THE ANNUAL 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
INTRODUCTION

The annual 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is an international campaign to challenge violence against women and girls. The campaign runs every year from 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to 10 December, Human Rights Day. The year 2018 marks the 27th year of a campaign that has grown steadily in strength and scope.

This year, IANSA members around the world participated in the campaign under the theme: “Real Men Don’t Need Guns – End Gender-Based Violence,” and organized a wide range of activities.

The group Bolivian Women’s Efforts engaged public institutions, international organizations, and civil society through advocacy on local radio and social media, reaching over 55,000 people on the role of firearms in gender-based violence. In Burundi, Women United for Peace in the Great Lakes Region (FUP/GL) educated over 70% of the population of Bubanza about gender-based violence, spurring seven radio clubs to form to address the domestic violence prevalent in the region. Argentina’s Institute of Comparative Studies in the Criminal and Social Sciences (INECIP) conducted extensive research on the negative impacts of armed violence from a gender perspective. Their research determined that a significant number of deaths in Argentina are attributed to the proliferation of guns, and that increasing women’s engagement in the small arms process can reduce this number. A peace rally organized by Women for Peace and Democracy (WMD) in Nepal raised awareness of how violence against women and girls inhibits economic progress and strains development. In Israel, Gun Free Kitchen Tables (GFKT) launched an extensive social media campaign to show the negative impacts that the widespread use of guns in civil spaces has on women in households, and generated spirited discussions on Israel’s gun legislation. In the Philippines, the Center for Peace Education (CPE) created an innovative and engaging exhibit for Filipino youth to learn about gender-based violence.

Newspapers, radio programs, television stations and social media sites covered the activities of our IANSA members, helping to amplify the call for an end to violence against women and girls. We invite you to learn more about these IANSA members and their actions, and to join the global movement against gun violence.
Burundi

Femmes unies pour la Paix dans la région des grands Lacs/ Women United for Peace in the Great Lakes Region (FUP/GL)

Femmes unies pour la Paix dans la région des grands Lacs (FUP/GL) organized activities to commemorate the 16 Days of Activism with a focus on armed violence against women. With their own sub-theme, “Prevention of Domestic Armed Violence in Burundi”, FUP/GL raised awareness of violence committed against women in households in the capital city of Bujumbura and the province of Bubanza.

The first activity in Bubanza aimed to break the silence relating to sexual and gender-based violence. Partnering with local women’s organizations, FUP/GL collected 543 testimonials from women and girls. Those testifying pledged to continue to speak out on sexual and/or gender-based violence.

FUP/GL’s second activity used radio interviews to inform the people of Bujumbura about how the proliferation of small arms affects domestic violence in their city. As a result of these interviews, seven radio clubs formed to counter prevalent arms affects domestic violence in their city. As a result of these efforts, more than 70% of the general public was informed about the 16 Days of Activism and more importantly, about efforts to end domestic armed violence in Burundi.

El Salvador

Fundación de Estudios para la Aplicación del Derecho/Foundation for Research on the Application of Law (FESPAD)

FESPAD conducted activities to commemorate the 16 Days of Activism in El Salvador with a focus on armed violence against women. On November 24, just before the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, women from the Ilopango municipality opened dialogue on the issue. FESPAD held a colorful and lively festival in Ilopango, with food, music, and festive costumes to promote the culture of peace and generate greater momentum for the 16 Days campaign. The celebratory activities brought people of all ages together around this critical issue in El Salvador. FESPAD continues its activism to spur higher levels of awareness, particularly among youth, of the harmful impact of firearms and gender-based violence. While the toll of gun violence in El Salvador remains high and threats to women’s rights persist, FESPAD is taking practical steps towards peace in the country. Such efforts within communities help to strengthen democracy and human rights, while encouraging citizen participation in critical issues.

