

# POWER

We all have it.

Press  
Release

## Activists Across Africa Call to Revolutionize Power Dynamics in Intimate Relationships

Human rights activists and community members from across Africa will ignite awareness and action about power imbalances between women and men as a core driver of violence against women (VAW) and HIV from November 25th - December 10th, as part of this year's 16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women.

“Currently women face violence at alarming rates: 15% to 71% have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime at the hands of an intimate partners<sup>1</sup>”

The 16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women Campaign is an annual global event that calls for collective action worldwide to prevent violence against women. It spans significant dates including the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (November 25th), World AIDS Day (December 1st), and Human Rights Day (December 10th). These dates were selected to symbolically link violence against women to escalating HIV infection rates and human rights abuses.

Over the 16-day period, hundreds of organizations in Africa who are members of the GBV Prevention Network will engage their communities under the regional theme *Power! We all have it. How Are You Using Yours?*

The theme highlights that violence against women occurs because of the power imbalance between women and men; this power dynamic is rooted in social norms that sanction men's control over women's bodies, minds, and behaviors, leading to all forms of violence against women. Transforming how we use our power can help us to change this reality to build stronger relationships and stronger communities.

(cont)

## How Are You Using Yours?

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How Are You Using Yours?

*“Violence against women and girls in all forms is the greatest shame of humankind. It has no excuse, no justification and no place in society. Everyone has the right to live free from violence, do not deny women and girls this right.”*

**Leah Chatta - Chipepa, Executive Director, Akina Mama wa Afrika**

*“The power of Patriarchy may seem invincible, but don’t ever estimate the power of right, let us use it?”*

**Dr. Hilda M. Tadria, Executive Director, Monitoring and Empowerment Program For Young Women and Co-founder African Women’s Development Fund**

*“We all should work towards de-constructing patriarchal values, beliefs and norms, while embracing the use of positive cultural norms to prevent violence against women and girls, and promote peaceful families and communities, in conformity with international and regional human rights standards.”*

**Jennet Kem, Manager, Africa UNiTE Campaign to End Violence Against Women and Girls**

With activities like social media “storms,” dramas, interactive exercises, lobby meetings, panel discussions, radio and TV talk shows, newspaper articles, public marches, rallies, vigils, SMS campaigns and so many others, activists from member organizations and millions of community members around the region will challenge common societal beliefs. They will inspire us to think differently about how we use power in our own intimate relationships, and take action to create social change that starts with ourselves. Activists will also lobby legislators and policy makers to improve national VAW legislation, and provide adequate budgets for implementation. The campaign will culminate in a call for equality between women and men in relationships, communities, and institutions on Human Rights Day (10th December).

It is expected that the deliberate and intense activity over this period will create a groundswell of movement across the region. When individuals first feel their own sense of power, and recognize how they use it positively or negatively, then social change is possible. **Power! We all have it. How are you using yours?**

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<sup>1</sup>Garcia – Moreno C., Jansen H., Ellsberg M., Heisie L. and Watts C. (2005). *WHO multi-country study on women’s health and domestic violence against women: Initial results on prevalence, health outcomes and women’s responses*. Geneva: World Health Organization, 27.

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