

Women Strike Back

Invitation to a unique and empowering International Conference and

March for Women's Freedom from Male Violence

and the Closing of the Gender Pay Gap

October 24th - 25th 2010, in Reykjavik, Iceland



From the Women's strike in 2005

A warm welcome to women from all over the world!

Registration at www.kvennafri.is

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Skotturnar, Hverfisgötu 115, 105 Reykjavík, Iceland

Women Strike Back, on Sunday Oct. 24th

An International conference on male violence against women from 9.00 – 17.00 o'clock. The host is **Skotturnar**, an umbrella organisation for the 15 women's org. in Iceland, with over 10.000 members.

Our guest of honour: United Nation's Special rapporteur on Violence against Women, H.E. Rashida Manjoo. Among other respected speakers we have H.E. Knut Storberget, Minister of Justice in Norway and a member of Ban Ki-Moon's network of 14 male leaders who have committed themselves to prioritize the campaign against gender based violence. Also, Professor Liz Kelly, Janice Raymond professor emerita and Ms. Taina Bien Aime, executive director of EQUALITY NOW! The programme will soon be published on www.kvennafri.is

The Women's Strike, on Oct. 25th at 14:25 o'clock

Iceland is no. 1 on the World Economic Forum measure for the Global Gender Gap. In spite of that, women's total salaries are 65.65% of what men earn on a yearly basis. The average working day is from 9 – 17 o'clock. Therefore it will be reasonable to leave work at 14:25 on Monday October 25th and that is exactly what women are going to do. We will meet in the Centre of Reykjavik, and you are welcome to join us. The protector of the Women's strike in 2010 is the Worlds first ever democratically elected female president Ms. Vigdís Finnbogadóttir.

About the Women's Strike



The Women's strike in 1975

It was with force hereto unknown in Icelandic history that Icelandic women started the United Nation's women's decade in 1975. The women of Iceland have decided that now it is time to write a new chapter in the history of equality and we invite you to join us!

In 1975 the status of Icelandic women was very weak compared to women in our neighbouring countries. Women received only about 2/3 of men's salaries and had very little influence in politics. Women therefore decided that it was time to bring women's contribution to society into the daylight on the UN day of 24th of October. It has since been called the "Women's day off" or the "Women's strike".

Women went out of their homes, and did not attend work that day. The society was completely paralysed. At the time, it was one of the biggest

demonstrations ever held in the Centre of Reykjavik, with 25.000 women gathering. The Women's strike gathered media attention from all over the world and was a life-changing and empowering event; the Women's Movement in Iceland was finally alive and kicking!

In 2005 – on the 30th anniversary of the 1975 event – it was time to repeat the demonstration. The average working day is from 9 to 17 o'clock. At the time women's total salaries were 63.5% of men's salaries. In a state of real gender equality, women would therefore have done their share of work at 14:08 o'clock. Women decided to gather in the Centre of Reykjavik at that time. About 50.000 people gathered in the streets, most of them women. The whole population of Icelandic women is 157.000 individuals.

Now we have decided that once more it is appropriate to remind our nation and the world about women's strength and empowerment. We will expand the demonstration to include an International Conference on male violence against women on Sunday Oct. 24th, and then on Monday Oct. 25th we will leave work at 14.25 o'clock, after a reasonable working day.

We will not accept any injustice. The conference focus will be on the Justice system and how badly it is designed to protect women's rights. We demand that survivors of violence will be taken seriously and we'll discuss what needs to be done. The legislation has improved, but we need implementation and action.

All of the 15 Women's NGO's in Iceland agreed on this focus, and every single one will take part. These women created a new umbrella organisation, Skotturnar, to prepare what needs to be done. Skottur where in the old sayings Icelandic women's ghosts or spirits, that where not easily disposed. They often where hedgear with a tail – similar to that of the women's national costume, and they also often where red stockings.

Authorities have been informed and asked to cooperate and support the event as much as possible. The plans have been introduced to sister networks around the world, and the feedback has been very positive.

The Nordic Shelter movement will hold its annual conference in Reykjavik on Oct. 22.-23, and its focus will be on rapes. Other international organisations will hold their board meetings in Iceland and some steering committees will use this opportunity to meet.

On Sunday Oct. 24th there will be an international conference, with distinguished speakers. The United Nations special rapportour on Violence against Women Ms. Rashida Manjoo has accepted our invitation to be our guest of honour. On Monday Oct. 25th there will be a demonstration in the Centre of Reykjavik.

In 2010 women earn 65.65% of men's total salaries. This means that we are heading in the right direction, but very slowly. It is therefore reasonable that women work for 17 more minutes than 5 years ago. Women will leave their work and gather in the streets at 14:25 o'clock. Hundreds of activists, respectful housewife's, artists, academics and wild feminists have already engaged in the planning.

As far as we know, our demonstrations have been unique world wide. In Oct. 2010, we welcome you to join us. We want to be an inspiration to women around the world to do the same in their countries. We also want to be inspired by you. For those Nordic, European or International Women's NGO's that wouldlike to place their meetings in Iceland around the time of the conference, please contact us as soon as possible. We will do our best to create an unforgettable and empowering event.



Let's join forces and we will change the world!