Ghana

Zonta Club of Accra and New Vision Foundation-International (NVFI)

NGOs in Ghana organized a range of activities to raise public awareness of the 16 Days of Activism. The Zonta Club of Accra marched to end violence against women, with Zonta International Clubs providing additional support. The campaign highlighted criticisms of current law enforcement measures failing to punish perpetrators of sexual violence. Zonta International works in 42 countries to eradicate violence against women and girls by using service and advocacy to severely and consistently condemn perpetrators.

The New Vision Foundation-International (NVFI) called on governments to do more to counter violence against women by enforcing laws, ensuring support in national budgets for programs countering gender violence, and unifying individual and collective efforts to prevent all forms of violence against women and girls in Ghana. Their efforts emphasized that gender-based violence, in any form, is a human rights violation. NVFI’s efforts raised awareness on gender-based violence in the health sector, workplace and educational spheres. Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDA), International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA-Ghana), Oxfam International and Care International collaborated to call on governments and stakeholders, including traditional and religious leaders, to join the fight against sexual and gender-based violence by publicly denouncing such acts.
Activism against Gender-Based Violence

The group created three work channels to challenge the small arms legislation and the dangers it posed for women. At the event, eighteen Jewish and Palestinian women representing ten social and political organizations discussed the proposed new arms legislation and the dangers it posed for women.

The event, coinciding with Human Rights Day, called on the Israeli government to implement practical and verified measures to prevent violence against women by enacting a law aimed at reducing the number of small arms in civil spaces. The GFKT Facebook post on the subject was backed by international empirical research linking a decrease in female deaths in households with reduced gun proliferation. The media campaign produced vibrant discussions, reaching 5,000 people in less than 24 hours. GFKT continues to raise awareness and debate on these issues.

GF KT hosted two events to commemorate the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. The first was a meeting organized by the Israeli Parliament, and a public media campaign. Potential ideas for the media campaign included organizing a meeting on gun laws for journalists and public media campaign. Advocacy aimed at the Israeli Parliament, and a media campaign.

The group created three work channels to challenge the legislation, including legal analysis of the draft law from a feminist perspective, advocacy aimed at the Israeli Parliament, and a public media campaign. Potential ideas for the media campaign include organizing a meeting on gun laws for journalists and presenting gender-based violence issues to the Parliament’s Committee for the Status of Women with the Ministry of Public Security.

The second event, coinciding with Human Rights Day, called on the Israeli government to implement practical and verified measures to prevent violence against women by enacting a law aimed at reducing the number of small arms in civil spaces. The GFKT Facebook post on the subject was backed by international empirical research linking a decrease in female deaths in households with reduced gun proliferation. The media campaign produced vibrant discussions, reaching 5,000 people in less than 24 hours. GFKT continues to raise awareness and debate on these issues.

Gun Free Kitchen Tables (GFKT)

PEFENAP held two events for the 16 Days Campaign under the theme “The fight against gender-based violence: to protect women against armed violence.” PEFENAP mobilized key religious, political and youth leaders around the issue of gender-based violence to create social change. PEFENAP organized an open debate, providing a platform for women to share their experiences with gender-based violence. Local radio and television channels broadcast the debates and gave the floor to Muslim religious leaders to discuss gender-based violence. Posters and flyers with the 16 Days slogan were used to raise public awareness of the campaign events, which reached over 200 people. Their campaign was successful in educating the local population on gender-based violence and the dangers of arms, specifically in regards to women and youth.

PEFENAP is a secular organization based in Mali that mobilizes women of all faiths, professions, and from various communities to take strong unified action to contribute to peace and development. PEFENAP promotes peace for economic development and social progress in Mali, and works to improve conflict prevention and unify populations around a culture of peace and non-violence.

Mali

Association des Femmes pour les initiatives de Paix/Association of Women for Peace Initiatives (AFIP)

The Association des Femmes pour les initiatives de Paix (AFIP) launched its 16 Days Campaign under the theme “The fight against gender-based violence: to protect women against armed violence.” AFIP mobilized key religious, political and youth leaders around the issue of gender-based violence to create social change. AFIP organized an open debate, providing a platform for women to share their experiences with gender-based violence. Local radio and television channels broadcast the debates and gave the floor to Muslim religious leaders to discuss gender-based violence. Posters and flyers with the 16 Days slogan were used to raise public awareness of the campaign events, which reached over 200 people. Their campaign was successful in educating the local population on gender-based violence and the dangers of arms, specifically in regards to women and youth.

