



#16Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence

Demanding a Swift and Just Response to Rising Violence Against Women in the Multiple Crises of Health, Livelihoods and Climate

Through this 3-part series, APMDD calls attention to a pandemic that far pre-dates COVID-19 – the shadow pandemic of violence against women – and how it has escalated in the context of a long-festering multiple crises of public health, economic recession and climate change. Not only is the multiple crises providing more triggers for VAW. Narrow and false solutions that only benefit corporations, lenders, financial institutions and the wealthy, are also heightening the forms of VAW we see in the starvation of women food producers as climate events intensify, ill-health in the absence of essential social services while corporations are bailed out with public money, and longer, back-breaking hours of unpaid care work as governments surrender their social mandates to big business and austerity loan conditionalities.

Follow us these #16Days in making the links to debt, tax and climate justice and towards ending VAW!

Debt Justice for Gender Justice (1st of 3)

Today, we mark International Day for the Elimination of Gender-Based Violence - in solidarity with women everywhere, facing and fighting discrimination, exploitation and oppression in all its forms.

Long before COVID-19, women already faced the “shadow pandemic” of gender-based violence. With the pandemic and the eruption of the multiple crises of health, livelihoods and climate, the situation has only been made more acute. Economic conditions are now even more precarious, especially for women who are often in socially unprotected types of informal work. In addition to lockdown measures constraining their mobility, the greater loss of jobs and livelihoods among women are driving higher intensities of VAW.

In many contexts where public services are verging on collapse, women have to make up for the gaps in public social services, which has resulted in longer and more intense time spent on unpaid care labor. Gains in addressing VAW such as provision of shelters and other lifeline support services for victims-survivors have also been rolled back as public funds are channeled elsewhere as part of COVID-19 responses.

We protest the temporary, meager and limited responses to the debt problem of the international financial institutions, the G20 and all other lenders in the wake of COVID. Their debt relief “solutions” have not only failed to deliver what is urgently needed; they are leading the global south to graver debt problems, to deepening inequality and to greater exploitation and harm of women.

More than ever, we need urgent action on freeing up public financial resources by cancelling unsustainable and illegitimate debt by all lenders for all developing countries, and for changes in international and national economic and financial unequal relations, flawed frameworks and unjust policies. These are vital to spring free from the trap of debt dependence and break the vicious cycle of indebtedness.

It is not only a legal obligation on the part of state signatories to the Women’s Convention/CEDAW to provide the resources for the realization of the rights promised therein – an obligation that should be met by cancelling the debt and freeing funds from debt service. Debt cancellation is a key step towards addressing the socio-economic inequalities that continue to render women vulnerable to discrimination and abuse.

Nov. 25, 2021

