



**SPEECH BY HON HILMA NICANOR
DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND VETERANS
AFFAIRS
DURING THE MODVA OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE 16
DAYS OF ACTIVISM CAMPAIGN AGAINST GENDER
BASED VIOLENCE HELD AT DHQ SOUTHERN
CONFERENCE
1 DECEMBER 2020.**

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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

GOOD MORNING

Allow me now to request

It is my distinct honour and privilege to stand here before you this morning and join you for the launch of the 16 days of Activism against GBV.

The 16 days of Activism Against the Gender Base Violence, we are here to launch today, is an annual international campaign that kick starts on 25th November, a day which is commemorated as the International day for Elimination of Violence Against Women and runs up to the 10th December which is a Human Rights Day. The commemoration of the 16 days of activism was initiated by activists at the inaugural Women's Global Leadership Institute in 1991 and continue to be coordinated each year by the centre.

Being a global phenomenon, Gender Base Violence has claimed many victims in our society and our institution is no exception. It is against this background that I therefore before continuing like to request all of you to rise and join me in observing a minute of silence, in remembrance of those who lost their lives as a result GBV acts, in our society and in particular, those who were members of our institution. These are amongst others; late Captain Hileni Shikololo, Warrant Officer Tresia Enkono, Mrs Selma Shaimemanya and many others whose lives ended prematurely at the hands of

their loved ones. May their souls continue resting in eternal peace

(ATTENTION)

The UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Women's Right, is a human right issue. It is not just a woman issue. Internationally, there are instruments that have been adopted to protect women and children's rights. Examples that can be cited are such as:

- UN Convention on the Elimination of ALL Forms of Discrimination Against Women.**
- Convention on the rights of children**
- Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Woman**
- Declaration on the rights to development**

The rights of Woman and Children are thus guaranteed both by International Instruments and also in our Constitution of the Republic of Namibia, which is the Supreme Law of our country. The Namibian Constitution in particular chapter 3 of the constitution, provides for Fundamental Human Rights, and Freedom as well as

protection for live. Article 6 of our constitution, provides for that the right to live shall be respected. No law may prescribe death as a competent sentence. No court or tribunal shall have the power to impose a sentence of death upon any person. No execution shall take place in Namibia.

The 16 days of Activism Against Gender based Violence is an International campaign to combat Violence against Women and girls. It is a global call to end the destructive impact of GBV in our communities.

According to the World Bank, 1\3 of women (35%) have experienced physical and or sexual violence, and GBV impacts 1 in 3 women in their lifetime. Failure to protect women threatens future generations, as children who grew up in households with violence are more likely to experience or perpetuate violence. Equally true ending GBV is key for achievement of equality, development and peace.

On the other hand, it is important that the right of the girl-child is protected, as she is the women of tomorrow. For the girl-child to

develop her full potential she needs to be nurtured, in an enabling environment, where her intellectual and material needs for survival, protection and development are met and her equal rights are safeguarded.

Further, needless to say that the advancement of woman and the achievement of equality, between men and women are a matter of Human Rights and the condition for Social Justice and should not be seen, in isolation as a pure women issue.

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This year we commemorate this event under the theme "*Orange the World, Fund, Respond and Collect*".

As already alluded to GBV is not just a women issue but needs a collective response.

Gender Based Violence require inclusive and well-coordinated response from everyone. Its inter-linkages with intimate relationship, partner's relationship, poverty, cultural practices and numerous other factors demand all of us to join hands and fight against it.

I am therefore pleased that, the Gender Division in the Directorate of Human Resources have taken the step to observe and capacitate all of us with information and knowledge on how to deal, prevent and respond to GBV, whether it occurs at home, workplace and or in the public spheres at large. Ours as a Ministry is to promote gender mainstreaming as a strategy for making concerns and experiences of both men and women an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and military operations effective.

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I cannot emphasize more that Gender-Based Violence is at the heart of human rights. It is in fact in many ways a determining factor as to whether we can ever have a just society. Over the past few years our country has been deeply traumatized by acts of extreme violence perpetrated in most cases by men against women and children. I am informed that statistical evidence shows that the police Gender-based Violence Protection Unit in Windhoek gets more than 200 reports of cases under the Domestic Violence act on a monthly basis.

These cases include rape, assault with intent to cause grievous bodily harm (GBH), assault by threatening, common assault, child neglect, sexual harassment, concealment of birth, defamation of character human trafficking and other forms of GBV.

There is general consensus that both men and women are potential victims of gender based violence (GBV). However, data shows that

women and children are most often the victims particularly of physical and sexual violence

Gender Base Violence is a global phenomenon. The lives of women and girls around the world, are being or halted by the violence that prevails in their everyday life, because so much of this violence happens at home, for many of them there is nowhere to escape, nowhere to run to. A place where you call home, your refuge, is actually where you are most vulnerable. And if you are a women young girl, a child, where else do you go, if home is not safe?

- Namibia has lived through examples such as the murder of Magdalena Stoffels, a 17-year-old girl whose lifeless body was found in a river bed after she was raped.
- In October 2018 a nine (9) year-old Cheryl Avihe Ujaha mutilated body was found discarded near a riverbed between Katutura and Khomasdal. She had been raped and partially dismembered, and had to be buried without one of her foot, both arms and a thigh.

- In October 2020 an 18-year-old boy allegedly fatally stabbed his grandmother in Enongo village in Onesi constituency, these are but to mention but a few.

It is high time now for us as defender of peace and stability of this land of the brave to take steps and educate ourselves and capacitate our members about this social ill, called GBV, because the peace and stability we defend could be at compromised.

As a well-known philosopher Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar once said "*We must Educate, we must Organise and We Must Agitate*"

The mobilization of men and boys is an important component of our response to GBV. It is important to engage men in changing their own behavior more than protecting women and girls. We must all take part in stopping GBV for the sake of our nation building.

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In conclusion allow me to say the campaign which started today and ends 10th December 2020 across Services, Formations and Units, is a step in the right direction to advance Gender Mainstreaming. I remain extremely happy we are giving GBV special attention as a Ministry responsible for defending peace and sovereignty in our Country.

I thus urge, all our members across services, formations and Units to attend this important campaign and to be informed and equipped with knowledge on how to identify and prevent GBV and other forms of abuse.

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With those few remarks, I would like to sincerely thank you all, for listening to me.

**Finally, it is my honour and privilege to declare the 16 days of
Activism Campaign Against Gender Based Violence in MODVA
officially opened.**

I THANK YOU!