



YAS STATEMENT ON THE 2024 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

As Malawi joins the world in commemorating the 2024 **16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign**, Youth and Society (YAS) stands in solidarity with women and girls who continue to endure violence, discrimination, and inequality in their homes, workplaces, schools, and communities.

The campaign, observed annually from **25th November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women)** to **10th December (Human Rights Day)**, is a global call to action to prevent and respond to gender-based violence (GBV). This year's theme, *"Unite to End Violence against Women and Girls in Malawi: Towards Beijing +30"*, underscores the urgency of collective action as we approach the **30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA)** in 2025—a landmark framework for achieving gender equality.

A Call to Revitalize Efforts and Commitments

Despite notable progress, the stark reality remains:

- Over **one-third of Malawian women** have experienced physical violence.
- **One in four** women has suffered sexual violence (MDHS, 2016).
- Nearly **one in three women globally** is subjected to violence in her lifetime.

These figures are more than statistics; they represent lives shattered by violence, futures dimmed by fear, and rights denied by inaction. As we commemorate this year's 16 Days of Activism, YAS urges all stakeholders—government, local and international organizations, UN agencies, traditional and faith leaders, the private sector, and every Malawian citizen—to take decisive action to end this epidemic.

Actions to Protect Women and Girls

We call on the government and its partners to:

1. **Strengthen GBV prevention mechanisms** by addressing the root causes of violence, including harmful gender norms, economic inequalities, and lack of education.
2. **Enhance access to justice** for survivors of violence by removing barriers such as stigma, lack of legal aid, and inefficiencies in the justice system.
3. **Support women's organizations** that work tirelessly to protect, empower, and advocate for women and girls.
4. **Invest in community-level awareness** campaigns to educate society on the dangers of GBV and the importance of reporting and supporting survivors.
5. **Enact and enforce laws against femicide**, the most extreme and visible manifestation of GBV, and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable.

Accountability for Progress

As Malawi reviews its 30-year implementation of the Beijing Declaration, YAS emphasizes the need for:

- **Robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks** to track progress on gender equality and GBV initiatives.
- **Increased funding** for GBV programs, especially at grassroots levels.
- **Gender-sensitive policies** that promote economic empowerment, education, and healthcare access for women and girls.

The Role of Youth in Advocacy

As a youth-centered organization, YAS believes in the transformative power of young people to challenge harmful norms and build a future free of violence. We call upon the youth to:

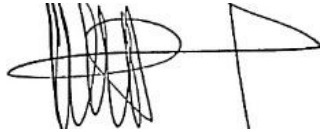
- Champion gender equality in their communities.
- Use social media and other platforms to amplify the voices of survivors.
- Engage in activism that holds duty bearers accountable.

Conclusion

The 16 Days of Activism is not just a campaign; it is a reminder of the urgent need to act against GBV. It is an opportunity to reflect on the progress made, renew commitments, and unite efforts toward a future where every woman and girl can live free from violence.

YAS stands firm in its commitment to ensuring the safety, dignity, and rights of women and girls in Malawi. Together, let us break the cycle of violence and create a society where gender equality is not just an aspiration but a lived reality.

#UniteToEndViolence #16DaysOfActivism #TowardsBeijing30

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of vertical, overlapping loops on the left side, followed by a horizontal line that ends in a sharp, upward-pointing arrowhead on the right.

Charles Kajoloweka
Executive Director

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