

JOINT PRESS STATEMENT

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (VAW)

Theme: Reimagining Feminist Futures: Rising in Solidarity, Thriving Out of Crisis

Global Theme: UNITE! Invest to Prevent Violence Against Women & Girls – End Digital Violence Against All Women and Girls

INTRODUCTION

As Uganda stands alongside the global community to commemorate the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV), the Domestic Violence Act Coalition (DVAC) reaffirms its unwavering commitment to advancing the dignity, safety, and freedoms of all women and girls. This annual campaign demands courageous action, transformative change, and bold political will to dismantle the patriarchal structures that uphold violence in our homes, communities, institutions, and digital spaces.

This year's global theme; **“UNITE! Invest to Prevent Violence Against Women & Girls – End Digital Violence Against All Women and Girls”** underscores a critical truth: **ending violence requires sustained investment**. Without financing prevention, justice, survivor-centered services, and feminist organizing, violence remains unchecked and survivors continue to face barriers to healing and justice.

The regional theme; **“Reimagining Feminist Futures: Rising in Solidarity, thriving out of Crisis”** speaks to women's capacity to organize, resist, and lead transformation, even under the weight of gender backlash, economic instability, political repression, digital harms, and climate crises. Across Uganda and Africa, women's movements are building powerful futures grounded in care, solidarity, and justice. This moment calls all of us; governments, civil society, communities, media, and individuals, to rise with them.

Context

Uganda continues to face persistently high levels of violence against women and girls. National statistics reveal the staggering magnitude of violations: **45%** of women aged 15 and above have experienced physical violence; **36%** have endured sexual violence; **54%** of ever-married women have faced emotional, sexual, or physical violence from an intimate partner (UBOS).

These represent shattered families, broken bodies, lost opportunities, and dreams cut short.

The 2024 Uganda Police Force Annual Crime Report shows: **12,424 registered GBV cases**, including **1,607 cases of rape**, **12,317 cases of defilement**.

Most survivors never see justice according to the UN Women's Beijing+30 Monitoring Report (2023) that shows that only **26.6%** of reported cases were investigated and taken to court and only **4.8%** resulted in convictions. This extreme impunity emboldens perpetrators, silences victims, and erodes public confidence in the justice system.

Uganda loses approximately **UGX 73 billion** annually due to GBV, equivalent to millions of dollars lost in healthcare costs, legal processes, lost productivity, school dropout, disability, and long-term trauma. These national losses undermine Uganda's development agenda, strain institutions, and impede progress toward Vision 2040 and the SDGs.

The Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development (MGLSD); the institution mandated to coordinate GBV response receives only **3% of the national budget** for FY 2025/2026. This chronic underfunding has forced shelters to close, reduced the availability of psychosocial services, limited community prevention efforts, and disrupted survivor referral pathways.

Women and girls are increasingly targeted online through: Cyberstalking and online harassment, non-consensual image sharing, deepfake sexual content, online sexual exploitation, digital blackmail and extortion, surveillance and cyberbullying. These forms of violence silence women's voices, shrink civic space, and erode women's confidence to participate in digital economies, leadership, and public life.

Despite multiple overlapping crises, economic pressures, political tensions, climate emergencies, digital harms, and gender backlash, women across Uganda and the region continue to resist, advocate, and organize. Feminist movements are building new visions of justice, care, and safety, pushing society toward a future where all women and girls are free and empowered.

DVAC KEY CALLS TO ACTION

Ending violence is a **collective responsibility**, requiring courage, solidarity, investment, and leadership across all sectors of society;

1. TO THE GOVERNMENT OF UGANDA

DVAC calls on the Government to demonstrate political will, accountability, and leadership by:

a) Strengthening enforcement of existing laws

- Fully implement the **Domestic Violence Act (2010)**, Children Act, FGM Act, Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, and related legislation.
- Ensure that police, health workers, and judicial officers receive specialized training on survivor-centered approaches.
- Improve coordination between institutions to ensure timely investigation and prosecution of GBV cases.

