Global Issues Local Action

25th November
International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

Violence against Women
White Ribbon Day was created by a handful of Canadian men in 1991 on the second anniversary of one man’s massacre of fourteen women in Montreal.

They began the White Ribbon Campaign to urge men to speak out against violence against women.

“We decided that wearing a white ribbon would be a symbol of men’s opposition to men’s violence against women. The WRC is the largest effort in the world of men working to end men’s violence against women. We encourage men to do educational work in schools, workplaces and communities, to support local women’s groups and to raise awareness internationally.”

In 1999, the United Nations General Assembly declared November 25 the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and the White Ribbon has become the symbol for the day.
The 16 days of activism against gender violence is an international campaign, which originates from the first Women’s Global Leadership Institute in 1991.

Participants chose the dates November 25th International Day Against Violence Against Women and December 10th, International Human Rights Day, in order to emphasise that such violence is a violation of human rights.

This 16 day period also highlights other significant dates including November 29th, International Women Human Rights Defenders Day; December 1st, World AIDS Day and December 6th, which marks the Anniversary of the Montreal Massacre.

The 16 Days Campaign has been used as an organising strategy around the world to:

- raise awareness about gender based violence
- establish a link between local and international work
- put pressure onto governments to eradicate the problem
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Statistics from India

45% women slapped, kicked, beaten
75% battered women try to commit suicide
77% men felt their masculinity threatened if their wives did not listen to them
55% women perceive violence as normal part of their marriages
Violence Against Women

THE FACTS IN THE UK

Each year across the UK, 3 million women experience violence and there are many more suffering the legacy of previous abuse.

In the UK this includes:

- *domestic violence*
- *rape and sexual violence*
- *sexual harassment at work*
- *female genital mutilation*
- *forced marriage*
- *crimes in the name of honour*
- *trafficking and sexual exploitation*

Violence against women is mostly committed by men that women know or are in a close relationship with.

Domestic violence is the major cause of death and disability for women between 16 and 44 in Europe.

Violence causes physical damage including miscarriages, forced pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

The direct cost to the economy of domestic violence alone in England and Wales is £6 billion. In addition the human and emotional cost is estimated at £17 billion.

The UK government spends £21 million per year on the military, a sum which could provide universal access to sexual and reproductive health services.
Women and girls are most at risk of violence from men they know, particularly in the family. Rape and sexual torture are used as weapons of war. Violence against women has serious mental, physical and sexual health consequences.

Violence against women is a public health problem. It can be prevented.
Violence Against Women Has No Borders

In war, women are routinely raped by the invading and occupying forces. Currently this includes:

- **Indian armed forces in Kashmir**
- **Sudanese government forces and allies in Darfur**
- **rival militias and state forces in Colombia**

Wherever troops are billeted, prostitution, trafficking and sexual slavery follow. For example:

- **peace-keeping missions in Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo**
- **US bases in Korea.**

The culture of war leads to sexual exploitation by military personnel. When the soldiers return home, the prostitutes are trafficked to other countries.

Between 1995 and 2000 global trafficking in women increased by 500%. Each year at least 500,000 women are sold to local prostitution markets in Europe.

Women who are trafficked over borders bring in around £7billion per year to middle men.
Pornographic images of women in Lads’ Mags contribute to violence against women. They make pretty women into objects. Once someone sees a picture of one woman like that, it is possible they see every woman they meet in the same way; an object.

Even high street advertising uses images of sexual violence to sell their products. This makes violence against women look acceptable.
WORLD AIDS DAY SEMINAR

1 December 2009  9.30–12.30 followed by buffet lunch
Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1

“I want to live my rights in the workplace”
The Nobel Women’s Initiative was established in 2006 by sister Nobel Peace Laureates Jody Williams, Shirin Ebadi, Wangari Maathai, Rigoberta Menchu Tum, Betty Williams and Mairead Maguire.

These six women - representing North and South America, Europe, the Middle East and Africa - have decided to bring together their extraordinary experiences in a united effort for peace with justice and equality.

See their website at http://www.nobelwomensinitiative.org
The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom has worked through the United Nations to establish international agreements that women can use eg CEDAW (the Commission on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women).

The UN’s Security Council Resolution 1325 is an international instrument which is being used to enable women to participate fully at all levels of conflict prevention, resolution and post-conflict situations.

Women in Black is an international movement in opposition to militarism, war and other forms of violence. They hold regular vigils to highlight local and international abuses. The Women in Black vigils were started by Israeli and Palestinian women in 1988 to protest against the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land.

In 1933 the Women’s Cooperative Guild came up with the idea of wearing a white poppy instead of, or as well as, a red poppy on Remembrance Day, in order to show they opposed war and promoted peace.

Celebrities like Nicole Kidman support international campaigns.
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STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

ZERO TOLERANCE
Commit * Act * Demand
We CAN End Violence Against Women

- Learn more about the facts at www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk

- Find out about the UK Human Trafficking Centre in Sheffield at www.ukhtc.org

- Watch the film at http://www.stoprapenow.org

- Join the 16 days electronic discussion Email: cwgl@igc.org

- Plan and take action with a group or on your own

- Join the Women in Black demonstration on the first Saturday of each month: Sheffieldwomeninblack@hotmail.com

- Sign a petition at http://www.gopetition.co.uk/online/24336.html

- Write to your MP about support for women asylum seekers who experience domestic violence. See www.sadf.org.uk

- Join Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom www.wilpf.int.ch/
CONTRIBUTE TO THE DISPLAY

Write a poem or make a statement

Put your writing or other suggestions in the box and we will try to integrate them into the display.
These 3 day residential courses are for volunteers, community groups, local leaders and individuals involved in community action. The courses include:

- Practical learning with case studies, debates, games, videos, internet, visiting speakers
- Developing media skills: interviews, press releases, blogs
- Action planning: for carrying out local campaigns after the course

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Sign a petition supporting African women at http://www.gopetition.co.uk/online/24336.html

Write to your MP about support for women asylum seekers who experience domestic violence; see www.sadf.org.uk

Become a member of Women’s International League For Peace and Freedom; www.wilpf.int.ch/

If you are a man, join the White Ribbon campaign at www.whiteribboncampaign.co.uk

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