# About the 16 Days of Activism Campaign

## What is it?

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign begins from the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on 25 November and ends with International Human Rights Day on 10 December– highlighting that violence against women is a fundamental violation of human rights.

During the 16 Days of Activism, people around the world unite to raise awareness about gender-based violence, challenge discriminatory attitudes and call for improved laws and services to end violence against women for good.

## A history of the campaign

In the Dominican Republic on 25 November 1960, sisters and political activists Patria, Minerva and Maria Teresa Mirabal were killed on orders from the dictatorship government.

The sisters became symbols of the feminist resistance, and in commemoration of their deaths 25 November was declared International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women in Latin America, later being recognised as a UN International Day in 1999. In June 1991, the Centre for Women’s Global Leadership (CWGL), alongside participants of the first Women’s Global Institute on Women, Violence and Human Rights, called for a global campaign of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.

It has since become an important time for organisations and individuals around the world to raise awareness that women’s rights are human rights, and that violence against women is a fundamental violation of those rights.

## Why orange?

As a bright and optimistic colour, the campaign utilises orange to represents a brighter future free from violence against women and girls.

## Why does it matter?

Violence against women continues to occur at an alarming scale in every country in the world. Too often it is accepted as normal behaviour and the global culture of discrimination against women allows violence to occur with impunity.

Calls for action like the 16 days of Activism are crucial because they shine a spotlight on the issue of violence against women.

They are a moment to create public awareness about what needs to change to prevent it from happening in the first place at local, national, regional and international levels.

## Who should take part?

We all have a role to play in preventing gender-based violence.

We need to challenge the attitudes that perpetuate, rationalise and normalise this kind of violence and deny women’s right to safety and respect. Within this, men have an important role to play in challenging harmful masculine stereotypes and behaviours.

Shifting these behaviours is hard and slow, but gender equality means all of us working together to achieve true, systemic change.

# About gender-based violence

## What is gender-based violence?

The term refers to all forms of violence directed at someone because of their gender. This includes acts that cause or could cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering including threats of harm or coercion, in public or in private life. It is most often used to refer to men’s violence against women.

## What are its drivers?

Research broadly shows that this type of violence happens as a result of gender inequality - a system where women and men do not have equal status, power, resources or opportunities in their society and are not valued or respected in the same way.

As a result, the drivers of this kind of violence are distinctly gendered. According to Our Watch, these are:

1. Condoning of violence against women

When societies, institutions or communities support or condone violence against women, levels of such violence are higher.

1. Men’s control of decision-making and limits to women’s independence in public and private life

This can happen in private relationships - where men who control decision-making, limit women’s autonomy and hold rigid ideas on acceptable female behaviour are more likely to be violent - and in the public sphere - where men’s greater control over power, resources and decision-making sends a message that women have less value and are therefore less worthy of respect.

1. Rigid gender stereotyping and dominant forms of masculinity

Promoting these has the effect of reproducing the conditions that create gender inequality and underpins gendered violence.

1. Male peer relations and masculinity that emphasise aggression, dominance and control

## Statistics on gender-based violence

* In 2022, 60 women were killed as a result of gender-based violence in Australia
* Globally, five women or girls are killed every hour by someone in their own family
* An estimated 736 million women - almost one in three - have been subjected to physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence, non-partner sexual violence, or both at least once in their life
* 26% of women aged 15 and older have been subjected to intimate partner violence
* 24% of adolescent girls who have been in a relationship have experience physical and/or sexual violence from and intimate partner
* 16% of young women aged 15 to 24 have experience physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner in the past 12 months
* Less than 40% of women who experience violence seek help of any sort