

Spotlight on 16 days of activism

Why 16 days?

16 days of activism is wrapped around two key days – running from 25th November, which is the [International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls](#), to 10th December, which is [Human Rights Day](#). These dates were specifically chosen to emphasise that VAWG is a violation of human rights.

[White Ribbon Day](#) coincides with the start of 16 days as men's commitment to ending VAWG.

How did 16 days come about?

The 16 days campaign was first started in 1991. On 25th November 1960, three sisters from the Dominican Republic were beaten to death and dumped at the bottom of a cliff by the then President's secret police. The Mirabel sisters who had been activists, actively opposed the cruelty and systematic violence of the Trujillo dictatorship, became symbols of the feminist resistance. In commemoration of their deaths, 25th November was declared International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women in Latin America in 1980. Between then and formal recognition of 16 days by the United Nations in 1999, there were significant UN [commitments](#) and [declarations](#) to eliminate VAWG and all forms of discrimination against women. Scotland's [Equally Safe Strategy](#) stems from the global commitment to [gender equality](#) adopted by all UN member states in 2015.

[White Ribbon](#) developed from the killing of 14 women by a 25-year male in Montreal in 1989, because of his hatred towards women. In 1991 Canadian men began wearing a white ribbon as a symbol of men's opposition to men's VAWG. The movement grew from there with the UK taking on the campaign in 2004.

What is the purpose of the 16 days campaign?

- To raise awareness about gender-based VAWG as a human rights issue at local, national, regional and international levels - #LightUp;
- To strengthen local action to prevent and tackle gender based VAWG - #WhatNext;
- And in doing so, be a springboard for the other 349 days of the year!