

“We Believe... Partners to End Violence Against Women and Girls”

Launching “The International 16 days
to End Violence Against Women & Girls” campaign

November 29, 2012

Press Release



“Violence Against Women regardless, of its types or forms, is a violation of her dignity”



“Violence against women is a sin that is unacceptable by religious doctrine and by logical reasoning!”



“None but a noble man treats women in an honorable manner, and none but an ignoble treats women disgracefully”.



“Jesus Christ denounced acts of violence against women... so why would you be violent against women?”

... These are the key messages endorsed by Muslim and Christian Religious leaders in Lebanon on the occasion of the “International 16 Days Campaign of Activism to End Violence Against Women (VAW) and Girls” in an initiative to denounce VAW in our communities. Patriarch Cardinal Bechara Boutros Rahi, Grand Mufti Sheikh Muhammad Rachid Kabbani, Vice President of the Higher Islamic Shiite Council Sheikh Abdel Amir Kabalan and Patriarch of the Melkite Catholic Gregorios III Lahham took active part in this nation-wide campaign titled “We Believe... Partners to End Violence Against Women” launched by ABAAD around this occasion. These religious leaders are conveying messages to the public condemning violence against women and girls based on the principles of religious text and belief. They also state their commitment to contribute to the efforts of combatting VAW in Lebanon.

These messages endorse the culture of respect for the dignity of women, rejection of all forms of violence, condemnation of violence as sacreligion and illogical and citing holy texts to support their decree against VAW.

Hence, this active participation of religious leaders coupled with their heartfelt messages is rather a clear-cut evidence for a shared fundamental belief between religious leaders and civil society actors working towards women human rights: all women are entitled for a life of dignity free from violence. Stemming from this fundamental belief there comes a strong reason to believe that future communication between civil society actors and religious leaders can continue and flourish towards the goal of ending violence against women. This common belief will be the building block upon which the alliance between these factions can be built and a continuous dialogue in the best interest in society is initiated in an aim of working together for a violent free society.

ABAAD efforts in this respect is built on the extensive body of work in sociology, social psychology, anthropology and theology studies. These suggest that religion has functioned as one of the most important agencies of socialization determining social norms and moral values with regards to gender equality in all societies. Religious leaders possess the moral authority in their communities that could promote women’s dignity.

Thus, this campaign comes to build on ABAAD existing multi-dimensional strategy of using positive psychology in addressing men and religious leaders in Lebanon to end VAW. In other words, it continues ABAAD's use of positive psychology to inspire change and raise the awareness of the public. This will lead to true social justice and respect for human rights

This is what ABAAD is seeking to assure through this nation-wide campaign “We Believe” due to its belief that:

- The message of rejecting violence against women can bring together all poles under one shared agenda;
- Setting up frames for networking with men in general, and Religious men in particular, has become of increasing importance to accelerate eliminating violence against women in our communities;
- Religious leaders truly believe in the importance of elimination of violence against women and girls.

The national campaign includes a TV commercial; hundreds of billboards and uni-poles in different areas of Lebanon , radio commercial, as well as online ads on websites of Lebanese journals and newspapers.

To watch the TV Spot of the Campaign: <http://www.youtube.com/user/ABAADMENA>

For more information about the campaign please contact:

Mrs. Ghida Anani – Director and Founder of ABAAD (*Dimensions*)-Resource Center for Gender Equality:
ghida.anani@abaadmna.org; 00961 (1)-283820/1 ; 00961 (3) 663052.