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Nepal

Women for Peace and Democracy (WPD)

The Peoples Federation for National Peace and Development (PEFENAP) held two events for the 16 Days using the slogan, “Real Men Don’t Need Guns”. PEFENAP coordinated a peace parade at the Limbe market, a location that sees a lot of gun violence, with local vendors, women and and market officials. PEFENAP also held motivational peace talks to empower a large group of secondary school students. The talks encouraged students to consider the impacts of gender-based violence in new ways, promoted advocacy for human rights, peace and education, and discussed challenges faced by Malawans. Gun violence against women and girls was the central topic of discussion. Together, the events reached over 1,000 people through social media, successfully raised public awareness of gender-based violence, unified the public and fostered support for a culture of peace to replace a culture of gun violence.

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Training workshops for men on ways to relate to women without ways to cope with anger and stress. The Catholic Church organized perceptions of gender-based violence and to find alternative South African Police Services, encouraged men to discuss their. The second workshop, a discussion between men and the Social Justice Program also teamed with government and the Gauteng Department of Social Development to organize workshops to raise awareness on gender-based violence. They also raised awareness of Sustainable Development Goal 5.2, which aims to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls by 2030. The Social Justice Program also teamed with government and religious organizations to demonstrate their commitment to transforming lives through public education and outreach. One workshop brought together women from Burundi, DRC, Somalia and Zimbabwe living in South Africa, and focused on helping them understand their rights—including that violence committed against them is punishable by law. The women who participated agreed to organize home visits to talk to families about violence in homes, in collaboration with the Catholic Church and the NGO African Diaspora.

The Social Justice Program of the Catholic Archdiocese of Johannesburg worked with the African Diaspora, the South African Police Services, the Ministry of Women, Ekurhuleni Municipality and the Gauteng Department of Social Development to organize these events, and is committed to transforming lives through public education and outreach. The events reached far beyond the borders of the country, and were linked to wider advocacy efforts within the African Union, calling on governments to end gender violence.

In addition to social media, the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign captured the attention of radio, television, and newspaper outlets around the world. From Bolivia to Burundu to Mali to South Africa, international news outlets lauded the message set forth by the campaign. In Bolivia, for instance, radio stations educated the public on the dangers surrounding firearms and their relation to gender-based violence. FUP/GL of Burundi mobilized public opinion on the issues of gender-based violence by conducting radio interviews, thereby leading to the creation of seven new radio programs as part of the campaign. In Mali, local television and radio stations played a key role in stimulating discussions on gender-based violence by religious leaders. The 16 Days Campaign also sparked the attention of the Catholic Justice and Peace Johannesburg organization of South Africa, in which newspaper coverage of the campaign events raised public awareness on the issues of gender-based violence.

In the Philippines, the Center for Peace Education (CPE) organized two events raising awareness for gender violence during the 16 Days of Activism. CPE created an interactive art exhibit for ASEAN students on the implications of gender-based violence and exposed the intersection between arms and gender in the region. “The Crime Scene and Coordinates,” visually presented the issue of arms and gender violence from a new perspective. One side of the exhibit shared individual cases and incidents of violence, while the other side displayed efforts to counter gender-based violence by civil society and women’s groups. Coloful strings carefully linked each image together so that attendees would visually experience empowerment and associate progress with their community. Attendees were encouraged to post their reflections relating to arms and gender violence on a freedom wall, and post their pictures with the 16 Days sign on a photo wall. The exhibit created a place for attendees to join together and act in solidarity against gender-based violence in the Philippines.

