



2013 THEME ANNOUNCEMENT

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
16 DÍAS DE ACTIVISMO CONTRA LA VIOLENCIA DE GÉNERO
16 JOURS D'ACTIVISME CONTRE LA VIOLENCE DE GENRE
25 NOV - 10 DEC <http://16dayscwgl.rutgers.edu>



From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Let's Challenge Militarism and End Violence Against Women!

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign continues the theme of **“From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Let’s Challenge Militarism and End Violence Against Women!”** in 2013. After an open call for input, feedback was received from the 16 Days network of participant activists and organizations working on human rights, gender-based violence, and social justice issues worldwide.

The **2013 16 Days Campaign** advocates for awareness and action on the multi-faceted intersections of gender-based violence and militarism, while highlighting the connection between the struggle for economic and social rights and ending gender-based violence. The theme focuses on militarism as a creation and normalization of a culture of fear that is supported by the use or threat of violence, aggression, as well as military intervention in response to political and social disputes or to enforce economic and political interests.¹

Militarism is a system of structural violence that **infringes upon the human rights and human dignity, safety, and security of women, men, and children** in nearly every country and region of the world.² The impact of militarism can be seen in the way national budgets are allocated for health services, education, and public spaces versus military budgets; in legislation and policies that marginalize women and minorities; in discriminatory policies and acts enforced or condoned by state authorities; and in military response versus diplomacy to political and social issues.

The Campaign emphasizes that **women’s rights are human rights**, and acknowledges the role of patriarchal systems that embody harmful traditions and legal policies that normalize violence against women, and deny women their right to a life of dignity.

Focus for Action

The 16 Days Campaign will focus on **three priority areas** while **underlining the intersections of economic and social rights with militarism and gender-based violence**:

I. Violence Perpetrated by State Actors: State actors use the threat or act of violence to maintain or attain power. They claim a need to protect state security by unleashing violence on those deemed a threat; and they sexually and physically assault Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs), protestors, and dissenters fighting for political, economic, social, and sexual rights. Police, judges, and prosecutors harass women victimized by gender-based violence into silence. In some places, women are punished for the sexual violence committed against them. The prevalence of **State impunity** for crimes against its peoples, those of other countries, and stateless peoples **is a grave challenge to ending gender-based violence and militarism and achieving the realization of women’s human rights.**

States are tasked with due diligence - to respect, protect, and promote the human rights of all people. Still, **women and girls** throughout the world **continue to be denied access to economic and social rights** (the right to work, education, food, and water for example), while WHRDs who advocate for these human rights are harassed, assaulted, or killed by state sanctioned authorities. Seen as transgressors of sexual and gender norms and the traditional “private” space assigned to them in their communities and countries, **WHRDs remain targets of State violence and imprisonment.**

In Egypt, during recent protests WHRDs endured harassment as well as sexual and physical assault at the hands of men protestors, soldiers, and police, and were forced to have virginity tests while imprisoned. In Honduras, transgender WHRDs face economic, political, and social discrimination, and extrajudicial killings perpetrated or condoned by State authorities.³ In Iran, WHRDs are routinely targeted by the State, who often claims these women are a threat to the moral order of society or are working with subversive elements against the integrity of the State.

WHRDs, especially indigenous women, are fighting and dying to protect the forests, waters, and lands that are pivotal to their communities' economic and social well-being.⁴ They are fighting to keep ancestral lands from theft or destructive use by the State and private sector,⁵ and curb human rights abuses of wind, mining, water, logging industries⁶, and of factory labor.

- 2. Domestic Violence and the Role of Small Arms:** Domestic violence continues to occur in every region of the world, with the majority of the world's women experiencing violence inflicted by an intimate partner at some point in their lives. Statistics show that **having a gun in the home increases the risk of someone being murdered by 41%**, while **for women** in the context of domestic/intimate partner violence, **the risk is increased by 272%**.⁷

The proliferation of small arms, which include guns, machetes, and knives, increases the threat of injury or death for women and children and normalizes masculinity with acts of violence. Many countries have instituted legislation and reforms against domestic/intimate partner violence, but implementation of protections and services for survivors of violence, and stronger reforms against the proliferation of small arms have yet to be fully realized. **Economic dependence and exploitation is a contributing factor to why women remain in domestic violence situations.** Women's economic independence is imperative to empowerment over their lives and enjoyment of human rights.

