



**Statement on the commemoration of  
16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence  
25 November 2012**

The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (the Forum) joins the rest of the world in commemorating **16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence** between the 25<sup>th</sup> of November and the 10<sup>th</sup> of December. This is an occasion during which individuals, families, groupings and citizens reflect on the violence that is perpetrated against women on the basis of gender and commit themselves to the charting of a future in which women can be free from violence both inside and outside their homes.

For the second year in succession the theme ***From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Let's Challenge Militarism and End Violence Against Women!*** has been retained underlining the importance of peace in the home. We are also prompted to consider our contribution, or lack thereof, to discouraging and ending practices of violence against women, especially organised violence and torture that can only be deliberately and systematically executed.

Practices of violations against women incorporate political and domestic violence; economic deprivation; human trafficking; sexual harassment; child marriages; pledging of virgins and wife inheritance among others. Although acknowledgement of violence against women has been made, at national level through the enactment of the **Domestic Violence Act** and establishment of the Anti-Domestic Violence Council and at international level through treaties such as the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**, the 2012 Zimstat Quarterly Digest of Statistics revealed that 15 women are raped in Zimbabwe daily while the ZRP Victim Friendly Unit

reports indicate remarkable increases in domestic violence cases since 2008. Noble government and inter-governmental organisations' efforts to deter and criminalise violence against women should be complimented by behaviour changes and intolerance to violence against women by the entirety of the Zimbabwean society.

In a society that is still reeling from acts of political violence that shamelessly did not spare women and little children, the calls by the country's political leaders for all of us to desist from any form of violence should be deterring everyone from breaking the law or committing dastardly acts, that are shunned by even those allegedly fermenting the violence. The Forum commends members of civil society who have complemented the responsibility of government by defending the interests of women and providing various forms of assistance to militate against the impact of violence against them. It however regrets that state agents have been tried and found guilty of perpetrating numerous acts of violence against the country's citizens, including women. It is also shocking that organisations which provide medical and psychosocial support to victims of all forms of violence, have earned the mistrust and wrath of the state, leading to their harassment and arbitrary arrests.

The Forum urges society to respect the dignity of women and implores the Government of Zimbabwe to put in place measures that ensure adequate protection of women, against political violence by militia groups and uniformed forces as we approach the 2013 electoral period.

## Forum members

- Amnesty International-Zimbabwe
- Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe
- Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe
- Justice for Children Trust
- Legal Resources Foundation
- Media Institute of Southern Africa-Zimbabwe
- Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe
- Non-violent Action and Strategies for Social Change
- Research and Advocacy Unit
- Students Solidarity Trust
- Transparency International-Zimbabwe
- Women of Zimbabwe Arise
- Zimbabwe Association for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of the Offender
- Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights
- Zimbabwe Civic Education Trust
- Zimbabwe Human Rights Association
- Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights
- Zimbabwe Peace Project
- Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association

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