



INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



The godFather:

Today is the *INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN*. This marks the beginning of *16-Days of Activism* which ends on the 10th December which will be *Human Rights Day*

We at Zanu Pf Patriots have also joined the nation and indeed the whole world in condemning violence against women

Adv Kudakwashe



The show is yours let's get started...

Adv Kuda:

Good evening dear Cdes and a special welcome to Adv Roeze.

Let's get right into it shall we!

Now Adv Roeze many of us have noted an annual observance of these 16 days of activism against violence towards women. These 16 days always start on the 25th of November.

Can u take us through the significance and history of this observance?

Adv Roeze:

Evening Counsel, my learned colleague.

The International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women was designated on 17 Dec 1999 by the UNGA through Resolution 54/134. The date was chosen to commemorate the lives of the Mirabel sisters from the Dominican Republic who were violently assassinated in 1960 for standing up against the ruler ship then. The day pays tribute to them as well as urging global recognition of gender violence. Each year on this day,gvts, international organisations and NGOs are invited to organize activities designed to raise public awareness of violence against women. 16 days of activism begin on 25/11 and ends the eve of International Human Rights Day (10/12). The theme for this year is "Leave no one behind".

Its however important to note that the declaration to commemorate such a day was proposed in Beijing 1995 by 189 states but 17 December 1999 became the date the declaration received it's official UN resolution

Adv Kuda:

Splendid piece of history there

Adv Roeze



My research reveals that Violence against women is a human rights violation and a consequence of discrimination against women, in law and also in practice, as well as of persisting inequalities between men and women. This violence impacts on, and impedes, progress in many areas, including poverty eradication, combating HIV/AIDS, and peace and security.

Adv may u kindly take us through what violence against women really is because many a time we hear this word spoken but without clear guidance on the parameters of violence?

Adv Roeze:

I would want to rely much on the founding principles of 25/11 and how UN General Assembly defines violence against women.

The UNGA defines violence against women as - any act of gender based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering for women, including threats of such acts coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty whether occurring in public or private life. Common forms of GBV include; intimate partner violence; sexual violence; female genital mutilation, child marriage practices, trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Our own domestic act expands the definition to include "interestingly" stalking, forced entry and properly damage etc...Just wanted to capture the interesting ones.

Adv Kuda:

Adv Roeze you do list a number of variations of violence there. Do Zimbabwean laws cover all these forms of violence against women?

Adv Roeze:

Yes cde. A closer look at the Domestic Violence Act of 2007 will reveal that even in our jurisdiction such acts are considered as violence against women



Adv Kuda:

Very well then

You speak of the 16days of activism as a global effort showing that violence against women is a global problem.

Do we in reality have common causes of violence against women or do these causes differ from one society to another?

Adv Roeze:

Violence against women is a social ill. An ill because the society suffers from it yet the way in which societal values are founded is as if this illness is regarded as normal. Societal structures, power structures and certain cultural norms are the root of GBV.

Of course societal structures are not universal neither are norms but across the globe the militarism and violence against women is rooted in patriarchal power structures

Adv Kuda:

Adv Roeze

Enlighten me a bit. Does GBV reduce or increase depending on the education and financial independence of a woman or the level of education of the man?

Adv Roeze:

My learned one, I have mentioned that issue of power structures and this question basically probes on that. A woman is learned is regarded as economically independent. What had fueled GBV is the continuous dependent of women (economically that is) on men.

So the cases tend to be prevalent in women who are not economically independent and men who are not intellectually secure



Adv Kuda:

Adv Roeze

Let's get into statistics. What numbers are we talking of when we speak of GBV and what efforts have we seen Govt and perhaps Zanu PF make to fight this social ill?

Adv Roeze:

Well that's like asking me to count grains of sand in a desert. The statistics are shockingly spine chilling. In September alone, 81 girls were raped in just 2 weeks across Zimbabwe. According to UN, one in three girls experience violence in their lifetime - that is one too many. What's disheartening is most of it goes unpunished.

