

GBV Prevention Network 16 Days of Activism Campaign: **Press Release**

Use Your Voice! Take Action Now!

Activists across the Region Call on Leaders to End Violence against Women

From the 25th November to 10th December hundreds of activist organizations across the Horn, East and Southern Africa will mobilize their communities and challenge leaders at all levels to end violence against women and girls. This year's Regional 16 days of Activism Campaign: **Voice, Action-Now! Leading the Way to end Violence against Women** demands and implores our leaders to lead the change by using their voice to speak out and their power to take action to end violence against women and girls now!

Violence against women remains a challenge in the region and hinders social and economic development, it prevents girls and women's equal participation at social and political level, it is extremely costly to families, communities and nations, and it is a profound symbol of gender inequality and social injustice. Additionally, it is a public health concern; World Health Organisation reported that 1 in 3 women would experience physical and /or sexual violence in her lifetime.

(Please insert information and statistics of the economic cost of violence, if available, and the number of women who experience violence in your country)

A wide range of organizations, media, and community members will engage in a diverse range of events across the Horn, East and Southern Africa. They will ask their leaders to recognize violence against women as a human rights violation and barrier to social and economic development. Many laws and policies have been put in place across the region yet are not meaningfully implemented. The over 800 members of the GBV Prevention Network call for real action. We demand that our leaders:

- Speak out and publically condemn violence against women
- Develop or strengthen a multi-sectoral National Plan of Action spanning health, social welfare, police, justice, education and gender. The plan should include specific operational actions and measurable targets for each sector
- Establish a national co-ordinating mechanism with sufficient authority and budget to develop, implement and monitor actions to address violence against women
- Ensure sufficient resources are available to support the implementation of the National Plan of Action for the prevention and response to violence against women

(Please use the information you have gathered as you completed the worksheet within the Action and Advocacy Kit to customise these advocacy asks and make them relevant)

to your campaign)

Leaders at various levels have expressed commitment to ending violence against women. During the 25th African Union Summit¹ Heads of State and Government committed to various initiatives aimed at the empowerment of women. 2015 is the halfway point of the African Women's Decade that emphasizes women's development and empowerment with special focus on peace, security and violence against women. These and so many other commitments have been made by our leaders for gender equality and to end VAWG. The commitments have resulted in various laws, policies and plans across the region. This is the time to make policies and expressed commitments work for women! GBV Prevention Network members call on leaders to demonstrate their leadership by taking practical steps to end violence against women and girls.

From the 25th November (Day of Elimination of Violence against Women) to the 10th December (Human Rights Day), activist organizations across the region will take the campaigns from the streets to the offices of our leaders to demand action. They will reach out to political and technical leaders, government ministers, Members of Parliament, Heads of State, Religious and Cultural Leaders as well so that all levels of leadership are held accountable for ending violence against women.

Join the activism! Ask your leaders to demonstrate their leadership and take action to end violence against women. Contact the following organisation to find out how you can join your community to demand accountability from your leaders.

Insert your details here:

Organisation Name:

Contact Person:

Phone No:

Email:

Use your voice, take action – now!

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¹ <http://summits.au.int/en/25thsummit/events/25th-assembly-african-union-commits-mainstreaming-women>