

Women in Black

I joined Women in Black in my community shortly after 9/11/01. Standing in silent vigil gave me a space to mourn worldwide violence. I was in Eastern Europe during the period Sarajevo was under siege. That is where I first heard about Women In Black and the worldwide attention they brought to the violence used against women as a tool of that war.

Women In Black have won a number of awards for their work toward peace. In 2001, the international movement of Women in Black was honored with the Millennium Peace Prize for Women, awarded by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

Women in Black is not an organization. It is loosely connected groups of women who use this format as a means of mobilization and a formula for action. It is standard for women wearing black, standing in a public place in silent, non-violent vigils at regular times and intervals. As the country gears up for war men are wishing to stand with us. Some groups call themselves "People In Black" and others have asked men to stand behind them in silent support.

Mission Statement:

Women In Black stand in silent vigil to protest war, rape as a tool of war, ethnic cleansing and human rights abuses all over the world. We are silent because mere words cannot express the tragedy that wars and hatred bring. We refuse to add to the cacophony of empty statements that are spoken with the best intentions yet may be erased or go unheard under the sound of a passing ambulance or a bomb exploding nearby.

Our silence is visible. We invite women to stand with us, reflect about themselves and women who have been raped, tortured or killed in concentration camps, women who have disappeared, whose loved ones have disappeared or have been killed, whose homes have been demolished. We wear black as a symbol of sorrow for all victims of war, for the destruction of people, nature and the fabric of life.

Women in Black is an international movement of women of conscience of all denominations and nationalities. What unites us all is our commitment to justice and a world free of violence. Historically Women In Black have held vigils to protest violence in their part of the world. . Each vigil is autonomous, setting its own policy and guidelines.

<http://www.womeninblack.net>

De Williams