



Widows' Rights International



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WRI WINTER NEWSLETTER

WRI events for 16 days

WRI partners joined us in two virtual events for the 16days.

One panel and discussion was held on 25 November and one on 11 December.

Our partners and sister organisations The Algerian Women's Association, Guild of Service, Rona Foundation, Come Together Widows and Orphans Organisation, Naserian, Commonwealth Business Women's Association, Associated Country Women of the World, and Global Fund for Widows joined us to provide information and insights.

As ever it was heartbreaking and inspiring at the same time to hear of the challenges but also huge achievements.

16 Days of Activism

The 16 Days of Activism Against Violence against Women and Girls is an international campaign that runs from November 25 to December 10 every year, symbolically linking two significant dates: the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and International Human Rights Day.

This campaign serves as a powerful reminder of the urgent need to address and eradicate violence against women, a pervasive issue affecting millions around the world especially widows.

Violence against women is a global epidemic that transcends borders, cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds. It takes many forms, including physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence. Despite progress in various areas, women continue to face discrimination and abuse simply because of their gender. The 16 Days of Activism is a concerted effort to raise awareness, challenge societal norms, and galvanise action to eliminate this pervasive issue.

The campaign aims to raise awareness about the different forms of violence women experience, fostering a deeper understanding of the root causes and consequences. Through education and advocacy, the hope is to create a more informed and empathetic global community. [For more information.](#)

Widows in Lough Neagh

Cold water swimming in water that is only 8 deg.C in Northern Ireland is known to be a natural pain relief that also cures many of the physical and mental stress problems brought about by widowhood. Wild Swimming clubs exist all around the shores of Lough Neagh which is the largest lake in Ireland and the UK covering almost 400square km. The clubs are supportive and nurturing. Mary, a wild water swimmer told us:

"What cold water swimming provides to everyone who does it, is a hardiness. Your body is continually exposed to fight or flight response, and therefore learns to overcome that. People experience being immersed in a natural environment. They get to hear the sounds of nature all around them. That has a healing effect. As well as all of this, most swim within groups, and a community of people who have shared experience of trauma and healing can mean the world to some. It combats loneliness like nothing else, friendships are built from strangers bonding through Cold water and the natural environment. Swimming groups tend to be predominantly female. There are of course always a few men too. But for many women, it's the fun that is very often missing from their adult lives. Women must be so much to so many. Cold water swimming definitely is a time and a place to just be themselves." One of the widows in the group told us:

"Hi not sure I'm the one to ask, but I'm widowed a long time, and what I like about the swimming is no one knows or needs to know your story, i.e. "this is Jeannie her husband died at 36 etc. etc. "" ... I could be anonymous, and didn't know half the people that turn up!! . Personally I think the swimming helped my stamina and I'm only doing it over a year now , it helps your body prepare for shock, wish I'd had it back then lol .. it's the adrenaline rush after you come out of the water, .. give it a go ????" She added some encouragement " You've nothing to lose , and the people are lovely and friendly, Take care and gentle journeys. One day at a time !! And you can stay about and talk or leave straight after entirely up to you .. no pressure."

In the summer of 2023 the Lough was subjected to a massive Algal bloom of toxic algae, the worst kind, microcystis a brightly coloured blue green algae that produces a liver toxin that is at worst an irritant and can be fatal to vulnerable people. It killed several pet dogs that went into the water. Mary and the wild water swimmers campaigned for cleaner water. Women and widows united with the fishing community and sailing, canoeing and sports interests - but it is no guess who is leading the charge!



WRI new website

WRI has been updating its website. We invite you to visit the new website at <https://www.widowsrights.net/>

As with all websites it is under constant development and we invite you to share any recommendations.

If you have any news about widows, please do share with us for our newsletter and website.

If you have any articles or reports we look forward to publishing them on the website with a link to your own website or other credit that you wish.

Photos on the website and in the newsletter are taken from our own library, that of our partners or unsplash whom we would like to credit. <https://unsplash.com/>

WRI statement on Gaza

The situation of widows in conflict is dire. In most regions in the world female headed households experience great vulnerability and this is acerbated in areas of conflict.

WRI issued a statement on the situation that can be found here https://ce50fcfb-e08b-4ca9-b87d-eaa7c3ab066f.filesusr.com/ugd/f3f376_3f42715e0d4d41b8a2ca15f5b6a717de.pdf

The situation is complex and arouses passions. It is very difficult to find a text that covers the history and nuances of the situation without upsetting people. Despite this we have tried to focus on the situation of widows and women and girls in Gaza.

All abuses by any party are outrageous. Violence against women and girls can not be tolerated or perpetrators continue to enjoy impunity regardless of the excuse for that barbarism.



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WRI statements

WRI has new papers on our website. Please do take a look in the resources page

One highlights harmful traditional practices against widows.

https://ce50fcfb-e08b-4ca9-b87d-eaa7c3ab066f.filesusr.com/ugd/f3f376_b268bfca5085483681668c32a6d4d0ff.pdf

If you have a paper or report that you would like to share please do send to admin@widowsrights.net

Upcoming events

WRI is looking forward to 2024 with events throughout the year including at CSW68 - the 68th session the Commission on the Status of Women, Please keep an eye out for information on these and we look forward to you joining us both in person and virtually.



enabling widows to have a brighter and fairer future

Festive Season greetings

2023 has been a tumultuous year in the world. WRI has worked to continue its advocacy for widows within this context of challenge and we would like to thank everyone working in this area for their perseverance, hope, vision and energy. There remain many challenges, but as our virtual events for 16 days highlighted, there is much being achieved through the resilience and love of activists and champions for equality around the world.

The trustees of Widows Rights International wish you a wonderful year ahead and invite you to work with us for a better world for all widows and female headed households of all ages, wherever they find themselves.

