16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

25 NOVEMBER – 10 DECEMBER 2013

16-day prayer guide for individuals, groups and churches

‘Violence against women and girls takes many form and is widespread throughout the globe. It includes rape, domestic violence, harassment at work, abuse in school, female genital mutilation and sexual violence in armed conflicts... I urge governments and partners around the world to harness the energy, ideas and leadership of young people to help us to end this pandemic of violence.’

BAN KI-MOON, UN SECRETARY GENERAL

The 16-days of Activism against Gender-based Violence runs from the 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) to 10 December (International Human Rights Day). In 2013 the focus of the campaign is ‘From peace in the home to peace in the world: let’s challenge militarism and end violence against women’ which is similar to the previous year.

We live in a world where one in every three women and girls is expected to face violence in some form in their lifetime (United Nations). It is a staggering statistic but, more than that, it is heart-breaking: it breaks the heart of our God who created and loves each and every one of us, whether male or female.

‘THERE IS NEITHER JEW NOR GENTILE, NEITHER SLAVE NOR FREE, NOR IS THERE MALE AND FEMALE, FOR YOU ARE ALL ONE IN CHRIST JESUS.’

GALATIANS 3:28
A 16-DAY PRAYER GUIDE

This prayer guide can be used by individuals, home groups or churches to follow the 16-days campaign (or at any time of the year), to pray into gender-based violence issues. Here you will find a short story for each of the 16-days to illustrate how Tearfund South Africa and partners are taking steps to journey with and enable the most vulnerable who have suffered the impact and pain of sexual violence in their homes and communities to move forward with hope. These stories come from KwaZulu Natal, the province devastated by twin epidemics of sexual violence and HIV. NB. All names in the stories below have been changed to protect identities.

‘By standing up against violence against women and girls, we will come closer to peace, justice and equality.’

MICHELLE BACHELET, FORMER UN WOMEN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DAY 1 CHURCHES IN SOUTH AFRICA STAND UP.

On 25 November 2013 local churches across South Africa will unite to take a stand against sexual violence, which affects 1 in 4 women across the country.

Supported by Tearfund SA, The Anglican Archbishop for the province of Southern Africa, The Most Reverend Archbishop Thabo Makgoba will launch Tearfund’s report ‘Breaking the Silence’ and invite leadership across the country, from government, civil society, other faiths to join hands in launching ‘We Will Speak Out - South Africa’, a coalition committed to working together to end sexual violence in South Africa.

PRAY FOR:

The launch of the Breaking the Silence report at St Albans Cathedral in Pretoria, South Africa, on Monday 25 November. Pray for a meaningful event that gives birth to renewed optimism, motivation and practical action.

‘South Africa, our beautiful and incredible nation, has triumphed over much, but has also failed much as our vulnerable women and girls have gone through abuse and rape. The numbers are staggering. The avenues for seeking justice and healing are inadequate. The silent pain is deafening...Our faith teaches and gives us the foundation to build a violence-free South Africa where men, women, boys and girls work together to bring peace for all. We speak out with one voice putting aside our differences and division.’

THE MOST REVD THABO MAKGOBA, ANGLICAN ARCHBISHOP OF CAPE TOWN AND METROPOLITAN OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA
DAY 2  
CHURCHES TOGETHER. A FORCE FOR GOOD.

On 26 November 2013 in Pretoria, church leaders will participate in a crucial meeting to develop practical plans for how they and many other local churches could respond and end violence in their communities. The Archbishop will take these plans to the Government.

PRAY FOR:

- Key church leaders attending the subsequent action-planning meeting on Tuesday 26 November.
- Pray that concrete plans will be put in place, resulting in powerful transformation for women and girls across South Africa.

