

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Ligue Internationale de Femmes pour la Paix et la Liberté

Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y la Libertad

Consultative Status with UN ECOSOC, UNCTAD and UNESCO; Special Consultative Relations with FAO, ILO, and UNICEF.



WILPF Participation in 16 Days of Activism 2011 Campaign: "From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Let's Challenge Militarism and End Violence Against Women!"

December 10, 2011

December 10 marked International Human Rights Day, WILPF sections and members around the world celebrated the end of our collective participation in the 2011 "**16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women**" Campaign. "WILPF's participation in this year's campaign was very powerful. From Kinshasa to Geneva to Bogotá, WILPF sections successfully organized and participated in a variety of inspiring and strategic activities, all united to challenge militarism and violence against women at home and during conflict," remarked Maria Butler, PeaceWomen Director, WILPF UN office on the last day of global campaign.

On the final day of campaign, WILPF Nepal held a seminar with women affected by conflict. WILPF International screened the film *The Whistleblower* and held a panel discussion featuring Kathy Bolkovac and Madeleine Rees in Geneva. A US rally was also held at City Hall Park, Burlington, Vermont.

Recalling WILPF participation in the 2011 campaign, the President of WILPF-Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) section, Annie Matundu Mbambi noted: "We are activists and during the 16 Days we demonstrated our united participation to call for gender equality and an end to impunity, violence and all forms of oppression. This meant a lot to us in Congo". DRC was one of WILPF's 17 national sections that took part in the campaign. Annie and our WILPF sisters in DRC bravely went ahead with their seminars despite serious security concerns linked to pre-election violence and unrest. The seminars brought together many grassroots activists, WILPF members and legislative candidates. At this critical time, WILPF sections around the world stand united in solidarity with our sisters in DRC in the hope of a post-election period free from intimidation, violence and instability.

As the Campaign ends, we celebrate and acknowledge all our members and WILPF participating sections which included: **Australia, Colombia, Costa Rica, DRC, Denmark, Germany, Finland, India, Mexico, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Switzerland, Sweden, the UK, and the USA, as well as activities in Geneva arranged by the International Office of WILPF.**

Some WILPF highlights from around the world:

Women of Bolivar province in **Colombia** marched to spread the message "multiplying our voices for the right of women to live a life free of violence" (November 25). Seminars and practical workshops on violence against women, women as peacebuilders and on women's participation also took place in various locations around the country including Cartagena, Bogotá, Villavicencio and San Jacinto. Ximena Correal, Director of WILPF Colombia explains: "We developed a workshop in San Jacinto and San Juan in order to strengthen communication skills. Women collaborated to teach each other the importance of alternative media in recognizing, appropriating, and spreading information. Women created a community newspaper for each place. They were very motivated to use these tools as a way to communicate all they do as women leaders".

Picture shows women participating in a group discussion during the Alternative Media workshop held in Bogotá, Colombia



Several sections including, **Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, WILPF International, the USA and Finland** screened films highlighting the need to expose and address violence against women. Many sections screened the prize winning **“The Whistleblower”** featuring WILPF Secretary-General, Madeleine Rees in her former capacity as the head of the UN High Commissioner’s office in Bosnia. ‘Pray the Devil back to Hell’, was also screened in Zurich by our Swiss section.

Reflecting on the Whistleblower film screening in Burlington Vermont, Robin Lloyd, coordinator of WILPF Burlington shares: *“Forty five students and community activists turned out for this very educational and sobering discussion and film screening. Several dozen postcards [to reform immunity systems] were signed and will be sent to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon”*

Many of WILPF’s sections also arranged demonstrations, featuring the blowing of whistles, to attract attention to human rights abuses and the particular need to address violence against women. Among sections ‘blowing the whistle’ was **Australia**, where demonstrations took place in Queensland and Tasmania and then the **US** where a rally is being held today at City Hall Park, Burlington, Vermont.

Costa Rica also used theatre as a medium to spread the 16 days message with an interactive play encouraging audience participation and response being shown near San Jose.

Picture right shows Performers for Peace performing in Brisbane, Australia



Our WILPF participants in Pakistan managed to coordinate an activity everyday for 16 days. Highlights, of these events included workshops on violence against women with women health workers and a session with male policemen, visits to schools, women prisoners in Rawalpindi jail as well as to a women’s IDP camp near Peshwar.

WILPF **Nigeria** held a seminar focused on Women, Peace and Security, which brought together over 75 participants to discuss priorities. The meeting recommended to local officials including the Commissioners of Police in Enugu to engage more with local grassroots women and to establish a SGBV department in the Police.



In Geneva, **International WILPF** hosted a two-day legal expert meeting on how we can develop legal mechanisms and connections to further our aims to redefine security, invest in peace and uphold human rights.

December 10 also witnessed the official presentation of the **Nobel Peace Prize** to the three 2011 female recipients: **Leymah Gbowee, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (Liberia)** and **Tawakkol Karman (Yemen)**. WILPF stands in solidarity with these women as we continue our work to promote gender equality and women’s participation in all forms of conflict prevention and peace-making.

Information:

For more information on WILPF activities globally during the 16-day campaign [click here](#).

For comments on WILPF’s participation in the campaign contact Maria Butler maria@peacewomen.org

To see WILPF’s work on our websites: www.wilpfinternational.org; www.peacewomen.org;

www.reachingcriticalwill.org

For the official website ‘16 days of Activism against Gender Violence’, [click here](#).