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16 Days Campaign Challenges Militarism and Puts the Spotlight on Ending Violence Against Women

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On November 25, 2010, the Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL), based at Rutgers University, will launch the annual 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence Campaign. Since 1991, through the annual campaign, CWGL has worked with more than **3,400 organizations from 164 countries** to raise awareness about the pervasiveness and numerous forms of violence women face. This year's theme, *Structures of Violence: Defining the Intersections of Militarism and Violence Against Women*, puts the spotlight on militarism and its links to perpetrating and perpetuating violence against women. From Brazil to Fiji, the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Campaign has grown into a powerful platform to educate the public and governments about violence against women and its effects on human rights.

"Militaristic environments breed violence against women, political and social repression, as well as impunity. Militarism as an ideology creates a culture of fear and supports the use of violence, aggression, and military interventions for settling disputes and enforcing economic and political interests," stated Radhika Balakrishnan, Executive Director of the Center for Women's Global Leadership. That is why CWGL envisions this year's theme as a multi-year project and believes that highlighting the intersection between militarism and violence against women is crucial.

A sampling of events planned for this year's campaign demonstrates the global reach and creative activism of organizations working to eliminate violence against women:

- In Bamenda, **Cameroon** an organization is hosting a human rights film festival with a focus on gender-based violence;
- There will be a series of events held in Delhi, **India** focusing on women's safety in cities and the importance of building cultures of non-violence, including a photo exhibition, a half-marathon, and a "Claim your city by the night walk";
- The gender department of the Puerto Deseado municipality in **Argentina** is organizing a mural commemoration. Other events include a debate, presentations, a play and book fair on issues related to violence against women and girls.

Here, in New York City on November 29th from 4-6pm, CWGL will host *A Feminist Dialogue on Militarism and Military Intervention* at the Church Center for the United Nations, 2nd Floor. The dialogue will feature dynamic speakers and will be an effort to discuss differences within the feminist movement regarding these issues. The event will be followed by a candlelight vigil in Dag Hammarskjold Park at 6:30pm.

CWGL encourages everyone to visit <http://16dayscwgl.rutgers.edu/campaign-calendar> for further information regarding events and visit <http://16dayscwgl.rutgers.edu/> to learn more about the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence Campaign.

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence is an international campaign originating from the first Women's Global Leadership Institute (WGLI) sponsored by the Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) at Rutgers University in 1991. Participants chose the dates November 25, International Day Against Violence Against Women, and December 10, International Human Rights Day, in order to symbolically link violence against women and human rights and to emphasize that such violence is a human rights violation.