No matter where violence against women happens, what form it takes and whom it impacts it must be stopped. You can only imagine, 81 women in a matter of 2 weeks.

Adv Kuda:

Very shocking stats that you reveal there that is almost 6 women raped every day. This is sadder when we factor in the unreported rapes especially marital rape as well as other forms of violence against women

Adv Roeze:

Cde Counsel, for reasons I'll explain later, tonight I'm omitting the role ZANU pf has played but will focus on the government

The GoZ is committed to eradicating GBV and promote Gender Equality. Zimbabwe ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1991, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa in 2007 and Sadc Protocol on Gender and Development in 2009. These instruments call upon member countries to implement strategies aimed at eradicating GBV .It is against this background tht our Min of Women Affairs developed the National Gender Based Strategy (held annually since 2012) which seeks to improve the efforts of gvt and civil society to prevent and respond to GBV. One of the major milestones in our fight against GBV was the enactment of the Domestic Violence Act in 2007 and subsequent establishment of the



Anti- Domestic Violence Council. To compliment government efforts a number of NGOs are working on raising awareness on GBV and also actively participate in 25/11. I'll list a few; Katswe Sisterhood, Her Zimbabwe, Msasa Project, Zimbabwe Peace Project... There has been the establishment of Victim Friendly Units in police stations but they are not properly functional because of the negative perception around the justice system, most women do not trust the police for fear of stigmatization.

Marital rape. It's on the prevalent but its alarming how most of it is shielded by silence. Here we have to look at our underlying religious and societal tenets to understand it further. I'm sure my sisters who will present further will touch on this.

Adv Kuda:

Adv Roeze

Having spoken abt GBV as a scourge you could perhaps clarify to us what the consequences of GBV are and how it affects women and society

Adv Roeze:

The law establishes that acts of domestic violence (includes GBV) are punishable with up to ten yrs. In prison and/or a fine. The act requires tht each police station be staffed with at least one constable who has relevant expertise dealing with domestic violence. It also empowers police to make arrest without a warrant when a domestic violence offence appears to be impending or is in progress. Complaints may also apply for a Protection Order (substance and procedure requires another time slot)

The above applies in our jurisdiction.

Women have been affected tremendously to the extent that they begin to fear utilizing all the service available for them to curb GBV. How? They choose silence over having a bread winner locked up. A huge % of DV cases are dropped before prosecution



Adv Kuda: Before we open the floor i would like to hear from you if the 16 days of activism has been effective in eradicating violence against women.

Do you have any recommendations to bolster the fight to eliminate all forms of violence against women?

Adv Roeze: Firstly may I opine by saying, to measure success of 25/11 we must not focus on the 16 days only. They only afford us a time to reflect and introspect on violence against women. What matters is the action we take prior to 25/11 and post 10/12. I would like to believe tht in as far as advocacy and awareness is concerned it's been a success. However we cannot relegate attitudes. In as far as curbing GBV, it hasn't been much of a success given the stats

Secondly and lastly: Violence against women is not inevitable. There are many ways to prevent it. Everyone has a role to play. Last year's theme was "From Peace in the home to peace in the world" meaning charity begins at home. We need to resist GBV, empower women through adequate services, hold perpetrators accountable and transform our culture and attitudes that condone violence against women.

Adv Kuda: kindly note that the floor is now open for you to participate in this program

Adv Roeze: Noted cde

Adv Kuda: Adv Roeze

Let's see if the floor has contributions

Adv Roeze: Contributions are always welcome.

the godFather: And this year's theme is *LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND* Right?

Adv Roeze: Yes Cde



The godFather:

Adv Roeze

So during the 16-Days of Activism does it also include violence by women on men and on other women?

Adv Roeze:

This activism is a bit gender (self-centered) if I may say. It fell under attack by a lot of chauvinists but well a deeper analysis of the history and the feminist movements of the 60s will reveal that's its more sympathetic to women/ female victims.

Cde Nyabanga:

Adv Roeze

From your contribution above it seems men are perpetrators and Women are victims...

Is it the real situation obtaining on the ground??