- 3. Sexual Violence During and After Conflict:** Violent conflict increases the vulnerabilities of women and girls, where rape, sexual slavery, mutilation, forced impregnation, and forced "marriage" occur against them at a higher rate than during times of relative peace.⁸ Vulnerabilities rise especially for women and girls who are collecting water or firewood, tending to fields, living in refugee or internally displaced camps, or in areas overrun with fighting between militias or state military. Sexual violence, in its various forms, is used as a weapon to instill fear and maintain power over communities by armed militias and State authorities. Furthermore, soldiers, as well as mandated peacekeepers, have been guilty of abusing or raping women and girls in refugee camps.⁹ Local women who work or live near military bases experience sexual violence at the hands of foreign troops stationed in the area.¹⁰

Many women continue to feel the effects of their abuse in psychological, physical, and social terms after the official end of violent conflict. Most cultures and traditions stigmatize and punish women who have been sexually violated. Instead of support, they often face ostracization by their families and communities after experiencing sexual violence. In places where there are competing power structures, women and girls are also vulnerable to being bartered or traded to settle disputes, to pay off debts, or improve social, political, and business relations.¹¹

Campaign with Us

As always, the 16 Days Campaign encourages participants to focus on areas that are most relevant to their specific context. Participants may consider how they can engage with their governments and communities to challenge and change in positive terms the structures that perpetuate gender-based violence.

Take Action Kit Materials 2013

The Center for Women's Global Leadership has developed materials for the 2013 Take Action Kit (TAK), which contain resources to help support activities during the 16 Days Campaign. CWGL will make these materials available in multiple languages in August. Participants can visit our website (<http://16days.cwgl.rutgers.edu>) to download the Take Action Kit materials or to request a hard copy.

Connect With Us & Learn More

- **16 Days Campaign website:** <http://16dayscwgl.rutgers.edu>
- **Email:** 16days@cwgl.rutgers.edu
- **Facebook:** <http://www.facebook.com/16DaysCampaign>
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- **Skype:** cwgl_16days
- **Tumblr:** <http://cwgl.tumblr.com>
- **Twitter:** #16days; @16DaysCampaign; @CWGLRutgers

About the 16 Days Campaign:

For the past twenty-two years, the global 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign has been dedicated to advocacy and coordination of work in support of ending violence against women at the local and international levels. The dates November 25 (International Day against Violence against Women) and December 10 (Human Rights Day) were chosen to emphasize the links between ending violence against women and human rights values and highlight that violence against women is an international human rights violation. The 16 Days Campaign is used as an organizing strategy to call for the elimination of all forms of gender-based violence by individuals and groups throughout the world. The Center for Women's Global Leadership is the global coordinator for the Campaign.

- ¹ Center for Women's Global Leadership. "Intersections of Violence Against Women and Militarism Meeting Report". 2011. <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/resources/publications/gender-based-violence/388-intersections-of-violence-against-women-and-militarism-meeting-report-2011>. [accessed 7 May 2013]
- ² Caprioli, M. "Primed for Violence: The Role of Gender Inequality in Predicting Internal Conflict". *International Studies Quarterly* (2005) 49, 161-178. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.0020-8833.2005.00340.x/pdf> [accessed 7 May 2013]
- ³ International Federation for Human Rights. "Iran: Ongoing Judicial Harassment Against Women Human Rights Defenders". 21 April 2009. *RefWorld*. <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4a2cd0cd23.html> [accessed 9 May 2013]; Mackey, Robert. "One Year Later, Egyptian Women Subjected to 'Virginity Tests' Await Justice". 9 March 2012. *The New York Times*. <http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/09/one-year-later-egyptian-women-subjected-to-virginity-tests-await-justice/> [accessed 8 March 2013]; REDLACTRANS & the International HIV/AIDS Alliance. "The night is another country: Violence and impunity against transgender women human rights defenders in Latin America." 12 December 2012. http://issuu.com/aids_alliance/docs/thenightisanothercountry#download [accessed 9 May 2013]
- ⁴ Wilkson, Tracey. "Environmental activist and her son slain in Mexico". 29 November 2012. *The Los Angeles Times*. <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/nov/29/world/la-fg-wn-activist-murdered-mexico-20121129> [accessed 9 May 2013]
- ⁵ Pasimio, Judy A. "Philippines: An Encounter - The Killing Of Three B'laan Tribal People". 23 October 2012. http://indigenouspeoplesissues.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=16567:philippines-an-encounter-the-killing-of-three-b-laan-tribal-people&catid=32:southeast-asia-indigenous-peoples&Itemid=65 [accessed 7 May 2013]
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- ⁸ Shannon, Lisa. "The rape of Somalia's women is being ignored". *The Guardian*. 11 October 2011. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/oct/11/rape-somalia-women-famine> [accessed 13 May 2013]; UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. "Systematic rape, sexual slavery and slavery-like practices during armed conflict". Gay J. McDougall, Special Rapporteur, 22 June 1998, E/CN.4/Sub.2/1998/13: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f44114.html> [accessed 13 May 2013]; Fisher, Siobhán, K. "Occupation of the Womb: Forced Impregnation as Genocide". *Duke Law Journal* Vol. 46, No. 1 (Oct., 1996), pp. 91-133 Published by: Duke University School of Law. <http://scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3320&context=dlj> [accessed 12 May 2013]; Bunting, Annie. "Forced Marriage in Conflict Situations: Researching and Prosecuting Old Harms and New Crimes". *Canadian Journal of Human Rights* 1:1 165-185 (2012) <http://cjhr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Bunting-Forced-Marriage-in-Conflict-Situations.pdf> [accessed 12 May 2013]
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