

**MEDIA RELEASE - UN International Day for the elimination of violence against women – November 25**

**THE CATHOLIC COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE calls on citizens to combat violence against women**

The Catholic Commission for Social Justice calls on all citizens to combat violence against women; to empower our women and promote their dignity and rights. **Violence against women is a violation of human rights.** We agree with Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary-General, that: “Violence against women is perhaps the most shameful human rights violation. It knows no boundaries of geography, culture, or wealth. As long as it continues, we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development, and peace.”

Each of us has a role to play in promoting right relationships in families and in society. Here are some things that you can do:

1. Raise your awareness of the nature and causes of violence against women and commit yourself to act to eliminate such violence.
2. Find out about non-governmental organisations/community-based organisations in your area that deal with violence against women and offer to support their work.
3. Look in your newspaper and keep numbers such as the following readily available in case you need support: e.g. Rape Crisis Soc: 622 7273 POS; 657 5355 S’do; Domestic Violence Hotline: 800 7283; Childline: 800 4321.
4. Report incidents of violence against women, of which you are aware or suspect, to the relevant authorities.
5. Parents/carers instil love and respect for self and others in the hearts and minds of young people in your care.
6. Religious leaders strive to reduce violence against women and girls among members of your faith communities. No religious group is exempt from such violence. How many of you, for example, know of women in your communities who go to court time and again trying to enforce maintenance orders so that the fathers of their children will accept their responsibility and contribute to the upkeep of their children?

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon said at the launch of his campaign: *Unite to end violence against women*: “Violence against women cannot be tolerated, in any form, in any context, in any circumstance, by any political leader or by any government.”

Now is the time to unite to save our women and girls from the scourge of violence that affects more than 70% of women in their lifetime. Let us work together to create a more just and harmonious world.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT LEELA RAMDEEN, CHAIR, CCSJ  
ON 299 8945**