

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE

November 25 - December 10, 2008

Human Rights for Women – Human Rights for All: Celebrating 60 years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Background

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence is an international campaign originating in 1991. The dates, November 25, International Day Against Violence Against Women, and December 10, International Human Rights Day, have been chosen in order to symbolically link violence against women and human rights and to emphasize that such violence is a human rights violation. This 16-day period also highlights other significant dates, including November 29, International Women Human Rights Defenders Day, and December 1, World AIDS Day.

The 16 Days Campaign has been commemorated by individuals and groups around the world who use a human rights framework to call for the elimination of all forms of violence against women by:

- raising awareness at the local, national, regional and international levels*
- strengthening local work*
- linking local and global work*
- providing a forum for dialogue and strategy-sharing*
- pressuring governments to implement commitments made in national and international legal instruments*
- demonstrating the solidarity of activists around the world*

Historically, the 16 Days Campaign has been instrumental in using a human rights framework to draw global attention to the worldwide problem of violence against women. In its early years (1991-1992), 16 Days activists initiated a worldwide petition calling for the United Nations to place women's human rights issues on the agenda for the World Conference on Human Rights in June of 1993 in Vienna, Austria. By the time of the conference, the petition had collected half a million signatures in 23 languages from 124 countries. The petition helped secure a formal declaration of women's rights as human rights and of violence against women as a human rights violation in the Vienna Declaration. Also, in 1999, the 16 Days Campaign was part of successful efforts to push the United Nations to declare November 25 as International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Activists at the local, national and regional levels have realized successes through activities as varied as media campaigns, campus rallies, art exhibitions, lobbying, roundtable discussions, theater performances, tribunals, and workshops.

For more information, please see <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/16days/kit08/kit.html>.
