

Tuvalu's leaders speak out against gender-based violence

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Webpage: <https://pacificwomen.org/news/tuvalu-16-days-of-activism-against-gender-based-violence/>

Prominent figures in Tuvalu took the lead during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, speaking out against violence in a national media campaign.

Tuvaluans participate during the peace march to mark the start of 16 Days. Photo Credit: Gender Affairs Department, Tuvalu.

The campaign set the tone for a range of events coordinated by the Gender Affairs Department (GAD) in partnership with other stakeholders in Tuvalu, featuring: the Prime Minister, His Excellency Kausea Natano; Attorney General, Eselealofa Apinelu; and Minister for Health, Social Welfare and Gender Affairs, Isaia Taape.

'Domestic violence is not a private matter or a family issue but a crime that is against the law, it affects us all because we are all connected with each other,' His Excellency Natano said.

'Let us work together to build a society where men and women are equal partners and contribute to the development of harmonious and peaceful families and communities.'

The 16 Days is a global campaign to end gender-based violence, starting 25 November with the International Day for the Elimination of Gender-Based Violence and ending 10 December, Human Rights Day.

GAD supported partners through a peace march, a pledge signing by parliament members, a march to support people with disabilities, youth talk show, awareness sessions, a national COVID-19 video animation about staying safe at home, a forum for traditional leaders and other activities.

The signing of the pledge to address violence against women and girls in Tuvalu was a campaign highlight, according to GAD's Communications and Campaign Officer, Salesa Falesene. The pledge stimulated a national conversation on ending violence against women and girls.

Tuvaluans participate during the peace march to mark the start of 16 Days. Photo Credit: Gender Affairs Department, Tuvalu.

'We had a lot of senior government officials from Chief Executive Officers, secretariats and even members of parliament sign the pledge, and this is good because this really puts their stance to stand up for women and girls in Tuvalu,' Mr Falesene said.

Mr Falesene said another highlight was the march and awareness session on how Tuvaluans could better support people with disabilities, organised by the national disabled people's organisation (DPO) Fusi Alofa Association on 3 December.

He said this was an exciting time for those in Tuvalu as various stakeholders worked together for the first time to organise activities for 16 Days.

'The team has been very helpful, and we have also had a lot of help from the Police Domestic Violence Unit; Social Welfare personnel' Ministry of Education and Public Health Department who sent over their staff to help out with the campaign,' he said.

Mr Falesene also thanked the Office of the Attorney General, Tuvalu Family Health Association (TUFHA), Fusi Alofa Association, Red Cross, Pacific Community's (SPC) Human Rights and Social Development Division, Department of Social Welfare and other partners for their support and assistance with the 16 Days campaign.

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