IST | Place: New Delhi

The 25-year-old woman executive, allegedly raped by an Uber driver in New Delhi, on Sunday said she is 'suffering mentally everyday' and lashed out at the web-based US taxi firm for "insult to her injury", saying it has only made cosmetic changes to its policies to operate in India.



"Until women can legitimately feel safe, we cannot obtain equality... Sadly, Uber doesn't understand this", she said in her message on International Women's Day released on Sunday.

The woman said while she would like to forget what happened to her in December last year, she has had to "relive the vicious attack multiple times", most recently when she was cross-examined for the second time by the assailant's counsel as the trial continues.

"Words cannot describe what I am currently going through and I continue to suffer mentally...everyday this goes on," she said in the message released by her lawyer Douglas Wigdor.

She emphasised that as a [rape](#) survivor and Indian woman, the International Women's Day is an important occasion to reflect on "where we have come and how much more must be achieved before we can claim true equality". She lambasted the company for continuing to operate in the Indian capital by making only cosmetic changes to its safety measures, saying Uber is adding "insult to injury" as originally the company had said it would help her and her family but refused to meet with her legal team and her to discuss important safety measures.

She said such measures are necessary to ensure that other women do not have to go through what she is enduring. "Instead, they have defied the local authorities and continue to operate in Delhi and have made cosmetic changes to their policies that are clearly marketing efforts designed to attract more customers," she said.

Wigdor said his client's rape case underscores "how much more work needs to be done in order for women to achieve true equality".

"Sadly, rape and sexual assault myths continue to be floated about to 'justify' or 'explain' these heinous crimes," Wigdor said, citing the comment by an accused of the December 16, 2012 gangrape in the documentary 'India's Daughter' where he defiantly blames the girl for the rape.

The prominent New York attorney had also represented Naffisatau Diallo, the hotel maid who had accused former International Monetary Fund (IMF) leader Dominique Strauss-Kahn of sexually assaulting her in his hotel room.

Wigdor said the dismissal of the Strauss-Kahn indictment by the Manhattan District Attorney, the recalling for a second cross-examination of his client in the Uber rape case and Uber's refusal to meet with his client only "exacerbate" problems.

"Rape and sexual assault are crimes of control and domination - hopefully, discussions surrounding International Women's Day will bring about positive change so that women can achieve true equality," he added.

The San Francisco-based cab service - that works through 'app' and lets non-professional drivers become chauffeurs-for-hire at rates far lower than normal taxi rides - has been at the receiving end of legal hurdles and ethical issues in several countries.