

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE

November 25 - December 10, 2011



2011 THEME ANNOUNCEMENT

To explore some of the deeper social structures that promote and perpetuate violence against women and girls, last year the Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) launched a multi-year campaign theme on the intersections of militarism and violence against women. While there are many different ways to define militarism, our working definition outlines militarism as 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. Militarism also privileges certain violent forms of masculinity, which often has grave consequences for the true safety and security of women, of men who do not conform to these roles, and of society as a whole. Current world events - including military interventions, femicides, attacks on civilians participating in political change, ongoing conflicts etc. - exemplify the distinctive way in which militarism influences how we see our neighbors, our families, our public life, and other people in the world.

Over the last year CWGL has heard accounts of how this theme resonates with many activists. One activist from Mozambique expressed her concern that there could not be "Peace on Earth while there is War in the Home." Her comments stayed with us, and we hope this year's theme describes the complex relationship between peace, home, and the world, and recognizes the many spaces where militarism influences our lives. Therefore, the 2011 theme slogan will be:

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

Building upon the information gathered from participants during the 2010 campaign, this year's 16 Days Campaign will delve further into five issues that were identified as priorities for those working on the intersections of violence against women and militarism:



Bringing together women, peace, and human rights movements to challenge militarism: For decades, women's movements, human rights movements, and peace movements have advocated for the use of peaceful strategies to end conflict and violence and to achieve women's rights. These movements challenge the social structures that allow violence and discrimination to continue. While we may have different approaches to bringing about a more just world, advocacy in all of these areas is inherently tied to challenging militarism and putting forward a feminist alternative. Civil society plays a crucial role in pushing for more expansive understandings of security that emphasize peace and the fulfillment of human rights as a way to achieve genuine security for all. There are many

international tools and mechanisms that can help us hold our governments accountable for protecting and respecting rights (e.g. the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW, international humanitarian law, the Human Rights Council, the Security Council's Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960 on Women, Peace, and

Security, and more). These approaches and tools provide entry points for social movements to reframe security as a human rights issue instead of a military issue.

2

Proliferation of small arms and their role in domestic violence:

Domestic violence is a reality in every

country of the world. This violence becomes even more dangerous when guns are present in the home, as they can be used to threaten, injure, or kill women and children. According to the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) Women's Network, women are three times more likely to die violently if there is a gun in the house. Small arms are also one of the major causes of civilian casualties in modern conflicts. Not only do small arms facilitate violence against women, but due to their association with violent masculinity, they often perpetuate violence itself. Regardless of the context - conflict or peace - or immediate cause of the violence, the presence of guns invariably has the same effect: more guns mean more danger for women. Consequently, this year we will also look at the sale, trade, proliferation, and misuse of small arms.

3

Sexual violence in and after conflict: Rape is often used as a tactic of war to drive fear and to

humiliate or punish women and their communities. Sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations is used to reinforce gendered and political hierarchies. While there has been more attention to this crime in recent years, sexual violence remains a major barrier to women's safety and reintegration, as its effects are physically, psychologically, and socially devastating.

peaceful revolutions, they may be excluded from political roles in the new government. Governments that use force against their own civilians, suspend rule of law in an "emergency" period or use "anti-terrorism" laws to suppress pro-democracy movements or to silence human rights defenders also employ militaristic ideologies that attempt to pass off violence as "security" measures.

5

Sexual and gender-based violence committed by state agents, particularly the police or military: Even in places where

there is no recognized conflict, militarized violence against civilians by uniformed personnel takes place. Militarism tends to privilege a particular form of aggressive masculinity, and sexual violence is one tool that might be used to assert power over others. Individuals in positions of authority may believe they can commit crimes with impunity, and this is exemplified by high rates of sexual violence within the military, threats by police to women reporting cases of violence or assault, violations committed by peace-keeping forces, and violence against women living and working around military bases.

4

Political violence against women, including election violence: The use of violence

to achieve political goals has specific gendered implications. From electoral violence that targets women with sexual violence to harassment or "sexuality baiting" of female protesters and political candidates, open misogyny in public and political spaces results in violations of women's human rights. Even when women play crucial roles in

Over the next several years, CWGL will work to support the development of a coordinated, global, feminist critique of militarism and the violence it perpetuates. The 2011 campaign is an opportunity for reflection and conversations about what the global women's rights movement can do to challenge the structures that allow violence against women to continue at all levels, from local to global. It is also a crucial time to reach out to and involve more men, boys, faith-based and traditional leaders, and other key partners in this work towards building a more just and peaceful world. While militarism is often discussed in terms of conflict situations, this campaign theme seeks to broaden our understanding of the many ways militarism influences our daily lives. A crucial aspect of the 16 Days Campaign involves listening to the stories of women around the world and standing in solidarity with one another, but it also emphasizes the importance of working locally to transform violent or militaristic mindsets. By focusing on how "peace in the home" extends outward and relates to "peace in the world," we see how values of nonviolence can influence the attitudes of friends, families, communities, governments and other actors.

As always, CWGL encourages activists to utilize the 16 Days Campaign to focus on the issues that are most relevant to their local context. At the same time, we also hope you will find ways to connect with the international theme and work in solidarity with other activists around the world. In the coming months, CWGL will be producing additional campaign materials and fact sheets to further explore the five issues mentioned above. We look forward to working with you to develop the 2011 campaign!

2011 Take Action Kit Materials

CWGL is developing fact sheets and other campaign materials, including suggestions for planning your campaign activities. These resources should be posted on the 16 Days Campaign website by September. You can also write to the 16 Days Campaign Coordinator (16days@cwgl.rutgers.edu) to request hard copies of these materials. As always, information and resources on various thematic areas related to violence against women will be available on the 16 Days website for participants focusing on other topics.

How to Stay Connected

- Learn more about the campaign on our website: <http://16dayscwgl.rutgers.edu/>
- Check out the pictures on Flickr and email yours to us for inclusion: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/16dayscampaign>
- Receive email updates by joining the 16 Days listserve: https://email.rutgers.edu/mailman/listinfo/16days_discussion
- As November approaches, remember to submit your plans to the online International Calendar of Activities. The form will be available beginning in September on our website. View last year's calendar here: <http://16dayscwgl.rutgers.edu/campaign-calendar>
- Become a fan on Facebook (Search for "The Official 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence Campaign")
- Email us anytime! 16days@cwgl.rutgers.edu

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence is an international campaign originating from the first Women's Global Leadership Institute sponsored by the Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) at Rutgers University in 1991. Participants chose the dates November 25, International Day Against Violence Against Women, and December 10, International Human Rights Day, in order to symbolically link violence against women and human rights and to emphasize that such violence is a human rights violation.