



**Press Statement: 2015 16 Days of Activism Campaign
VOICE, ACTION- NOW! Leading the way to end violence against women/girls**

A call on the leaders to End violence against women and girls.

Human rights activists and community members from across Uganda, east and horn of Africa will mobilize their communities and challenge leaders at all levels to end violence against women and girls from November 25th – December 10th, as part of this year's 16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women

Violence against women/girls remains epidemically high in Uganda and hinders social and economic development, it prevents girls and women's equal participation at social and political level, it is extremely costly to families, communities and nations, and it is a profound symbol of gender inequality and social injustice. Additionally, it is a public health concern; World Health Organization reported that 1 in 3 women would experience physical and /or sexual violence in her lifetime.

Currently in Uganda women face violence at alarming rates: 59% of women experience physical violence, while 28% have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime at the hands of intimate partners (2011 Uganda Demographic and health survey). The police Annual crime report 2014 indicates a significant increase in the number of sexual violence cases reported last year; 8,076 cases of defilement, 530 cases of rape and 108 cases of human trafficking were reported at police stations countrywide.

VAW negatively impacts on the economic development of Uganda and increases women's risk to HIV infection. 2012 CEDOVIP report on the Economic Cost of Domestic Violence in Uganda indicates that government loses an estimated 77 billion shillings every year to address domestic violence, service providers (police, LCs, courts of law, health care workers) spend 56 billion shillings, while individuals spend 21.9 billion in lost time at work and out of pocket money to respond to the effects of domestic violence. Domestic violence also remains a driver for the HIV /AIDS prevalence reported at 7.4% according to the MOH indicator survey 2011.

The 16 days of activism against VAW campaign is an annual global event that calls for collective action worldwide to prevent VAW. It spans significant dates including the international Day for the Elimination of VAW (25th Nov), World AIDS Day (Dec 1st), and Human Rights day (10th Dec). These dates were selected to symbolically link violence against women to escalating HIV infection rates and human rights abuses.

This year's National theme is ***From Peace in the Home to peace in the Nation: Making education safe for all!***. Over the 16 days period CEDOVIP as member of the Regional GBV Prevention Network will engage the communities under the regional theme **VOICE, ACTION- NOW! Leading the way to end violence against women/girls.**

Despite the existence of the Domestic Violence Act 2010, domestic violence continues to happen with impunity in Uganda. The theme highlights that we need to demand and implore our leaders to lead the change by using their voice to speak out and their power to take action to end violence against women and girls now! The leaders need to recognize violence against women as a human rights violation and barrier to social and economic development and a fulfillment of government's obligation on the sustainable development Goal number 5 aiming to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by;

- Ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- Eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- Eliminating all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilations among others.

Many laws and policies have been put in place across in response to VAW/G yet are not meaningfully implemented. We therefore call for real action and demand that our leaders:

- Speak out and publically condemn violence against women
- Expedite the approval of the National GBV policy and action plan to ensure resource allocation for the implementation of the DV Act 2010.
- Strengthen the national co-ordinating mechanism with sufficient authority and budget to develop, implement and monitor actions to address violence against women
- Ensure sufficient resources are available to support the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act for the prevention and response to violence against women

This is the time to make policies and expressed commitments work for women! CEDOVIP in partnership with the police, community activists, local leaders and civil society; will conduct activities like community dialogues, press conferences, door to door activities, in Kampala and the Busoga region to challenge our leaders to demonstrate their leadership by taking practical steps to end violence against women and girls.

Small actions and words by every one every day can make a difference. Call upon the government to allocate funding towards implementation of the Domestic Violence Act 2010, learn about the benefits of using the Domestic Violence Act, reach out to girls and women experiencing violence, and teach girls and boys that women and girls have a right to live free from violence.

Join the activism! Demand accountability from your leaders.

Use your voice, take action – now!
