

Take back the night!

The global campaign

What

Take back the night (also known as **Reclaim the Night**) is an international march and intended as a protest and against and other forms of .

Women attending the 1976 International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women held the first **Reclaim the night** in Belgium. They marched in solidarity, holding candles to protest the ways in which violence permeates the lives of women worldwide. The campaign became known as **Take back the night** from the title of a memorial read by at an anti-violence rally in in 1977.

Why march?

The march began as a protest against the that women experienced while walking in public at night. It has now become a mechanism for communities to publicly speak out against gender violence. The word *night* was originally meant to be taken literally to express the fear that many women feel during the night, but has since changed to symbolize a fear of violence in general. This enables the campaign to incorporate domestic violence and sexual abuse.

Women are often told to be extra careful and take precautions when going out at night. In some parts of the world, even today, women are not allowed out at night. So when women struggle for freedom, we must start at the beginning by fighting for freedom of movement, which we have not had and do not now have. We must recognize that freedom of movement is a precondition for anything else. It comes before freedom of speech in importance because without it freedom of speech cannot in fact exist.

—Source, *Timmins and Area Women in Crisis Website*



Target

The marches are often deliberately women-only, in order to symbolize women's individual walk through darkness, and to demonstrate that women united can resist fear and violence. However, other marches include men; the organisation differs as each event is organized locally.

References:

Brownmiller, Susan (1999). In Our Time: Memoir of a Revolution (ISBN 0-385-31486-8).
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Take_Back_The_Night

The Southern African campaign

2006 marks the Sixteenth Anniversary of the Sixteen Days of Activism that runs from 25 November, International Day of No Violence Against Women, to 10 December, Human Rights Day.

To launch the 2006 Sixteen Days of Activism campaign, Gender Links (GL) in partnership with Gender and Media Southern Africa Network (GEMSA), is **taking back the night** on the 25 November 2006, International Day of No violence Against Women.

During **Take back the night** campaign women in cities across Southern Africa will march down a street they deem to have "lost" as a result of fear wearing T-shirts and carrying candles reclaiming their basic rights to freedom of movement and safety! In South Africa, the campaign is being led by the One in Nine Campaign of which GL and GEMSA are members.

Why?

Many women are unable to enjoy their basic right to walk down a street at night without fear of experiencing some form of violence. Freedom of movement, the right to safety and security and bodily integrity are basic democratic rights.

The Southern Africa Take Back the Night campaign aims to:

- Reclaim the right of women to be safe in all places at all times of the day and night.
- Foster collaboration with local government and other stakeholders to take back dangerous streets in cities and towns across Southern Africa.
- Speak out against all forms of violence within and outside the home.
- Raise community awareness on gender violence.
- Develop innovative preventative strategies for addressing the high levels of gender violence in communities.

What you can do

- 1) You can participate by joining an existing event in your country. Click here for the name of your GEMSA country representative.
- 2) If you are interested in organising a similar event in your street or community please let us know. We will be compiling a list of all events and marches. There will also be a photo gallery where pictures of all the marches and slogans will be posted.
- 3) You can post ideas for the march and slogans on the following bulletin board
- 4) You can also use the graphics on the website to print and distribute posters and T shirts for the event.

For more information go to www.genderlinks.org.za or www.gemsa.org.za or contact Loveness Jambaya on justice@genderlinks.org.za or Kubi Rama on ceo@gemsa.org.za or call tel.: +27116222877.

