



Press Release – 23 November 2016 - <http://nazra.org/en/node/519>

## **"It Happens" Campaign within the framework of the 16 Days of Activism Campaign to Combat Violence against Women**

***"It Happens" is a joint campaign to combat rape that women are exposed to on a daily basis, and a crime that faces silence and complicity from both society and the state.***

"It Happens" is a campaign launched by Nazra for Feminist Studies, ElNadeem Center for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture, New Woman Foundation (NWF) and the Center for Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance (CEWLA), within the framework of the "16 Days of Activism Campaign to Combat Violence against Women", which starts on 25 November of each year, the international day to combat violence against women, and ends on 10 December of each year, the international day for human rights.

The organizations launch this campaign within a public space that restricts the work of civil society and feminist organizations. For instance, the Center for Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance (CEWLA) faced a few days before the launch of the campaign the travel ban of the Head of its Board of Trustees and Lawyer Azza Soliman, in addition to the freeze of her assets and those of her private law firm, and ElNadeem Center for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture faces a closure order from the Ministry of Health In addition to the travel ban imposed on one of its founders, Dr. Aida Seif ElDawla. Moreover, Nazra for Feminist Studies' founder and Executive Director, Mozn Hassan, is banned from travel. This hostile environment towards women's human rights and its organizations renders work on these issues more difficult day by day, and since these organizations believe in their role to face violence and discrimination, they launch this campaign in this environment and try to break by it the silence and complicity towards the issue of "rape".



*"It Happens"* campaign deals with the different forms of rape in our society. Rape crimes "happens" in the street, homes, work, "happens" from husbands, fathers, uncles, brothers, "happens" from neighbors, friends, strangers, "happens" at any time, any hour be it day or night, "happens" to all women of different ages and "happens" in all societal classes.

The subject of rape was chosen for the 16 Days of Activism Campaign for this year since it is one of the controversial issues that is covered with societal silence and institutional concealment, in addition to the absence of accountability mechanisms from the state and the shortcoming of laws that criminalize different forms of rape and limit its occurrence. It is worth mentioning that rape is considered one of the most crimes for which there are no statistics for its occurrence in Egypt, which relates to the culture of blame, complicity and ridicule towards raped women that is widespread in society.

This year, the campaign aims to shed light on the issue of rape and the psychological and societal consequences that victims and survivors suffer from, and it also tackles the problems and difficulties raped women face in the course of obtaining safe and professional medical services that preserve their privacy and right to bodily integrity, in addition to the lack of information in educational curricula that tackle concepts of sexual violence and fails mainstream them in these curricula.

Subsequently and in this context, photographic and visual material, in addition to film screenings and information will be published that deal with the issue of rape in Egypt from different perspectives, and Nazra for Feminist Studies, in collaborate with **BuSSy Project**, will conduct a storytelling performance entitled "Forced" about true stories and personal experiences of rape, where the campaign will close its activities by a seminar to present and discuss specific measures to combat rape in Egypt.