‘THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS ON ME, BECAUSE HE HAS ANOINTED ME TO PREACH GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM FREEDOM FOR THE PRISONERS AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT FOR THE BLIND, TO RELEASE THE OPPRESSED.’
LUKE 4:18

DAY 3  
SURVIVOR STORY, DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA

Noluthando Mkhize was a teenager when she was raped over a period of time by close family members – her brother, cousins and uncle. She was cast out by her family and became a sex worker where she met a man whom she later married. Her husband took advantage of her vulnerable situation and abused her physically, sexually and emotionally. Noluthando left her husband but returned to sex work in order to survive and became an alcoholic for many years. Noluthando has found temporary refuge staying in the home of a survivor of domestic violence and is willing and eager to change her future. However, Noluthando is facing many challenges, she urgently needs to find an alternative means of earning an income.

PRAY FOR:

- God to heal women and girls of the pain and suffering caused by sexual violence, especially when most of them face their first experience at home.
- Noluthando to continue to stay off the streets and find an alternative means of income.
Nombuso Thuli had a rough upbringing in a township in Pietermaritzburg and was raped as a teenager, a trauma that stayed with her for a very long time because she did not receive any form of trauma counselling. As a teenager she found herself getting into different sexual relationships which lacked trust and enjoyment and which ended in painful experiences of betrayal and violence. During this time she became pregnant and experienced further turmoil when she discovered that she was HIV positive. She gave in to alcohol abuse and this made her increasingly vulnerable to abusive behaviour which exacerbated her pain and trauma.

However, Nombuso has turned away from alcohol abuse and her painful experiences have alerted her to the need to support and help young children in her township and she now works for a local community-based organisation supporting vulnerable and abused children.

PRAY FOR:

• access to and availability of services such as trauma counselling and treatment for HIV, desperately needed by survivors of sexual violence
• God to bring transformation of survivors’ painful experiences of sexual violence and strength to all those who work to protect others from violence

FACTS & FIGURES

• 71,500 sexual offence cases were reported to the Police in 2008/2009.
• According to the Medical Research Council, the real sexual assault figures in South Africa may be closer to 643,500 per year, which means that someone is raped or indecently assaulted every minute in South Africa (estimated 643,500 sexual assaults per year)

DAY 5 REFLECTION

THE RAPE OF TAMAR: 2 SAMUEL 13:1-22

Sexual violence is a phenomenon that has been there since the dawn of time. This passage the Bible illustrates a chain of events that finally ends up in the devastating act of the rape of Tamar.

• Who are the characters in this story and what do we know about them?
• What is the role of each of the male characters in the rape of Tamar?
• What does Tamar say and do?
• Reflect on the story of women like Tamar in your church and/or community
• Where can a survivor of sexual violence find support in your community?
• What will you now do in response to this Bible Study?

DAY 6  SURVIVOR STORY, SOUTH AFRICA

Thembeni Mazibuko is in her early twenties. She was raped coming back from her university library and this has deeply hurt her because the case was not handled properly by the South African justice system and she has to face the perpetrator on a daily basis in her community. Thembeni has dropped the legal case and is struggling to come to terms with her trauma. Thembeni dropped out of university when she became pregnant and is now a single mum with two boys. It’s a struggle to raise them on her own. But she dreams of studying engineering so that she can improve her circumstances and and build a successful future for her children.

PRAY FOR:

• All those who that are in positions of authority in the justice system, that they may seek justice for survivors and not fail them

• God to give women like Thembeni hope and encouragement to pursue their dreams and fulfil their God-given potential

‘HE WILL WIPE EVERY TEAR FROM THEIR EYES. THERE WILL BE NO MORE DEATH’ OR MOURNING OR CRYING OR PAIN, FOR THE OLD ORDER OF THINGS HAS PASSED AWAY.’
REVELATION 21:4

DAY 7  SURVIVOR STORY, SOUTH AFRICA

Siphokazi suffered domestic violence in her marriage and decided to walk away from the abusive relationship and seek a divorce. She has managed to raise her four children alone despite receiving no support from her or her husband’s families. Siphokazi believed that she had overcome the trauma of the violence she had suffered but undergoing counselling has shown her that she has lived her life covering up the trauma and not dealing with the issue.

