



Press Release: International Women's Day 2024

Shattering Stereotypes, Building Strength: Broken Chalk's Stand Against Violence



As the world marks International Women's Day, Broken Chalk reaffirms its unwavering commitment to combating gender-based violence and dismantling the harmful stereotypes and systemic barriers that perpetuate it.

Violence against women is a global epidemic, transcending borders, cultures, and socioeconomic statuses. It manifests in various forms, including domestic violence, sexual assault, harassment, and harmful traditional practices. Despite progress in gender equality efforts, millions of women continue to suffer in silence, trapped in cycles of abuse and oppression.

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The recent regional research sheds light on alarming trends, revealing that societal norms often blame women for the violence they experience, perpetuating a culture of victim-blaming. Shockingly, seven out of 10 young men aged 15–19 in the LAC region attribute women's attire or behaviour as justification for violence against them. Furthermore, rigid gender roles impose expectations of submission on women, leading to instances of physical violence as punishment for transgressions.

Femicide is also a big issue in the LAC region, femicide is not only about the description of crimes committed by homicides against girls and women but about the social construction of these hate crimes, the culmination of gender violence against women, as well as the impunity that configures them. According to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), femicide is a term used to refer to the gender-based killing of women and it is regarded as a grave form of assault on the right to life directed against women, constituting an extreme form of gender-based violence.

The problem of femicide is not only faced in the LAC region. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in 2023 nearly 89,000 women and girls were killed globally, the highest yearly number recorded in the past two decades.

Broken Chalk recognises that gender-based violence stems from deeply ingrained patriarchal and sexist views that legitimise violence as a means to exert power and control over women. Gender-based violence is a significant hurdle that impedes women's ability to exercise their civil, political, economic, cultural, and social rights. This issue is recognized as one of the most significant barriers that women face in achieving their full potential in society. Cultural factors, including religious and historical traditions, perpetuate notions of entitlement and ownership over women, contributing to the normalisation of violence in society.

Access to justice is a fundamental human right, yet many obstacles hinder women's ability to seek justice, including judicial stereotyping and discrimination within the legal system. Judicial bias and harmful stereotypes often lead to miscarriages of justice, re-victimisation of survivors, and perpetuation of inequality.

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a pervasive and deeply concerning issue affecting communities worldwide. As we observe International Women's Day, it is crucial to confront the harsh reality that millions of individuals, predominantly women and girls, continue to suffer from various forms of violence solely because of their gender. From physical and sexual abuse to psychological and economic coercion, GBV takes numerous insidious forms, inflicting profound and lasting harm on its victims.

Within the context of GBV, women are disproportionately affected, enduring systemic inequalities and discriminatory practices that exacerbate their vulnerability. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated this crisis, as lockdowns and social distancing measures trapped many survivors in unsafe environments with their abusers, while simultaneously disrupting essential support services. As a result, reports of domestic violence surged globally, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive and coordinated responses to address GBV in all its manifestations.

It is imperative to recognize that GBV is not confined to the private sphere but permeates every facet of society, including workplaces, educational institutions, and public spaces. The prevalence of sexual harassment, gender-based discrimination, and intimate partner violence underscores the pervasive nature of this phenomenon, which impedes progress towards gender equality and undermines the fundamental rights and dignity of individuals.

Addressing GBV requires multifaceted approaches that prioritize prevention, protection, and support for survivors. Education plays a pivotal role in challenging harmful gender norms and fostering respectful relationships based on equality and consent. By promoting gender-sensitive curricula and awareness campaigns, we can empower individuals to recognize and confront GBV in their communities, fostering a culture of zero tolerance for violence.

Moreover, robust legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms are indispensable in holding perpetrators accountable and ensuring access to justice for survivors. Legislative reforms aimed at

criminalizing GBV, enhancing victim support services, and strengthening law enforcement responses are critical steps towards eradicating impunity and fostering a culture of accountability.

Equally important is the provision of comprehensive support services that address the diverse needs of survivors, including medical care, psychosocial support, legal aid, and economic empowerment initiatives. By investing in survivor-centered approaches, we can facilitate healing and recovery while mitigating the long-term consequences of GBV on individuals and communities.

Collaboration between governments, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders is essential for achieving meaningful progress in the fight against GBV. By fostering partnerships and sharing best practices, we can leverage collective expertise and resources to implement effective interventions that address the root causes of violence and promote gender equality.

As we commemorate International Women's Day, let us reaffirm our commitment to ending GBV in all its forms. Together, we must strive towards a future where every individual, regardless of gender, can live free from violence and discrimination, and where gender equality is not merely an aspiration but a reality for all.

In response to these challenges, Broken Chalk is launching a comprehensive initiative to raise awareness, advocate for policy change, and provide support to survivors of gender-based violence. Through educational programs, community outreach, and advocacy efforts, Broken Chalk aims to challenge societal norms, dismantle systemic barriers, and promote a culture of equality and respect.

Join us in our mission to break down barriers and create a world where every woman can live free from fear and violence.

Happy International Women's Day!

Signed by

Broken Chalk

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