

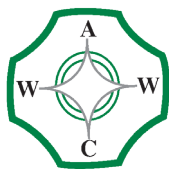
ELIMINATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN 2017

ORANGE the world:

END VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN AND GIRLS

#orangetheworld

We support 16days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence
#orangetheworld #WeAreACWW #16days #LeaveNoOneBehind



ELIMINATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN - 2017

A public statement from the Associated Country Women of the World

Violence against women affects communities in every country of the world, and in every generation. The impact is not just the physical and psychological damage done to woman, but also weakening of communities. Gender-based violence retards development of safe, peaceful, healthy and productive nations. The Associated Country Women of the World stands against all forms of violence against women, and encourages individuals, communities, nation states and international bodies to raise awareness of this crucial issue.

Between the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 November) and Human Rights Day (10 December), the international initiative 'Orange the World' seeks to promote positive action towards ending gender-based violence. ACWW fully supports this initiative, and in particular the theme 'Leave no-one behind'.¹

Gender-based violence can be generational, and education and intervention are crucial to breaking the cycle. Those who are abused suffer long-term impacts on their mental health, and can further suffer from agitation and anxiety, depression, panic attacks, and other ongoing effects on their happiness and health.

It is well established that violence escalates, and that domestic violence is a major issue around the world. It is estimated that 35% of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexually intimate partner violence at some point in their life.² Furthermore, it is estimated that in 2012, almost half of women victims of homicide were killed by intimate partners or family members, contrasting with less than 6% of men killed in the same year.³

In more than 30 countries, at least 200 million women and girls alive today have undergone female genital mutilation (FGM), and culturally sensitive education and discussion is critical to ending this practice; in most of these countries, the majority of girls were cut before the age of 5.⁴ Additionally, more than 750 million women currently alive were married before their 18th birthday. Child marriage often results in early pregnancy and social isolation, and disrupts schooling and education. This is not only significantly detrimental to the woman immediately, but has an ongoing impact on her future, her community and family. It also increases her risk of experiencing domestic violence.⁵

Violence against women and girls must stop, and this can only be effected when people are educated about its impacts, when societies stand united in rejecting its acceptance, and when support and relief facilities are properly funded to protect victims and survivors. By connecting women around the world, advocating for them when their voices are not heard, and uniting them in solidarity for change, ACWW takes a stand against gender-based violence all year round. These 16 Days of Activism are an important part of this work.

Whilst individual action is necessary, we must also rely on strong government and institutions to legislate fairly. Whilst 140 countries have passed laws on domestic violence, there is clear and regular evidence of these laws not being fully enforced, whilst 37 countries exempt rapists from prosecution if they are married to, or subsequently marry the victim.⁶ The international trade in trafficked persons is particularly impactful, with women and girls representing 71% of global victims, and nearly three quarters of these being trafficked specifically for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

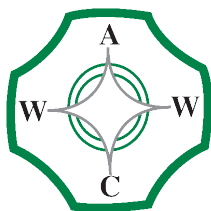
ACWW calls on all States to implement robust strategies to eliminate violence against women, with particular emphasis on culturally appropriate education, legislation and enforcement. Crucially, support and treatment for victims must be sustainably funded, and the process of shaming or re-victimising must end. Harsher penalties, fully and consistently employed, will further work to dissuade perpetrators. Civil society, institutions, and community groups must take responsibility for changing attitudes and behaviours. It is crucial for violence against women to be visibly, vocally and unequivocally unacceptable.

Mrs Ruth Shanks AM
ACWW World President

Mrs Kerry Maw-Smith
ACWW UN Committee Chairman

References

- 1 **16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign**
<http://16dayscswgl.rutgers.edu/>
DOWNLOAD a full campaign pack here:
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- 2 **World Health Organisation**
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- 5 **UNICEF: Is Every Child Counted?**
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- 6 **World Bank Group (2015)**
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- 7 **UNODC: Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016**
p7, 28
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KEY STATISTICS

Women who have suffered domestic abuse are...

twice

as likely to have an abortion

1.5

times more likely to acquire HIV

35%

of women worldwide have suffered physical or sexual violence

twice

as likely to experience depression

120 million

women and girls alive today have suffered forced sexual acts or intercourse

750 million

women and girls alive today were married before their 18th birthday

this is MORE THAN

1 in 10

women around the world

37

countries forgive rapists married to their victims, or who marry them later

less than

40%

of violence victims seek any help at all

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