



UN  
Iraq



## Factsheet: 16 Days of Activism Campaign

25 November - 10 December 2013

The 16 Days of Activism Campaign is an international campaign taking place every year from 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) to 10 December (Human Rights Day).

In 1991, a group of 23 women activists from around the world graduated from the Global Leadership Institute at Rutgers University, New Jersey. They decided, upon return to their respective countries, to organize a 16-day campaign against Sexual and other forms of Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) to increase awareness, lobby, and advocate against gender inequality and gender-based violence.

The campaign started as a local and grassroots awareness and advocacy campaign in the home countries of the 23 graduates of the Women's Global Leadership Program and quickly grew into a major anti-SGBV campaign throughout the world. The UN General Assembly officially designated November 25 as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) in 1999.

Today, the 16 Days of Activism Campaign is celebrated widely and supports individual activists and organizations around the world who work towards eliminating gender-based violence. Over 4,100 organizations in approximately 172 countries have participated in the 16 Days Campaign since 1991.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE CAMPAIGN:

- to raise awareness about gender-based violence as a human rights issue at the local, national, regional, and international levels;
- to strengthen local work around violence against women;

- to establish a clear link between local and international work to end violence against women;
- to provide a forum where organizers can develop and share new and effective strategies that demonstrate the solidarity of women around the world organizing against violence against women; and
- to create tools to urge governments to implement promises made to eliminate violence against women.

### DATES LINKED TO 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM CAMPAIGN:

- 25 November** – International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW)
- 27 November** – UN Iraq event to promote the 16 Days of Activism Campaign
- 29 November** – International Women Human Rights Defenders Day
- 10 December** – International Human Rights Day

**This year's theme:** Since 1991, the campaign has been carried out under different themes. This year's theme is **From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World**. The theme aims to underline the importance of a violence-free home in achieving world peace and to emphasize that no matter how much we try to resolve conflicts in the world, we cannot claim success unless we win the fight against all forms of violence at home.

### Why is the 16 Days of Activism Campaign important to the UN and its partners?

Sexual and gender-based violence can happen to boys/men or girls/women. However, as a result of imbalanced power relationships and deep-rooted gender inequality stemming from different social, cultural, economic, and political factors, more girls and women are at the receiving end of this violence.

Hand in hand, let us create safe homes and spaces for Iraqi women and girls.

### SOME DATA ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN IRAQ:

- Nineteen (19) per cent of girls in the 15-19 age group are married, with nearly the same percentage in urban and rural areas, reaching 21 per cent in the central and southern governorates, and dropping to 10 per cent in the provinces of Kurdistan<sup>1</sup>
- Forty-six (46) per cent of currently married women were exposed to at least one form of spousal violence: 44.5 per cent to emotional violence, 9.3 per cent to sexual violence, and 5.5 per cent to physical violence<sup>2</sup>
- Twenty-five (25) per cent of women want to use family planning methods but are unable to use them, so they become pregnant unintentionally<sup>3</sup>
- A National Strategy on Combating Violence against Women for 2013-2017 was endorsed in March 2013 by the Council of Ministers
- Twelve per cent of women aged 15-49 years have experienced some form of female genital mutilation (FGM), and the prevalence of FGM in some provinces in Kurdistan reaches 44 per cent<sup>4</sup>
- Some 28.2 per cent of women aged 12 years or older are illiterate, more than double the male rate of 13 per cent, and the percentage increases significantly for young women aged 15-24 living in rural areas, which have an illiteracy rate of 33.6 per cent<sup>5</sup>

- There are 16 Family Protection Units within Police Stations at the Federal Level and 16 hotlines<sup>6</sup>
- The National Database on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence provides for unified and consistent reporting through the Ministries of Interior at both the Federal and Regional levels<sup>7</sup>
- The average enrollment in primary school for females is 87.4 per cent, with big disparities between urban and rural areas where the percentage of female enrollment falls to 77 per cent compared to 90 per cent male enrolment<sup>8</sup>
- Eighty-four women die in childbirth per 100,000 live births<sup>9</sup>
- Fourteen per cent of women are working or actively seeking work, compared to 73 per cent of men. The unemployment rate is 68 per cent for women with a bachelor's degree and 41 per cent for women with higher education<sup>10</sup>

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> UNFPA/ VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN IRAQ FROM A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

<sup>2</sup> CSO/KRSO/UNFPA/HEALTH SURVEY(I-WISH 2011)

<sup>3</sup> UNFPA/ VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN IRAQ FROM A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

<sup>4</sup> UNICEF/MULTIPLE INDICATOR CLUSTER SURVEY 2011

<sup>5</sup> CSO/KRSO/UN, IRAQ KNOWLEDGE NETWORK 2011

<sup>6</sup> SUPPORTED BY UNDP

<sup>7</sup> SUPPORTED BY UNDP

<sup>8</sup> CSO/KRSO/UNICEF, MICS 2011

<sup>9</sup> WHO/COSIT/KRSO/MOH, IRAQ FAMILY HEALTH SURVEY 2006-2007

<sup>10</sup> CSO/KRSO/UN, IRAQ KNOWLEDGE NETWORK 2011