



Karen Women's Organization (KWO)

Formal Message for "16 Days of Activism to Stop Violence Against Women"

November 25 marks the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. The global 2020 theme is "from awareness to accountability." KWO recognizes the efforts of women and men allies who have committed themselves to advocating for an end to gender-based violence. Their dedication and willingness ensure that the significance of this day is not lost. KWO calls on everyone to make a commitment to the 16 Days of Activism by doing something 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 is International Human Rights Day. KWO welcomes and values everyone from all over the world who chooses to participate in different kinds of events and activities during the 16 Day Campaign to show their solidarity.

The theme that KWO has selected for the campaign this year is "**legal accountability for everyone**". We believe that all people, regardless of their background, have the right to benefit from legal accountability. However, not everyone has the same access and power to uphold it. Civilians, including survivors of violence, should have access to basic information about how to hold perpetrators accountable. Power holders should also be aware of how to guarantee legal accountability. Women and children are more likely to suffer from oppressive legal systems that permit rape, physical and mental abuse and limit access to basic services. If those who have power do not use legal accountability to protect victims, and if those who are vulnerable do not have the power to use legal accountability, then victims will never see justice. Based on the experience of KWO, justice is only served when everyone in the community can practice legal accountability for everyone without fear.

We decided on the theme of "**legal accountability for everyone**" because KWO would like to remind everyone that we all have an equal legal responsibility. Under the law, everyone is equal regardless of gender or socio-economic status or differences defined by the community. Upholding legal accountability must be in line with the law in order to promote impartiality for community harmony and prosperity.

KWO urges everyone to help take part in stopping any kinds of violence. Women and children are still suffering from sexual harassment and abuse in different forms as a means of pressure and control. This violence **MUST STOP** and not be tolerated anywhere. Women, girls and child survivors struggle to get justice at various levels of the legal systems in refugee camps, in villages, towns and at national levels. There are systems established to hold perpetrators accountable for the crimes they commit, so that the community can access justice. However, there remains a great need to guarantee civilians and authorities follow and implement procedures in place to promote rule of law in the community.

KWO calls on all people in our community to seek the safest way to stop violence and report the incident when you see or hear someone using violence against women. Violence will only stop when everyone in our community takes full responsibility and uses their legal rights to advocate for victims.

Let's remain committed to working together to ensure everyone in our community knows their rights and can access legal accountability so that we all can help promote justice and maintain peace and harmony in our community.

In solidarity,
The Karen Women's Organization