

**Karen Women's Organization Formal Message for
"16 Days of Activism to Stop Violence against Women"**

25th November 2016

Today is the special day, recognized in the world, to bring attention to efforts to stop violence against women. The 25th of November is the **International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women** and is also the opening day for the annual Campaign that will last for 16 days and which highlights community-based activism to stop violence against women all over the world. On this special day KWO welcomes and values everyone who wants to co-operate, and unite with us in their hearts, and who will take part in events and activities in the coming days.

KWO would like to remind all people that this is not a day to express happiness or to feel pleased to be at an opening event. The reason we should not be happy is because today reminds all of us that violence is still used against women. It has not stopped yet; women are still being raped, still being beaten; children are still being raped, still being hurt; and victims of violence still do not get justice. We all have to take on the responsibility to stop violence against women and children in our own corner of the world, and make sure that perpetrators are found and punished and not allowed to walk free. All of us need to show we will not accept violence in our community.

The theme for the Campaign that KWO has chosen this year is **"Strengthen law and promote justice for the protection of women and children"**. From KWO's experience in providing services to women and children who have suffered physical or sexual violence, we see that the law is not enforced effectively, so that the victims are not receiving justice. We believe that strengthening the law and then enforcing that law will be essential to break down and prevent violence used against women and children.

Currently, we say that we need national peace and justice in our country. However, in our own smaller communities, if violence continues and there is no rule of law then we cannot say that we have the peace that we dream of having.

On this day, the Karen Women's Organization would like to call upon our community, especially the men, to take responsibility to stop violence. If you see anyone using violence with women or with children, please find the best way to stop it and then make sure that action is taken with the perpetrators in accordance with the facts and with the law.

We know that in the community many men do not accept the use of violence. And themselves, they are not violent. However there are some men who do use violence, and do not understand their own power and they misuse it. Therefore it is important for male leaders, including young people in the community, to help to protect women and to protect children, by working to strengthen laws and to promote justice. Men of all ages, should help other men by encouraging them to change, explaining to them, not to use violence, and especially not on women and children. Explain to them that this is a crime and if anyone commits it, action can be taken against them.

KWO believes that in our community, everyone including men, do not want to see violence used on mothers, children, wives, aunts and sisters. Therefore we can stand with a united heart to prevent and respond to violence against women.

We encourage everyone to take responsibility in our own corners to let the violence stop. Following the law and promote justice in the community. We have to work hand in hand in our community to show that we do not accept violence in any form, that we promote justice for all, and that the law is strong enough to genuinely offer protection to women and to children.

In solidarity,

Karen Women's Organization (KWO)

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