

The Mesoamerican Declaration against Violence against Women

Women are a fundamental part of our society. Their daily work and struggles sustain our social fabric and create a more liberal, just and humane world for us all. In light of this, women are more susceptible to violence, insecurity, a lack of good health and general wellbeing, and diminished personal dignity. The issues affecting women are deeply rooted in structural problems that compromise democratic progress, contribute to the deterioration of society, and result in serious human rights violations against women.

In Mesoamerica, the fragility of democratic and justice systems; the decline of secular life in the face of state machinery and the influence of the church; and the growing inequality of the existing economic system are all factors that exacerbate violence against women.

Governments across Mesoamerica along with the combined forces of narcotics trafficking, religious hierarchies, the military, and the media, use violence against women as a tool to engender fear and insecurity, and to manipulate and repress the masses with impunity. Only by force can they have the control necessary to maintain their interests.

Ever increasing rates of femicide, sexual violence, persecution of and violence against human rights defenders and social justice activists, as well as, the criminalization of women that choose abortion are some examples of the challenges facing women in Mesoamerica today.

The reality speaks for itself:

- Two out of three women killed in Central America die because of their gender. In Costa Rica, 30 women per year are victims of femicide, and in Panama, 68 women have been killed to date. In El Salvador, 31 women were killed in September 2009 alone.
- Guatemala has the highest number of assassinations of women in Mesoamerica and the second highest number of attacks against human rights defenders.
- In Honduras, between January and October 2009, 325 women died violent deaths. Almost half the femicides that occurred in 2009 occurred during the coup, during which an alarming number of women were physically and sexually abused for their acts of “rebellion.”
- In Nicaragua, numerous feminists were captured, threatened, physically injured, illegally detained, and publically defamed at the advent of a repressive campaign by the government.
- In Mexico, 90% of assassination cases remain unsolved. Dozens of rape cases committed against women (the majority of which are indigenous) by the army and by the security forces in response to rebellious acts (as seen in the cases of Atenco and Oaxaca) remain unsettled.
- In Nicaragua, Mexico, El Salvador, and the Dominican Republic, women who have had abortions have been persecuted, publically defamed, and incarcerated (many of these pregnancies were a result of rape.) Of the four countries in the continent that

penalize therapeutic abortion, three are in Mesoamerica. As of now, 16 states in the Republic of Mexico have reformed their constitutions to protect life from the moment of conception thus prohibiting abortion, and imprisoning women who choose to have abortions. In the Mexican state of Guanajuato, over 100 women have been imprisoned for having abortions.

- After the age of 16, 50% of Costa Rican women have survived at least one incident of physical and/or sexual violence.

As women, we have historically been the objects of violence and the driving forces in the fight against violence. The struggles of women and feminism have spanned the world. We see women raise awareness about and publically denounce the epidemic of violence as well as the patriarchal pacts of impunity and silence that perpetuate it.

However, violence is everyone’s problem. The state should abide by its obligations with regard to women’s rights and stop acting as an accomplice and promoter of violence. Governments across Latin America should take the opportunity to reaffirm their convictions at the pivotal meeting of presidents and heads of state at the Summit on Gender, Integration and Development, which will take place in Costa Rica (December 8-9, 2010.)

Society should transform all the practices of power that subordinate women and put their lives, dignity, and health at risk. Social movements should make the fight against women a central component of their agenda aside from the issues or sectors they represent. Leaders of social movements and organizations should realize that protecting women’s rights is necessary in order to attain a just and united world, and is a concrete step towards addressing all discriminatory and violent practices within their own organizations.

It is for this reason that we made a call to the states, social movements, and citizens to work together to eradicate all forms of violence against women at the regional launch of the UN campaign “ United to End Violence Against Women” (November 2009, Guatemala):

All United against Violence!
Not one more murder!
We reject organized crime against Women!
No coups and no beating of women!

Name	Region/Country
1. Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID)	International
2. MADRE	International
3. JASS (Just Associates)	International
4. International Women's Human Rights Law Clinic, City University of New York School of Law	International
5. Feminist Radio International	International