PRAY FOR:

• Siphokazi as she journeys through counselling towards healing

• All the women involved in the survivor movement launched in Durban so that they can become a voice for the voiceless.
DAY 8       PRAYER FOR THE ‘WE WILL SPEAK OUT’ COALITION

We Will Speak Out (www.wewillspeakout.org) is a global coalition of Christian NGOs, churches and organisations, supported by an alliance of individuals, who together commit themselves to see the end of sexual violence across communities around the world. The WWSO coalition is committed to empowering women and girls, to transforming relationships between women and men, and to ensuring that the voices of survivors of sexual violence – women, girls, men and boys – are central to their work.

PRAY:

• with thanksgiving for the vision and potential of ‘We Will Speak Out’, the Christian coalition committed to ending sexual violence across the world.

• that together we will be able to demonstrate the power of the global church as intended by God and that the world will see that power expressed in practical action

• pray for the launch of the national chapters of the coalition in South Africa in November 2013 and DRC in February 2014

DAY 9       REFUGEE SURVIVOR STORY, SOUTH AFRICA

Marie Claire Mahoro is the mother of two boys. She was raped by her uncle after the death of her parents during the civil war in Burundi. Her uncle raped her several times until one day Marie Claire was physically badly injured that she was taken to hospital. However, because her uncle was a soldier, nobody was able to confront him. Marie Claire couldn’t wait for a complete recovery in hospital and had to flee from Burundi to Rwanda to join other relatives there. Living in Rwanda she had to remain silent about the sexual violence she had suffered to avoid causing conflict among her family and also because she feared being rejected by them. Since then Marie Claire has been living in silence in order to protect herself from being stigmatised or rejected.

PRAY FOR:

• an end to sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by by soldiers and other state agents, ending impunity forever

• young boys and girls suffering the devastating impacts of war and sexual violence

• church leaders to become advocates, speaking up for the justice of survivors
In recent years the work on ending violence against women and girls has led to a parallel conversation around the role of men and boys in ending this violence. The need to work with men and boys, as they are most often the perpetrators, and to address their behaviours, attitudes and social norms in relation to gender and gender equality, is imperative in order to see an end to the gross acts of violence committed against women and girls. This has warranted the need to better understanding men’s own experience of violence, abuse and childhood trauma, their struggles to express their experiences, and the limited available spaces to do so.

Studies in recent years find that many men have faced abuse as children, and that also as many as one in every four men admits to perpetrating sexual violence, including rape (UN Multi-country study, 2013, MRC, SA).

**PRAY FOR:**

- Tearfund’s partnership with Sonke Gender Justice as they seek to work with Churches and faith communities in ‘Transforming Leadership, transforming masculinities’
- men and boys, as we create safe spaces for them to share their trauma and struggles
- men and boys who emerge as role models, for God’s protection and covering over their lives as they put themselves in the forefront to lead this work

**FACTS & FIGURES**

27.6% of men interviewed in a study conducted in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal admitted having raped a woman or a girl, and 4.6% of them had raped in the past year.

**DAY 11**  
**REFLECTION**

**BOAZ AND RUTH: RUTH 2**

- what characteristics does Boaz show in his interactions with Ruth?
- what can we learn about the masculinity of Boaz from his relationship with other men in the story of Ruth?
- reflect on masculinities in your church and/or community - how does this passage from Ruth challenges attitudes to masculinities in your church and/or community?
DAY 12  SURVIVOR STORY, SOUTH AFRICA

Precious Mthembu is a retired single parent with grown-up children. She survived many years of an abusive marriage where rape and violence were part of her daily life, but she persevered and kept her marriage together because that is what her religion and culture expect from her as a married woman. One day she snapped during the normal violent fights with her husband and she stabbed him in self-defence. Unfortunately no one believed her story and even her children blamed her and disowned her. She is struggling to deal with her painful past; she still has nightmares of that traumatic experience and is grieving the loss of trust and meaningful relationship with her children and grandchildren. She still mourns the death of her abusive husband and wishes to support other women in a similar situation so that they can heal.