The immediate adoption of the following bills is essential: Marriage Bill, Sexual Offences Bill, National Legal Aid Bill, Witness Protection Bill. These laws will close major gaps in justice delivery and strengthen survivor protections.

b) Investing in prevention and response

- Increase national budget allocations to MGLSD.
- Fund shelters, psychosocial support, legal aid, and community prevention activities.
- Support feminist, grassroots, and survivor-led organizations that form the backbone of community resilience.

c) Ending technology-facilitated GBV

- Fast-track a National Strategy on Technology Facilitated Gender Based Violence.
- Establish digital safety hotlines, reporting mechanisms, and survivor support.
- Enhance women's digital literacy and online security.

d) Ratifying continental frameworks

Uganda must urgently review, sign, and ratify the **AU Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls**, ensuring it criminalizes marital rape, child marriage, Female Genital Mutilation and other harmful practices

2. TO CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS (CSOs)

The Domestic Violence Act Coalition urges CSOs to:

- Strengthen solidarity across movements and sectors.
- Center grassroots feminist voices and ensure resources reach local, rural, and marginalized communities.
- Engage men and boys to dismantle patriarchal norms.
- Generate evidence on emerging GBV trends, including digital violence.
- Monitor government commitments and hold institutions accountable.

3. TO COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Communities remain the first line of prevention. We call on all Ugandans to:

- Challenge harmful gender norms and stereotypes.
- Speak out against domestic and digital violence.
- Support survivors with dignity and confidentiality.
- Promote respect, equality, and non-violence in homes and relationships.
- Engage cultural, religious, and local leaders as champions for gender justice.

4. TO DONOR AGENCIES AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

DVAC urges partners to:

- Invest in long-term, flexible, feminist funding.
- Support innovation to combat digital violence.
- Strengthen the capacity of local organizations and survivor-led initiatives.
- Prioritize rural, refugee, and underserved communities.
- Hold government accountable for gender equality commitments.

5. TO THE MEDIA

We call on the media to:

- Report ethically, safeguarding survivor dignity.
- Interrupt victim-blaming narratives.
- Amplify stories of survivor resilience and feminist activism.
- Dedicate platforms to GBV awareness, digital safety, and civic education.

Use storytelling to humanize GBV statistics and mobilize public action.

OUR DEMANDS

DVAC demands:

- An end to all forms of impunity for GBV and digital violence.
- Adoption and enforcement of a national framework on TFGBV.
- Increased funding for GBV prevention, justice, and care.
- Inclusion of feminist leadership and survivor voices in decision-making.

Dismantling of harmful gender norms and patriarchal structures.

Conclusion

The Domestic Violence Act Coalition envisions a Uganda where every woman and girl; regardless of age, ability, class, location, or identity; lives free from violence, fear, and discrimination. A Uganda where survivors find justice and healing, where laws protect rather than harm, where institutions respond rather than fail, and where solidarity becomes a source of collective strength.

As we mark these 16 Days of Activism, we reimagine feminist futures where communities heal, systems transform, and women and girls not only survive but **thrive**.

Together, we rise. Together, we resist. Together, we build a future where every woman and every girl lives free, safe, and empowered.

Together, we can create a world where women and girls thrive, NOT just survive.

Issued by:

The Domestic Violence Act Coalition (DVAC)

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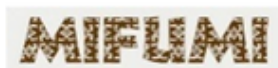


Thank you!



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No.	Organization
1	Raising Voices
2	CEDOVIP
3	UWOPA
4	LANDNET
5	Platform for Labour Action
6	HER initiative
7	Uganda Women's network
8	Bahai Faith
9	Terrewode
10	Women pro bono initiative
11	Action Against Violence Uganda
12	Coalition on Girls Empowerment
13	ACORD Uganda
14	Mifumi Project
15	UGANET
16	Centre for Women in Justice
17	CEDOVIP
18	ACFODE
19	ACTION AID UGANDA
20	Akina Mama Wa Africa

21	FIDA Uganda
22	Care International
23	CEWIGO
24	COACT 1325
25	COFTU
26	KCCC
27	Moslem Center for Justice and law
29	NAWOU
30	Oxfam International
31	School of women and Gender
32	UMWA
33	Plan International
34	Memprow
35	Adovic
36	SIHA
37	Institute of social transformation
38	WEGCDA
39	Foundation for Human Rights
40	Nyaka Foundation
41	Equitable Budgets for Women and Children's Initiative
42	UWONET