6. Campaña por la Convención Interamericana de derechos sexuales y derechos reproductivos	Regional
7. Articulación Feminista Marcosur	Regional
8. Red de Salud de las Mujeres Latinoamericanas y del Caribe (RSMLAC)	Regional
9. Consejería en Proyectos, Oficina Regional para CentroAmérica y México	Sub-regional
10. Central America Women's Network (CAWN)	Sub-regional
11. Alianza de Mujeres Indígenas de Centroamérica y México	Sub-regional
12. Las Petateras (Mariela Arce, Gilda Rivera, Emely Flores, Yanira Argueta, Alda Facio, Malena de Montis, Walda Barrios, Pilar Muriedas, Evelyn Flores, Martha Sánchez, Valerie Miller, Dilicia Zelaya, Patricia Ardón, Magdalena Cholotio, Yarman Jimenez, Marusia López, Daptnhe Cuevas, Regina Fonseca, Aleyda Terán, Alibel Pizarro, Ana Cofiño)	Sub-regional
13. Red Nacional de Jóvenes y Adolescentes para la Salud Sexual y Reproductiva	Argentina
14. Coca Trillini- Asociación Civil	Argentina
15. Colectivo por el Derecho a Decidir.	Argentina
16. Agende Ações em Gênero Cidadania e Desenvolvimento (AGENDE)	Brasil
17. Observatoire Ineza des Droits de l'Enfant au Burundi	Burundi
18. Association des Femmes Juristes du Burundi	Burundi
19. Organización Femenina Popular	Colombia
20. El Grupo de Ciudadanas de Servicio Voluntario	Colombia
21. Dialogo Mujer	Colombia
22. Grupo de Mujeres de la Quinta Edad	Colombia
23. Mujeres Artistas por la Vida MAVIP	Colombia
24. Colectivo Resucitando	Colombia
25. Grupo de Varones por una Nueva Masculinidad	Colombia
26. Hijas de la Diosa Chía	Colombia
27. Mujeres Microempresarias	Colombia
28. Mujeres por una Alimentación Sana que Sana	Colombia
29. Grupo Tierra de Mujeres Jovenes en Bogotá	Colombia
30. Esperanza Viva	Colombia
31. Mujer y Genero en Fundamarín	Colombia
32. Mujeres y Vida	Colombia
33. Colectivo Luna de Colores	Colombia
34. Fundación Carlos Urán	Colombia

35. Centro de Atención y Apoyo a la mujer violentada,	Colombia
36. Corporación para la Vida Mujeres que Crean	Colombia
37. Colectivo Huitaca	Colombia
38. Fundación Justicia y Género	Costa Rica
39. Red Sintitechan	El Salvador
40. Mujeres y Jovenes Nuevo Milenio	Chile
41. Centro Ambulatorio de Mujeres y Jóvenes	Chile
42. Feministas Biobio	Chile
43. WomanHealth Philippines	Filipinas
44. Education for Life Foundation in the Philippines	Filipinas
45. Sinergia No'j	Guatemala
46. Instituto Universitario de la Mujer	Guatemala
47. CNSP	Guatemala
48. MGP	Guatemala
49. COSPE	Guatemala
50. ACONAPAMG	Guatemala
51. CNPTIERRA	Guatemala
52. COMUNICH	Guatemala
53. Amigos por la Paz	Guatemala
54. Mujeres Rurales	Guatemala
55. STUSC	Guatemala
56. Estudiantes de la USAC	Guatemala
57. Frente Popular	Guatemala
58. ODIARP	Guatemala
59. UNASGUA	Guatemala
60. Asamblea de Maestros de Desarraigados	Guatemala
61. Economía Informal	Guatemala
62. Red Lesbica Cattrachas	Honduras
63. Movimiento de Mujeres por la Paz "Visitación Padilla"	Honduras
64. Centro de Derechos de Mujeres	Honduras
65. Colectivo Feminista Mujeres Universitarias (COFEMUN),	Honduras
66. Jóvenes Feministas Universitarias	Honduras
67. Convergencia de Mujeres Honduras	Honduras
68. Frente de Resistencia	Honduras
69. Coordinadora Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas de México	México

70. Salud Integral para la Mujer, A. C	México
71. Consorcio para el Diálogo Parlamentario y la Equidad	México
72. Coordinadora de Grupos Culturales Indígenas y Populares de Morelos	México
73. Patlatonalli A. C.	México
74. Red Nacional Género y Economía (REDGE)	México
75. Marcha Mundial de las Mujeres- México Zona Centro	México
76. Equidad de Género, Ciudadanía, Trabajo y Familia AC	México
77. Ddeser - Red por los derechos sexuales y reproductivos en México	México
78. Foro de Mujeres y Políticas de Población México	México
79. Mujeres para el Dialogo, (MpD)	México
80. Siembra, A.C.	México
81. Territorios de Cultura para la Equidad	México
82. Comité Cerezo	México
83. CIDEM A.C.	México
84. Red de Investigadoras Por la Vida y la Libertad de las Mujeres	México
85. Articulación por los Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres	México
86. Red Nacional de Mujeres Radialistas de México	México
87. Las Muchas Red de Comunicadoras	México
88. Colectivo de Investigación, Desarrollo y Educación entre Mujeres A.C.	México
89. Programa de Género de la Universidad Veracruzana	México
90. Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir, A.C	México
91. Comunicación, Intercambio y Desarrollo humano para América Latina CIDHAL A.C..	México
92. Colectivo Feminista Mercedes Olivera	México
93. Salud y Género AC.	México
94. Milenio Feminista	México
95. Centro de la Mujer Peruana “Flora Tristan”	Perú
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