



Karen Women's Organization (KWO)
Formal Message for
“16 Days of Activism to Stop Violence Against Women”

25th November 2019

Today, November 25, marks the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, which is recognized world-wide as a day of great significance. The efforts of women and male allies who committed themselves to advocating for an end to gender-based violence ensures the importance of this day is not lost. In recognition of these efforts, which continues by activists around the world, KWO calls on everyone to make a commitment to stop violence. Today also marks the beginning of the annual 16-Days of Activism Campaign Against Gender-Based Violence. The final day of the campaign is December 10th, which marks International Human Rights Day. KWO welcomes and values everyone in the community who chooses to participate in events and activities during the 16 Day Campaign to show their solidarity with us to achieve this aim.

The theme that KWO has selected for the campaign this year is “Use your power to protect”. We believe that every human being has some power to protect themselves and others. However, not everyone uses that power, when they have the opportunity to protect themselves, or protect others. People who have power need to use it to protect people who are vulnerable. Women and children are most likely to suffer from oppressive systems that permit rape, physical and mental abuse and limit access to basic services. If those who have power do not use it to protect victims, they will never get justice. Based on our experience, KWO has seen that justice is only served when the community and leaders work together using their power to protect victims.

We decided on the theme of “Use your power to protect” because we would like to remind everyone that we all have a responsibility not to misuse our power. The power that we have must not be used to undermine the rule of law. Under the law, everyone is equal regardless of gender or socio-economic status or differences defined by the community. The use of power must be in line with the law in order to promote justice for community harmony and prosperity.

All of us have a responsibility to use the power that we have by following legal procedures set up by the justice system, through reporting human rights abuses and any acts of injustice. It is very important that leaders and people in positions of responsibility at different levels understand that they have a greater obligation to ensure safe, accessible paths to justice because they have more power to respond to perpetrators than normal civilians have. Those who commit gender-based violence and various human rights abuses must be punished according to the law for the crimes they commit and must not be granted impunity.

Additionally, KWO would like to remind everyone that women and children are still suffering from abuse and harassment in different forms as a means of pressure and control. Such kind of violence MUST NOT happen or be tolerated, and yet we still see it happening everywhere in our country and around the world. Women survivors struggle to get justice at various levels of the justice system in refugee camps, in villages, in towns and at national

levels. There remains a great need for those tasked with protecting the people to promote a system that improves and promotes justice in our community.)

KWO would like to urge all people in our community, leaders, and responsible people, that every time you see or hear someone using violence against women or children to seek the best and safest way to stop that violence and report the case. Each of us has our own power that we can use to stop violence. Violence will only stop when everyone in our community takes full responsibility to follow our duties outlined by the law to promote justice for our community.

Let's work together to ensure everyone in our community will enjoy genuine peace and prosperity.

In solidarity,

Karen Women's Organization(KWO)