PRAY FOR:

- the Tearfund team in South Africa as they work through a process of healing of memories for 37 survivors involved with the work so far
- for just and equitable relationships between men and women
- for the ‘gogos’ (grandmothers) like Precious who have lived through abuse, violence and silence for many years to break free

‘HE UPHOLDS THE CAUSE OF THE OPPRESSED AND GIVES FOOD TO THE HUNGRY.\nTHE LORD SETS PRISONERS FREE.’
PSALM 146:7

DAY 13  SURVIVOR STORY, MARIAN RIDGE, SOUTH AFRICA

Mary is in her mid-fifties and is a single parent who looks after several teenage grandchildren. As a young woman she was a commercial sex-worker for her survival but has since stopped. She survived a very difficult and abusive marriage that ended in divorce. She has suffered rape

FACTS & FIGURES
Many girls do not know that they have the right to refuse to have sex against their wishes. One nationwide survey in South Africa revealed that only 55% of females aged 14-24 who have had sex reported themselves as having been ‘willing’ at their first sexual encounter (in other words, almost half of young South African girls’ (14-24 yr olds) first sexual encounter is not consensual).
a number of times, rape often committed by men who she knew in her previous life as a sex-worker. Her past is known by many of the people in her community and this makes Mary feel isolated and stigmatised by those around her, on top of the emotional pain she feels from her past experiences. This stigma has also impacted the lives of Mary’s grandchildren, one of whom dropped out of school because of harsh attitudes from the school and local community.

PRAY FOR:

- Mary and her family who are suffering the tragedy of generational abuse, poverty and hopelessness
- Mary as she grows into being a peer group leader for the survivors in her community
- Churches in Marian Ridge to be stirred to speak out and act to end the violence in their community

DAY 14  SURVIVOR STORY, DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA

Christine, a refugee from Rwanda now living in South Africa, had faced consistent sexual harassment as a child from her own father. She did not realise that her father’s behaviour was sexual abuse. This realisation has been a shock to her and she is struggling to come to terms with her past as her Father has since passed away and she does not know how to reconcile with this pain of the past. As a teenager Christine suffered sexual harassment and an incidence of attempted rape from her teachers when she was supposed to have refuge in the camps in Tanzania. She was a teenager when she fled Rwanda during the war to live in Tanzania where she also faced sexual violence from her employer. Christine married at 18 to have some security. Her husband is a pastor and he has been a support but she is still to speak to him about her Father.

PRAY FOR:

- Christine as she has moved from silence to disclosure, especially pray that she will have the courage to share her story with her husband.
- Children around the world who suffer abuse at home, at the hands of their loved ones, people they trust.

FACTS & FIGURES

In a study of 269 women interviewed in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town, it emerged that 71% of the women had experienced sexual abuse.
DAY 15  SURVIVOR STORY, SOUTH AFRICA

Janet Ndamase was raped several times in her youth and the pain and trauma that she felt led her to start an organisation to empower young girls. Her vision has been to transform her painful experience and anger to help bring healing to young vulnerable girls, to enable them to cope with their pain and trauma and receive much-needed support to go on through life. Janet works in schools, mentoring young people and running seminars and workshops to create awareness around issues of relationships, sexuality and culture.

PRAY FOR:

• Individuals like Janet who have used their painful and traumatic experiences to help others who are vulnerable

• For Janet as she relives traumas of her past as she supports others

DAY 16

A PRAYER FOR THOSE WORKING TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

God bless you with insight to recognise violence in all its forms, and courage to name it, speaking out for justice. Amen.

The Lord Jesus bless you with compassion for the vulnerable, and grace to stand with them, sharing his strength. Amen.

The Holy Spirit bless you with a prayerful heart, and power to breathe peace, transforming the world. Amen.

The blessing of the holy and glorious Trinity, eternal Wisdom, living Word, abiding Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

With thanks to the Anglican Church of Australia for this prayer
Visit www.tearfund.org/gender for further news, stories and other prayer resources on ending gender-based and sexual violence.

Thank you for joining with us in prayer. Let’s continue to pray until there’s an end to gender-based violence.

CONFIDENTIAL HELPLINE

If you have been affected by any of these issues personally and would like to talk to someone confidentiality about these issues, please call:

National Domestic Violence Helpline (UK) : 0808 2000 247

If you are based overseas then to find a local helpline please go to:

http://www.hotpeachpages.net/