STAR-Ghana Commemorates 2026 16 Days of Activism against Sexual & Gender Based Violence

As Ghana joins the global community to commemorate the 2026 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, STAR-Ghana Foundation reaffirms its commitment to advancing gender equality, protecting the rights and dignity of women and girls, and promoting a society in which everyone can live free from violence, discrimination and fear.

This year's campaign, under the theme "UNiTE to End Violence Against Women and Girls: Ensure Justice, Protect Survivors, End Impunity," provides an important opportunity to reflect on Ghana's progress, examine persistent gaps and renew collective commitments to preventing and responding to gender-based violence.

Violence against women and girls remains a serious human rights and development concern. Beyond the immediate harm to survivors, it undermines their dignity, limits their participation in social, economic and public life and weakens the foundations of an inclusive and equitable society. Addressing this challenge requires more than public condemnation. It demands sustained institutional action, adequate investment and accountability at all levels.

STAR-Ghana Foundation recognises Ghana's existing legislative and policy commitments to addressing gender-based violence, including the Domestic Violence Act, 2007 (Act 732), and the country's broader obligations under regional and international human rights frameworks. We also acknowledge efforts by government and relevant institutions to strengthen responses to gender-based violence, including initiatives aimed at expanding shelter services for survivors.

However, the existence of legal and policy frameworks must translate into meaningful protection and access to justice for those who need them most. Barriers to reporting, inadequate survivor-support services, social stigma, resource constraints and delays in accessing justice continue to present significant challenges. These gaps require deliberate and coordinated responses from public institutions, civil society, communities and other stakeholders.

As we commemorate this year's campaign, STAR-Ghana Foundation calls for urgent and sustained action in three priority areas.

Ensure Justice for Survivors

Access to justice must be timely, affordable, inclusive and responsive to the needs of survivors. We call on relevant justice-sector institutions to strengthen mechanisms for reporting, investigating and addressing cases of gender-based violence, while ensuring that survivors are treated with dignity, confidentiality and respect.

Strengthen Survivor Protection and Support System

Survivors must have access to safe, accessible and adequately resourced support services, psychosocial care, healthcare, legal assistance and appropriate referral mechanisms. We encourage government and its partners to sustain and expand investments in survivor protection, while strengthening coordination among institutions responsible for prevention, response and rehabilitation.

End Impunity and Strengthen Accountability

We call for stronger enforcement of existing laws, adequate resourcing of responsible institutions, improved coordination and greater public accountability in the implementation of national commitments. We further emphasize the need to address emerging forms of violence, including technology-facilitated abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation in schools which increasingly threaten the safety of girls in school.

Our Collective Responsibility

Preventing gender-based violence is not the responsibility of government alone. Traditional and religious leaders, educational institutions, civil society organizations, the media, families and communities all have critical roles to play in challenging harmful social norms, supporting survivors and promoting non-violence. Men and boys, in particular, must be actively engaged as partners in promoting respectful relationships, challenging attitudes that normalize violence and contributing to safer communities.

As the 2026 16 Days of Activism begins, we urge all stakeholders to move beyond symbolic commitments and translate policy promises into concrete, measurable and sustained actions.

Justice must be accessible. Survivors must be protected. Impunity must end.

Together, we can build a Ghana where women and girls live in safety, dignity and equality.