In Trinidad & Tobago, the Women’s Institute for Alternative Development (WINAD) and the Catholic Church organized two events raising awareness for gender violence during the 16 Days of Activism. WINAD advocates for stronger gun laws and focuses on the gendered dimensions of gun violence. As the Caribbean leader of discussions on small arms in the Caribbean, WINAD urges States and NGOs to use gender analysis for research and policy responses. For the 16 Days of Activism, WINAD launched a Facebook campaign to salute and empower women and the organizations dedicated to ending gender-based violence, using the hashtag DStressToHonour. The campaign reached over 1,800 people and raised public awareness of the organizations and individuals working to bring women together for social transformation and justice. WINAD highlighted organizations such as WOMANTRA, the National Muslim Women’s Organisation and Rape Crisis Society, among others who work to end gender-based violence and empower women. The campaign honored women’s rights advocates Hazel Brown, Jacque Burgess and Roberta Clarke for their work to promote the role of women in the political process. The first female Prime Minister of Trinidad & Tobago, Kamla Persad-Bissessar, was honored for her dedication to prioritising the needs of women and girls in the arms control process at the UN General Assembly. WINAD remains committed to strengthening the capacity and social consciousness of women and girls to lead social transformation in Trinidad & Tobago. Trinidad & Tobago has signed and ratified the Arms Treaty and supports international and regional efforts to curb small arms proliferation.

In South Africa, the Catholic Justice and Peace Johannesburg organized a series of workshops to raise awareness on gender-based and gun violence. They also raised awareness of Gun violence rates in the Caribbean region rank among the world’s highest, even though countries in the region prohibit the domestic manufacture, export and import of ammunition and firearms. The Women’s Institute for Alternative Development (WINAD) advocates for stronger gun laws and focuses on the gendered dimensions of gun violence. As the Caribbean leader of discussions on small arms in the Caribbean, WINAD urges States and NGOs to use gender analysis for research and policy responses. For the 16 Days of Activism, WINAD launched a Facebook campaign to salute and empower women and the organizations dedicated to ending gender-based violence, using the hashtag DStressToHonour. The campaign reached over 1,800 people and raised public awareness of the organizations and individuals working to bring women together for social transformation and justice. WINAD highlighted organizations such as WOMANTRA, the National Muslim Women’s Organisation and Rape Crisis Society, among others who work to end gender-based violence and empower women. The campaign honored women’s rights advocates Hazel Brown, Jacque Burgess and Roberta Clarke for their work to promote the role of women in the political process. The first female Prime Minister of Trinidad & Tobago, Kamla Persad-Bissessar, was honored for her dedication to prioritising the needs of women and girls in the arms control process at the UN General Assembly. WINAD remains committed to strengthening the capacity and social consciousness of women and girls to lead social transformation in Trinidad & Tobago. WINAD has signed and ratified the Arms Treaty and supports international and regional efforts to curb small arms proliferation.

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Individuals and organizations around the world used social media as a platform during the 16 Days Campaign to question, call out, and speak up against acts of gender-based violence. IANSA encouraged the use of the hashtags #16Days, #EndGenderBasedViolence, #Envision2030, and #IANSA, available in three languages. Social media campaigns were created to promote discussion and create greater awareness of the issues, seen with #NiUnaMenos (#NotOneLess) in Argentina, #OurstoHonour in Trinidad & Tobago, #GunFreeWeddings in Lebanon, and #MyActionsMatter in Canada. The Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons challenged gender-based violence with its own social media campaign, #WordsOverBullets.

IANSA members in Brazil, Argentina and Israel ran public education campaigns on armed domestic violence and its toll on women. The slogan “Real Men Don’t Need Guns” was used to challenge the culture of violent masculinity in Nepal, Malawi and the Philippines. National governments also participated in the 16 Days Campaign, with French President Macron speaking out publicly against gender-based violence in his country.

Social media can play an important role in mobilizing public support for Sustainable Development Goal 5.2, to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls by 2030. IANSA looks forward to building upon the great momentum made during these 16 Days.