

**Towards a world  
without rape and violence**

## **THURSDAYS IN BLACK**



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For more information on how you can join the  
campaign or order Thursdays in Black pins, visit  
[www.oikoumene.org/thursdays-in-black](http://www.oikoumene.org/thursdays-in-black)  
or contact [media@wcc-coe.org](mailto:media@wcc-coe.org)

**#ThursdaysinBlack**



# People of faith must speak out against sexual and gender-based violence

*This violence is frequently hidden, and victims are often silent, fearing stigma and further violence.*

*We all have a responsibility to speak out against violence, to ensure that women and men, boys and girls, are safe from rape and violence in homes, schools, work, streets – in all places in our societies.*



## Thursdays in Black: Resistance and Resilience

The campaign is simple but profound.

- ▶ Wear black on Thursdays.
- ▶ Wear a pin to declare you are part of the global movement resisting attitudes and practices that permit rape and violence.
- ▶ Show your respect for women who are resilient in the face of injustice and violence.
- ▶ Encourage others to join you.

Often *black* has been used with negative racial connotations. In this campaign Black is used as a color of resistance and resilience.

This global ecumenical campaign has been adopted by many of the World Council of Churches' 348 member churches, national councils and ecumenical and inter-religious partners, academic institutions, student associations, and more.

Join this movement of people and organizations that can make a difference to individuals, communities, and national and international policy forums. Be an ambassador in your words and actions for respect, security and justice for women and men, girls and boys.

## What is Thursdays in Black?

*Thursdays in Black* grew out of the World Council of Churches' Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988–1998), in which the stories of rape as a weapon of war, gender injustice, abuse, violence, and many tragedies that grow outward from such violence became all the more visible. But what also became visible was women's resilience, agency and personal efforts to resist such violations.

The campaign was inspired by:

- The **Mothers of the Disappeared** in Buenos Aires, Argentina who on *Thursdays* protested at the Plaza de Mayo, against the disappearance of their children during the violent dictatorship.
- The **Women in Black** in Israel and Palestine, who protest against war and *violence*.
- **Women in Rwanda and Bosnia** who protested against the use of *rape* as a weapon of war.
- The **Black Sash** movement in South Africa protesting against apartheid and its use of violence against black people.

## In every country, gender-based violence is a tragic reality:

**One in three** women today experience physical or sexual violence, mostly by an intimate partner.

Globally, more than **eight out of ten** girls experience street harassment before they are 17.

Women and girls represent **70 percent** of human trafficking victims.

**One in four** children under the age of five lives in a household experiencing domestic violence.

An estimated **246 million** girls and boys experience school-related violence each year.

Statistics from UN Women and UNICEF