

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE CAMPAIGN

November 25 – December 10, 2010



Global Call to Action Against Violence Against Women & Militarism

29 November 2010

With this action we, as women human rights defenders, peace activists, human rights advocates, feminists, young and old, around the world, speak out against all forms of violence and commit ourselves to the values of equality and peace with the following actions:

- 1) Challenge Militarism and End Violence Against Women:** Militarism is an ideology that creates a culture of fear and supports the use of violence, aggression, or military interventions for settling disputes and enforcing economic and political interests. It is a psychology which has grave consequences for the safety and security of women, men and children. Wars, internal conflicts, and violent repressions of political and social justice movements have a particular and often disproportionate impact on women, which is often manifested in specific forms of gender-based violence. Militarism is a distinctive way of looking at the world; it influences how we see our neighbors, our families, our public life, and other people in the world. Therefore, we each have a responsibility to examine our lives and relationships to understand how our ideas and actions impact the world around us. We need to better understand the global connections among militaristic ideas, arms production, and the destruction and devastation that wars and military conflicts bring. It is essential that we challenge power imbalances, discrimination, violence against women and girls in all forms, and the more subtle influences of militarism that persuade us to believe that having a strong military and more weapons or using force to settle conflicts will lead to our security and peaceful societies. We need to hold accountable those groups, individuals and governments that violate human rights. With this global action, we come together to proclaim that violence is not an acceptable way to solve conflicts – neither in personal relationships nor among nations, communities and peoples.

- 2) Strengthen Women’s Leadership to Promote Peace:** For decades, individual women, women’s organizations, and women human rights defenders have worked courageously as peace-builders and advocates of human rights. Many of these individuals have experienced violence and discrimination themselves and, with strength and determination, have become empowered survivors, defenders and leaders. Women experience militarism, conflict, and the consequences of war differently than men do, and their voices and perspectives must be heard in conflict prevention and peace-building efforts. It is crucial that we promote and support women leaders who have both feminist and pacifist ideals. Women need to claim spaces to speak out against violence in their communities, to promote women’s rights, to be empowered in decision-making, and to find their own inner strength as leaders. Men need to support these women leaders, by creating spaces for women to be heard, listened to and to be meaningfully included on all decision-making levels. We demand recognition - at all levels from the community-level to international forums - of women’s integral role as peacemakers and defenders of human rights.

3) Realize Human Rights for All to Achieve Genuine Security: The more we know of war and its consequences, the clearer it becomes that genuine security cannot be defined in military terms. Feminists, peace activists, scholars, legal advocates and human rights defenders need to come together to redefine and reclaim the discourse around peace, security, and justice. More expansive understandings of security must emphasize peace and the fulfillment of human rights as a way to achieve genuine security for all. Therefore, we need to confront other threats to human security, such as poverty, food insecurity, natural disasters and environmental degradation, the spread of diseases, domestic abuse, the massive displacement of people, and other violations committed by both state and non-state actors. Security is often discussed in terms of ‘national security,’ but genuine security also begins in the home, which is too often a site of domestic violence and abuse. The use of violence in public spheres cannot be seen separately from the use of violence in private spheres. With this action, we call upon our governments to be accountable for their commitments to essential economic, social, cultural, political, and civil rights and to provide an environment that enables all people to be truly safe and secure.

Your Additional Demands: While these three key demands unify our global action, you should decide on two additional demands that relate to your local campaign activities. These demands can be broad like the three listed above, or more specific (e.g. related to: a protocol, law, or action plan you would like to see your government pass, a specific violation that took place, certain ideas, values or attitudes you wish to change – see the *Guide to Planning Your Campaign* document in this kit for more ideas). **Once you determine these demands, please send them to CWGL (16days@cwgl.rutgers.edu) so that we can compile and share them on the international 16 Days website.**

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Center for Women’s Global Leadership
Rutgers University, 160 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8555 USA
Phone (1-732) 932-8782, Fax: (1-732) 932-1180, E-mail: 16days@cwgl.rutgers.edu
Website: <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/16days/home.html>