

DON'T LOOK AWAY

Act Against Abuse

The 16 Days of Activism for no violence against women and children is a global campaign which brings to the fore the atrocities and abuse that women and children are faced with daily.

It is 4 days since the start of the campaign and we are inundated with news in the media of rape and violence against women and children in our very own communities. There is one case in Johannesburg where a 13year old was raped by her 22 year old cousin for over a year. This man has got the life sentence. In Chatsworth there is a mother campaigning for the rapist of her little girl to be denied parole. During this period the men who raped two grandmothers in a temple were found guilty and sentenced to prison. I visited these women at their homes and also attended their first court appearance to ensure that these men were not granted bail. I believe that small steps can lead to big strides. There is a lot one can do to ensure that the 16 days of activism campaign is highlighted 365 days a year by making a meaningful contribution towards this global campaign which started on 25 November on International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. There are organizations that need assistance, not just monetary but your time and expertise to assist people who are abused and vulnerable. This campaign ends on 10 December which marks the International Human Rights Day.

Last week the world celebrated the release of Burmese pro- democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi Yan who has been under house arrest for over 10 years. This is indeed abuse against leaders who fight for democracy and basic human rights.

In South Africa the 10th of December is significant as the late Chief Albert Luthuli, past president of the African National Congress received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1960 for his efforts in bringing about peace and his determination and commitment to ensure that the fight for democracy in our country continued.

We can honour his memory by doing what the campaign wants us to do ; “Don’t look away, act against abuse.” By doing this we can start to create a South Africa where our women and children are protected and live in a free and safe country.

Maggie Govender

MEC:Human Settlements and Public Works