

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE November 25 - December 10, 2008



16 Days 2008 Demands for Action

On December 10, 2007, a civil society campaign was launched to celebrate the upcoming 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This project is pioneered by a group of notable activists known as “The Elders” and seeks to reclaim the principles in the UDHR through the message that *Every Human Has Rights*. As a lead partner in the UDHR 60 NGO Campaign, the Center for Women’s Global Leadership (CWGL) has been focusing on activities this year that address the many human rights challenges facing women around the globe.

During the month of March, and as a part of the *Every Human Has Rights* campaign theme month on women’s rights, CWGL worked with partner organizations to highlight a spectrum of women’s human rights issues and the importance of women’s leadership in realizing human rights for all. Activities included events that took place during the 2008 Commission on the Status of Women, celebrations of International Women’s Day on March 8, and the seventh session of the Human Rights Council.

As part of the UDHR 60 Campaign, CWGL developed four key demands. CWGL’s focus in this campaign is not exhaustive, therefore we invite you to join in advocating around these points and other issues related to the message *Human Rights for Women ↔ Human Rights for All: UDHR60*.

This year’s 16 Days Campaign focuses on:

I. Support Women Human Rights Defenders

Demand: Protect the rights of women human rights defenders and defenders of women’s rights so they can engage in advocacy free from threats to their physical and mental well-being.

Around the world, women engaged in defending human rights are attacked in many ways because of their political agendas, their identities as activists, and simply because they are women engaging in advocacy. Men and women activists are also antagonized precisely because they are working on women’s rights and sexual rights issues. As forms of punishment and to thwart political agendas, individuals are threatened with physical violence and harassment, their rights to organize, to freedom of assembly and to freedom of speech are limited, and their organizations are threatened with closure or other legal punishments.

- Protect rights of women defenders and defenders of women’s rights, and ensure violators, whether state, non-state, family, or community actors, are brought to justice.
- Document and report on violations of rights of women defenders and all defenders of women’s [and sexual] rights.
- Confront political contexts such as the global rise in fundamentalisms that affect rights of women defenders.
- Challenge regulation of consensual sexuality and attacks on women’s sexuality as a form of punishment for their advocacy.
- Call on governments and donors to commit resources for implementing the provisions of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

2. End Violence Against Women

Demand: Ensure women's rights to live free from violence and end impunity for all perpetrators.

Violence against women continues to be a pervasive human rights violation that affects all women around the world. The experience of violence by women is shaped by the intersection of gender with factors such as race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, culture, religion, age, class, sexual identity, disabilities or citizenship. The prevalence of violence against women constitutes a global public health crisis and is an obstacle to equality, development, security and peace.

- Ensure that states take action to protect women from and punish acts of violence by state and non state actors through implementation of the [Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women](#), which recommends governments have an obligation to:
 - Secure gender equality and protect women's human rights.
 - Exercise leadership to end violence against women.
 - Close the gaps between international standards and national laws, policies and practices, including access to justice and redress for all women who suffer from acts of violence.
 - Strengthen the knowledge base on all forms of VAW to inform policy and strategy development.
 - Build and sustain strong multi-sectoral strategies, coordinated nationally and locally.
 - Allocate adequate resources and funding to this issue.
- Urge intergovernmental/international agencies such as the United Nations, World Bank, World Trade Organization and International Monetary Fund to use the prevalence of VAW as an indicator for measuring a state's progress in fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals, when reporting back on obligations met under UN Conventions and as an indicator in the determination of a country's Human Development Index ranking.
- Call on regional mechanisms to be robust in monitoring and/or adjudicating cases where the state has failed to uphold women's human rights.
- Appeal to individuals and communities to be responsible agents of change by speaking up and intervening to prevent and report acts of violence against women.
- Promote greater understanding by all actors, of the intersection of violence against women with issues of armed conflict, poverty, [HIV/AIDS](#), global warming and identity based discrimination including being targeted based on race, sexual orientation, class or religion.
- Significantly increase government, international agency and donor resource allocations to eliminate discrimination against women, promote gender equality and prevent all forms and manifestations of violence against women ([Where is the money for women's rights](#)).

3. Strengthen Gender Equality Structures in the UN

Demand: Guarantee the creation of a stronger UN women's organization that can advance women's human rights and gender equality, implement global policies, and deliver results on the ground for women.

Within the UN system, women's units are fragmented, underfunded and understaffed, and their leaders do not have enough status to participate in high level decision-making. Furthermore, gender perspectives and women's rights are not adequately woven into UN organizational priorities at centralized or country levels. A strong new entity with higher status, additional resources, and greater staff capacity is needed to advance work on women's empowerment and to ensure that gender equality is truly integrated within the UN system.

- Ensure that the new women's organization has a country presence and a strong "operational" mandate.
- Create a new Under Secretary General position to head the new entity, which would enable high-level representation for women in UN decision-making and policy-development at both global and field levels.

- Ensure the new women's organization is initially funded at a minimum level of \$500 million to \$1 billion USD, and that its budget continues to grow substantially.
- Promote the integration of gender equality and women's human rights throughout the UN system, including in the all-UN reform processes such as the One UN Country Pilots.
- Promote accountability within the new women's organization including meaningful involvement of non-governmental organizations, particularly women's organizations, in its ongoing processes at national and global levels.

4. Expand Financing for Gender Equality

Demand: Deliver the funding to meet promises to achieve gender equality and women's human rights at all levels worldwide.

Significant progress toward achieving gender equality requires greater sustained political and financial commitment. Organizations working for women's rights have highlighted that the inconsistency in the allocation of financial resources by states, aid agencies and international financial institutions as well as their failure to fully demonstrate commitment to gender equality has had an adverse affect on the realization of women's human rights ([Fundher](#)).

Governments, donor states, aid agencies, development agencies and international bodies should:

- Commit sustainable resources for organizations working for gender equality and women's human rights.
- Invest in the advancement of services for women in areas such as health care and education.
- Enable greater access to financial resources for women by promoting employment opportunities and access to capital, loans and credit programs and by ensuring that laws of property ownership and inheritance are not discriminatory toward women.
- Create and implement gender budgets in all institutions at all levels local to global.
- Meet the promises made by donor countries to deliver 0.7% in official development aid, ensuring that it is not bound by restrictive conditionalities and that it is responsive to the needs of women on the ground.

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