

# Imagine a world free of gender violence and HIV & AIDS

FACT SHEET 4

## Take back the night! Localising the global campaign

### Background

**Take back the night** (also known as **Reclaim the Night**) is an international march and intended as a protest against all forms of violence against women. 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 at an anti-violence rally in 1977.

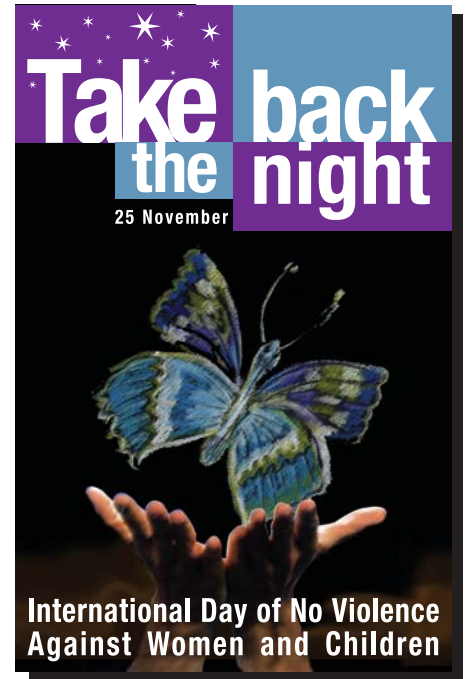
### Why?

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 human 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.

Common components of **Take Back the Night** rallies include candlelight vigils, empowerment marches, and survivor testimonials. Throughout its history, **Take Back the Night** has inspired both women and men to confront a myriad of social ills, including rape, sexual violence, domestic violence, violence against children, and violence against women. The unifying theme throughout these diverse topics is the assertion that all human beings have the right to be free from violence, the right to be heard, and the right to reclaim those rights if they are violated. Its impact is undeniable. Since its inception, thousands of marches and rallies bearing the name **Take Back the Night** have taken place worldwide. <http://www.takebackthenight.org/>



### How Southern Africa has been involved in the past



In 2006, Southern Africa joined the globe in taking back the night to launch Sixteen Days of Activism campaign. Gender Links (GL) working with Gender and Media Southern Africa Network (GEMSA) spearheaded the regional campaign. On 25 November women in cities across Southern Africa marched down a street they deemed to have “lost” as a result of fear, wearing T-shirts and carrying candles reclaiming their basic rights to freedom of movement and safety! Activities included:

- Five countries participated in the campaign: Mauritius, South Africa, Seychelles, Swaziland and Zambia.
- In South Africa, partner organisations in four provinces spearheaded simultaneous marches: Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg and North West.
- GL in partnership with GEMSA, POWA, One in Nine, City of Johannesburg and Constitutional Hill spearheaded the Johannesburg march. One in Nine handed 16 demands in the 16<sup>th</sup> year of 16 days to the MEC for Safety and Security, Firoz Cachalia during the event.
- Different posters were used: Mauritius translated the poster into its official language Creole, Swaziland developed their own version while GL produced one specifically for the Johannesburg march.
- In South Africa marches were organised in Cape Town, Durban, Free State, Johannesburg and North West. In the rest of the region, similar marches were held in Mauritius, Seychelles, Swaziland and Zambia among others.

### The 2007 Southern African campaign

To mark this year's Sixteen Days of Activism, an annual campaign that runs from 25 November, International Day of No Violence against Women, to 10 December, Human Rights Day, GL in partnership with GEMSA, will again coordinate the regional Take Back the Night campaign. In South Africa, GL and GEMSA are working together with the municipality of Ekurhuleni to mount a march and several cultural events on Saturday 24 November, the eve of the Take Back the Night march. The march will be led by survivors of gender violence who will also launch their book of "I" Stories at the event.



### What you can do:

- 1) You can participate by joining an existing event in your country. You can contact the GEMSA representative in your country by visiting: [http://www.gemsa.org.za/page.php?p\\_id=247](http://www.gemsa.org.za/page.php?p_id=247)
- 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: <http://www.genderlinks.org.za/forums/viewtopic.php?t=1163>
- 4) You can also use the graphics on the website to print and distribute posters and T shirts for the event ([http://www.genderlinks.org.za/page.php?p\\_id=37](http://www.genderlinks.org.za/page.php?p_id=37))

For more information go to <http://www.genderlinks.org.za/> or [www.gemsa.org.za](http://www.gemsa.org.za) or contact Loveness Jambaya on [justice@genderlinks.org.za](mailto:justice@genderlinks.org.za) or Kubi Rama on [ceo@gemsa.org.za](mailto:ceo@gemsa.org.za) or call tel.: +27116222877.

### 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Take_Back_the_Night)

