

Op-Ed: Embassy of the United States Recognizes 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence

In December 1999, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed November 25 as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. In 1991, Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, together with 23 participants in the first Women's Global Institute on Women, Violence, and Human Rights, called for a global campaign of "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence," linking the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on November 25 to International Human Rights Day on December 10. The link between women's rights and human rights was also proclaimed by then-First Lady Hillary Clinton in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence campaign, which began on November 25, offers an opportunity to renew the global commitment to free women and girls from violence. The United States Embassy, with support from local partners, organized a variety of events in recognition of the campaign across Georgia. We have sponsored domestic violence trainings; hosted public forums to raise awareness of gender based violence (GBV), held roundtables to discuss GBV and gender-related stereotypes, and published articles in national magazines. In addition, Peace Corps Georgia has spearheaded a campaign to raise awareness about GBV through gender specific lessons, conversation clubs, trainings, presentations, and other activities. Volunteers have worked with their local communities to identify their specific needs and design their activities together with members of their communities.

No democracy can progress when half of the population is marginalized and mistreated, and subjected to discrimination. For this reason, the United States has made gender equality and women's empowerment a core focus of our foreign policy. When women and girls can live free from violence and are afforded equal opportunities in education, healthcare, employment and political participation, they lift up their families, their communities, and their nations, and act as agents of change. As Secretary Kerry has stated, "Investing in girls is a critical part of our duty to promote prosperity, security, and peace around the world. Empowered girls grow up empowered women. They grow up to be empowered mothers, leaders, and innovators." Please visit the U.S. Embassy's website and Facebook page for more information on how you can contribute to ending gender violence through the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence campaign.

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