

Press Release

16 Days of Activism Campaign urges everyone to commit to preventing violence against women

Every day, individuals, families, communities and organizations around the world are taking action to end violence against women. But for 16 days of each year, our collective voices are put together in a worldwide campaign to prevent such violence.

The 16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women takes place annually from 25th November to 10th December. The regional and international campaign, undertaken by women's organizations and other stakeholders, spans some very significant dates in the women and human rights movement.

The first day of the campaign, November 25th, is officially recognized by the UN as the International Day for Recognition of Violence Against Women. This date commemorates the assassination of three sisters, who were political activists opposed to the government of Trujillo in the Dominican Republic. These sisters were murdered on November 25th 1960.

Also within the 16 Days of Activism is World AIDS Day on December 1st, an annual campaign to prevent the spread of HIV and remember those we have lost to AIDS. This day is significant since violence against women greatly contributes to the spread of HIV. The activism period ends with the International Human Rights Day on December 10th and on this day the whole world commemorates the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that affirms every human beings rights, freedoms and entitlements.

Consequences of violence against women affect every member of society, and yet violence against women continues with impunity despite the coming into force of the African Protocol on Rights of Women which was adopted by the African Union Heads of States and Government on 11th July 2003.

This year in the Horn, East and Southern Africa various organizations and individuals from Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Tanzania under the regional Gender-Based Violence Prevention Network will join together to advocate for the prevention of violence against women. The regional theme this year is "I Commit to Preventing Violence Against Women! What about you?! Speak out, reach out, stand out!" Organizations will hold marches, rallies, conferences, dramas, talk shows, community outreaches, media events and a host of other activities.

Every individual is urged to add your voice and your efforts and commit to preventing violence against women in your own personal relationships, extended families, communities and nations as a whole. Professionals like police and health workers are also urged to prevent and respond to violence against women within your daily work practices. Communities and nations are urged recognize and confront violence against women within their communities, and to treat it as a violation of women's human rights that fuels the spread of HIV and has dire economic consequences on families, communities and nations. What about you? What will you do? Speak out! Reach out! Stand out! Commit to preventing violence against women!

For more information about how you can get involved, please contact: