

IJDH Calls for Urgent Action to Support and Protect Haiti's Women and Girls

November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, kicks off [16 Days of Activism](#) against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) against women and girls. These appropriately culminate on Human Rights Day, as GBV “is the most pervasive breach of human rights worldwide.” As part of this global civil society mobilization, the Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (IJDH) **calls for urgent, sustained, and well-funded action to protect Haiti's women and girls from violence and to support their leadership and equal enjoyment of human rights. #16Days of Activism should be just the start.**

Haiti's women and girls are facing catastrophic levels of violence, especially those who are poor or have vulnerable intersecting identities. Rape and other sexual violence are being [deployed](#) by gangs as a deliberate tool for disrupting Haiti's social fabric. Protections are being [dismantled](#) by an illegitimate and corrupt government propped up by the international community. Always scarce resources are [dwindling](#). And the humanitarian response is profoundly [inadequate](#). Sexual exploitation and abuse – including by humanitarian actors – and pressures for transactional sex are rising. These harms reflect women's [unequal](#) status in Haiti's society as well as ongoing social, economic, and governance crises, which are in turn the [product](#) of colonialist legacies and structural racism.

In spite of the challenges they face, including [political violence](#) deployed to impede their full participation in public spaces, **Haiti's women and girls are also some of Haiti's most valuable resources.** A vibrant women's [movement](#) has successfully **mobilized to break down dictatorships and advance human rights.** Women are key actors in responding to disasters and confronting [climate insecurity](#); marshaling and deploying community resources; and organizing to provide critical services, especially for GBV. At the same time, they are the primary caregivers at home and the entrepreneurs who drive Haiti's economy.

Haiti's women and girls need **only a little support and a reprieve from violence to finish their work of breaking down inequality and achieving stability and prosperity for their communities.** This year's global #16Days of Activism [campaign](#) recognizes that “the presence of a strong and autonomous feminist movement is the single most critical factor to drive policy change in ending violence against women and girls” even as “women's rights organizations and autonomous feminist movements remain severely underfunded.” **Those funding and action gaps need to close.**

IJDH calls for these #16Days of Activism to be the start of a concerted movement to supply that support and solidarity, including through **effective responses to GBV; gender-sensitive and accountable humanitarian assistance;** and – just as critically – concerted efforts to **support women's leadership, enable women's participation in decision-making, and center the specific needs of women and girls** across every undertaking, all alongside active measures to include women and girls with marginalizing identities.

YOU CAN HELP, including by:

- **LISTENING to Haitian women and girls and SUPPORTING their efforts.** IJDH and Haiti-based feminist organization *Nègès Mawon* will be [publishing profiles](#) of Haitian women leaders and survivors during the #16Days of Activism to uplift Haitian women's voices.
- **EDUCATING** yourself about the situation facing women and girls in Haiti and **MOBILIZING to support them.** IJDH, our Haiti-based partner the *Bureau des Avocats Internationaux* (BAI), and several solidarity collaborators have [published reports with specific recommendations](#) for action.¹
- **DONATING** to organizations like [IJDH and BAI](#), *Nègès Mawon*, and others engaged in the fight for the rights of Haitian women and girls.

¹ **READ** this year's reports to the UN Working group on discrimination against women and girls ([EN/FR](#)); to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ([EN/FR](#)); and to the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences ([here](#) and [here](#)); **WATCH** our [Webinar](#) in honor of International Women's Day on advancing women's rights in Haiti, political participation, social equality, and ending GBV.