



Day 1-- Envisioning

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence



Today is the International Day Against Violence Against Women, the start of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. Zonta International and UN Women work non-stop around the clock, 365-days a year, to stop this senseless violence. For the next 16 Days, envision what

you can do to help eradicate violence against women; envision a world in which no woman lives in fear of violence.

Unfortunately, in 2020, COVID-19 touched our lives in nearly every way, as countries worldwide went into lockdown and restricted movement to contain the spread of the virus. According to UN Women, as doors closed and isolation began, reports of all forms of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, began to rise.

However, this pandemic of violence against women is not new. Even before COVID-19 became a reality, globally, 243 million women and girls were abused by their intimate partners in the past year. The spread of COVID-19 intensified the violence, even as support services faltered and accessing help became harder, if not impossible.

During this year's annual 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign (25 November – 10 December), UN Women and Zonta International are both joining hands with survivors, activists, decision-makers, the UN system, and people from every walk of life, to shine a light on the need for funding, essential services, prevention and data that shapes better-informed responses. WHY? Because **Ending violence against women is everyone's business.**

What can you do?

Listen to and believe survivors

When a woman shares her story of violence, she takes the first step to breaking the cycle of abuse. We must give her the safe space she needs to speak up and be heard. Remember, that when discussing cases of



sexual violence, a victim's sobriety, clothes, and sexuality are irrelevant. The perpetrator is the sole reason for assault and must bear the responsibility alone. Call out victim-blaming and counter the idea that it's on women to avoid situations that might be seen as "dangerous" by traditional standards.

#UNITE
WOMEN

Survivors of violence are speaking out more than ever before, and everyone has a role to play to ensure they can have justice.

Don't say, "Why didn't she leave?"

Do say: "We hear you. We believe you. We stand with you."

(information from UN Women website)