Adv Roeze:

Evening cde Nhewa. Pragmatism demands that I be honest. Women are the most perpetrators of GBV. Be it against fellow women or ag men. There is need for us, after almost 20yrs of commemorating 25/11 to revert and introspect. 21 century movements of women emancipation and equality has rubbed off the notion of women victims in GBV

Men are victims too. Men are being raped. Emotionally, physically and economically abused by women. Previously the definition of rape used to exclude men but I always applaud the cognitive realisation by our legislators that men can also be raped. (Little hope there that in our quest to eradicate GBV; we have the other gender in mind)

Cde Nyabanga:

I have always alluded that married men are an abused lot. Indeed they are! After ferocious and unsubstantiated provocation you are told to restrain but hey am only human... what can be done to pragmatically look at both sides of the coins before passing judgement



the godFather:

Adv Roeze

You have listed a number of organizations which have partnered with GoZ to fight GBV and sadly Zanu Pf is missing from that list. Does it mean our culture as a party and environment does not accommodate women and there is nothing we are doing to right that wrong?

Adv Roeze:

Cde I plead the 5th but before I exercise that right may I humbly and respectfully submit that the standing of our women in the party had been tainted (well until recently). We experienced women to women violence from the powers that were. Ideally we should have the WL partnering with all these other bodies. We hope to see this happen.

I now plead the 5th

Patience-Nyasha:

Adv Roeze

We have heard our male counterparts crying foul that women are now abusing some of the Acts passed by the gvt e.g. Domestic violence Act

Adv Roeze:

I believe no matter the provocation, nothing justifies violence on the person of another.

Patience-Nyasha:

As in women are provoking their partners knowing that the law is in their favour

Is it a genuine cry and who is protected by the Domestic violence Act

Adv Roeze:

Cde I actually don't see it that way. Amongst many acts that are unutilized, the DV is one of them. Women fear stigmatization and that issue yeEconomic dependency always work to the detriment of abused women



Bans1:

Adv Roeze

Laws such as DVA protects women more than men, doesn't that cause women to unnecessarily start fires knowing that the Laws favour them?

Adv Roeze:

DV Act protects both male victims and female victims. Wives, Ex-girlfriends, ex boyfriends etc. This law is not gender based but the attitude of our judicial umpires is. They tend to sympathies with women more in GBV cases.

Bans1:

Aren't equality and laws treating men and women equal better in eradicating violence against women?

Adv Roeze:

I agree. But like I said, the law can be written on paper but how do we relegate attitudes? Our societal attitude is such tht we believe men can't be abused. That has to change. The police chaiyo they still laugh at men who lay charges against their partners for GBV

It's disheartening

Bans1:

Adv Roeze

Do you recognise that such attitude and actions causes Violence against women?

If my wife abuses me and it's difficult for the law to protect me, I will end up beating her up.

What is being done during the 16 days of activism to deal with such societal attitude?

Adv Roeze:

What happens during these 16 days is just reflection like I've said up there. The real work lies in what we do prior or post. How we deal with attitude during the 25/11 is we will bring the GBV issue to your attention but will that change your attitude, tht u probably carried for



349 days!!? No. What we need is a legal framework that is stauncher on these issues

Let's copy other jurisdictions

Elias:

Adv Roeze

Is there a deliberate effort to coach women not to be provocative? As this may go a long way in protecting them against being assaulted

Adv Roeze:

From a societal/socio anthropologist p.o.v women are nurtured not to provoke men. Religiously so as well. However as a liberal feminist myself I always say in our quest for emancipation we are sort of shifting from who/what we are nurtured to be as women.

Whether we accept how society has nurtured us or not is a story for another day.

Elias:

Understood

In closing

Adv Roeze, is there anything you wish to add that we may all have omitted to ask?

Adv Roeze:

Cde Elias I think we have exhausted today's session pretty fairly. There will be a series of presentation so whatever we omitted I'm sure my sister Cdes will turn it up for us.

Elias:

On that, on behalf of the group, I would like to thank you Adv Roeze for the well-researched responses.

It was indeed enlightening

Twalumba