

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE

November 25 - December 10, 1999

*Ninth Annual Campaign * Ninth Annual Campaign * Ninth Annual Campaign* Ninth Annual Campaign **

Fulfilling the Promise of Freedom from Violence

For the past eight years, activities organized around the world during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence - November 25 - December 10 - have raised awareness of all forms of violence against women. The 16 Days of Activism is an international campaign which developed from the first Women's Global Leadership Institute sponsored by the Center for Women's Global Leadership in 1991. Participants chose the dates, November 25 and December 10, in order to symbolically link violence against women with human rights. November 25 is the International Day Against Violence Against Women declared by the first Feminist Encuentro for Latin America and the Caribbean in 1981. This date commemorates the murder of the Mirabal sisters by the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic on November 25, 1960. December 10 marks International Human Rights Day - the anniversary of the signing of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)* in 1948. This 16 day period also highlights other significant dates including December 1 which is World AIDS Day and December 6 which marks the anniversary of the

Montreal Massacre, when in 1989 a man gunned down 14 women engineering students for being "feminists."

Contact the Center for a free 16 Days *Take Action Kit*.

TAKE ACTION TO END VIOLENCE!

Violence against women occurs in all aspects of women's lives. It encompasses abuses of women's civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. This broad understanding of violence against women as a human rights violation has moved advocates and governments to transform and expand their work. For example, when the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences was appointed by the Commission on Human Rights at its Fiftieth Session to investigate reports of violence against women her mandate was defined to include:

- Violence in the family (including domestic violence, traditional practices, infanticide, incest, etc.);
- Violence in the community (including rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, commercialized violence, labour exploitation, etc.);
- Violence by the State (including violence in detention and custody, as well in situations of armed conflict and against refugee women).

On the eve of a new millennium, the eradication of gender-based violence remains an urgent task. Increasing the attention of international communities and governments provides the basis for sustained action including documentation, advocacy, education, legal reform, etc. Whether your organization focuses on domestic violence or violence against women in situations of armed conflict or violations of women's right to health, your activities will come together during the 16 Days to address "violence against women" as a whole. The International Calendar of Campaign Activities posted online at <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu>

illustrates activities organized last year - both in terms of strategies used and various forms of violence addressed. The Calendar, compiled annually by the Center, connects local activities to the global women's movement and serves as a tool in pressuring governments to recognize citizens' demands to eliminate gender-based violence.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

Some suggestions for action during the 1999 16 Days which reflect major events throughout the year focusing on women's human rights include:

On March 8, 1999, the UN Inter-Agency Video Conference on Violence Against Women called for the formal recognition by the United Nations of November 25 as the International Day Against Violence Against Women.

- ◆ Act Now to have November 25, 2000 recognized as the International Day Against Violence Against Women!
 - Write letters to representatives in your national government.
 - Send a note to the Secretary General's office at the UN.
 - Include as one of your demands during the Beijing +5 review.
- ◆ Send information on your actions to the Global Center. Include addresses, where possible, of representatives you contacted so that we can follow-up by sending them an *International Calendar of Campaign Activities* to show the solidarity of the women's human rights movement!

Governments will be evaluating progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, June 5-9, 2000.

- ◆ Learn about your government's commitments at the IV World Conference on Women and what they have done to both implement and enforce these commitments. For copies of the Platform for Action and National Action Plans submitted by governments, go to <<http://www.un.org.womenwatch>>.
- ◆ Participate in regional preparatory meetings being planned by governments prior to the meeting of the Special Assembly in June 2000.
- ◆ Prepare reports based on evaluation and analysis of the strategies and work you have done to combat gender-based violence and send copies to your government.


Radhika Coomaraswamy, the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences, will focus her report to the UN Commission on Human Rights in 2000 on trafficking and economic and social policies affecting women.

- ◆ Gather information from your work on these issues and send it to: Radhika Coomaraswamy, Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland; fax: (41-22)917 0212; e-mail: <svraw@sltnet.lk>.
- ◆ You can access the Special Rapporteur's past reports to the Commission, including her 1997 report on trafficking, at <<http://www.unhch.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf>>.

December 19, 1999 marks the twentieth anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

- ◆ Pressure your government to ratify CEDAW. If they have already ratified, but have made reservations, which are contrary to the purpose of the Convention, pressure your government to remove them. A list of countries who have ratified CEDAW and a list of reservations made upon ratification can be found at <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/conven.htm>>
- ◆ Engage your governments NOW in discussions about the Optional Protocol to CEDAW and the statute for an International Criminal Court, which will be open for ratification after adoption by the General Assembly. For more information about the Optional Protocol, contact International Women's Rights Action Watch - Asia Pacific (fax: (60-3)2984203; e-mail: <iwraw@po.jaring.my>) or the International Criminal Court, contact the Women's Caucus for Gender Justice (ph: (1-212)697 7741; fax: (1-212)973 0332; e-mail: <iccwomen@igc.org>).

Organize human rights education activities in your community using *Local Action/Global Change: Learning About the Human Rights of Women and Girls* to raise awareness about human rights at the local level.

- ◆ To obtain a copy of this publication, contact Women, Ink., 777 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017 USA; ph: (1-212) 687 8633; fax: (1-212)681 2704; e-mail: <wink@womenink.org> website: <<http://www.womenink.org/>> or to obtain excerpts from the publication, visit the Global Center website at <<http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/>> 

Join the 16 Days movement! Become part of an already existing student, community, national or international activity for the 16 Days or take actions on your own. Submit your planned activity to us for posting to the *International Calendar of Campaign Activities* and become part of the growing global movement organizing during this time. Your submissions will also enable the Center to refer other individuals/ organizations which are interested in your activities to you.

Please send a description of planned activities for the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence by October 15, 1999 to: Linda Posluszny, 16 Days Campaign Coordinator, Center for Women's Global Leadership, 160 Ryders Lane, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8555, USA.
Fax: (1-732)932-1180. E-mail: <cwgl@igc.org>.

*We would also be grateful for any pictures, reports, posters, stickers etc.
that are produced as part of your activities.*