



## Raped by men you know

**THE FIJI** Women's Crisis Centre is concerned with the increase in rapes and sexual assaults of women and girls over the past year.

The alarming statistics from 2008 analysed by the FWCC confirm the fact that women are more likely to be sexually attacked by men they know rather than strangers.

The survey reviewed most of the rape and sexual assault cases covered in the news reports in 2008.

This finding was followed by 10 rapes and sexual assaults in January alone, according to official police statistics. Most of the rapes and sexual assaults reported to police in January were carried out in rural areas, mostly villages, with the majority of survivors between the ages of eight and 19.

Police figures show a 43 per cent increase in rape in 2008.

The FWCC's survey of 2008 reported rapes and sexual assaults lends support to the assertion that women face a greater risk of being attacked in their homes and in familiar surroundings than on the street.

It also confirms the global phenomenon that men are more likely to attack women they are related to, know, or are intimate with.

Of the cases reported in the media from February to December 2008, just over 16 per cent of rapes and sexual assaults were carried out by strangers, debunking the myth of "stranger danger".

In about 83 per cent of cases, the perpetrator knew the victim. This figure also confirms the worldwide trend.

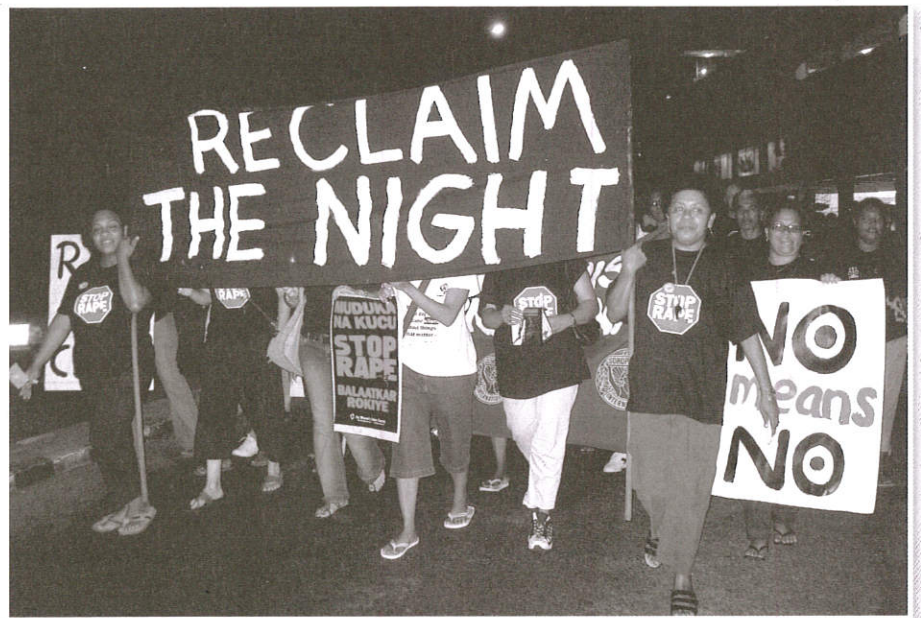
The most common perpetrators of rapes and sexual assaults over the past year were fathers, stepfathers, father-in-laws, brothers, uncles, sons, cousins, neighbours, friends, caregivers and intimate partners (husband, de facto, boyfriend, fiancé).

Even in cases where strangers are the perpetrators, the rapes usually occurred in the victim's home (such as during home invasions) or while the woman was out in her neighbourhood.

These men - and increasingly teenagers - have ranged in age from 13 years to 71 years and the whole spectrum in between.

Most of the perpetrators were between the ages of 21 and 30, with an alarming number of perpetrators under 20 years, as well as above 50 years.

In some cases, the perpetrators have raped



Women take back the night in a march through Suva to commemorate International Women's Day in 2008

the same victim numerous times over many years and sometimes one perpetrator has raped more than one victim. There have also a disturbing number of gang-rapes, often of young girls.

FWCC Coordinator Shamima Ali says rape happens because of the underlying patriarchal structure of society which perpetuates gender inequality.

"Rape is not about sex. It is an act of violence. It is about men who have utter disrespect for women, who deliberately want to exhibit power and dominance over women" says Ali.

A woman who survives rape is often blamed for not being careful enough or of not dressing "appropriately", even though the statistics show that most rapes are actually carried out by acquaintances of the victim.

This false belief that women can prevent rape by taking extra "precautions" is one of the main reasons for the continuing increase in rapes and sexual assaults.

Such myths are often perpetuated by those in authority who make public comments suggesting it is the woman who has been raped who should have been more careful.

The increasing incidents of rape and sexual

assault can also be linked to the atmosphere of machoism and militarisation that has flourished since the takeover of government by the military.

The disregard for the rule of law perpetuated by the unlawful removal of government, leads to an increase in machoism, coupled with feelings of male powerlessness due to increased poverty, unemployment and disenfranchisement.

In a patriarchal society this feeling of a loss of manhood leads some men to lash out at the vulnerable, mainly women and children. This can also explain an increase in sexual assaults and rapes as well as an increase in the intensity of such acts that often end in murder.

Also, a higher tolerance of violence develops during periods of conflict and political upheaval.

Another aspect of rape arises during natural disasters and conflict when women and girls are often placed in vulnerable situations.

One of the girls raped in January was at an evacuation centre in Vunidawa, Naitasiri that had been set up after major flooding across the country.

"The rape of this young girl is a clear demonstration of the vulnerability of women and

Turn to page 4



# Rape victim and perpetrator profile

(From media reports in 2008)

DATE	VICTIM	PERPETRATOR	LOCATION OF ATTACK	PERPETRATOR'S RELATION TO VICTIM
2-Feb	20yr-old female	20yr-old male	Raped in a drain while on her way to the shop	Stranger
3-Apr	12yr-old female	27yr-old male	Attempted rape at victim's relative's house	Known to victim
9-Apr	15yr-old female	57yr-old male	Raped on numerous occasions at home	Father
11-Apr	17yr-old female	Age unreported	Raped on several occasions at home by her father who is a pastor	Father
20-Apr	13yr-old female	30yr-old male	Raped in a vacant house	Acquaintance
22-Apr	22yr-old female	Age unreported	Raped at a house party	Unknown
23-Apr	14yr-old female	71yr-old male	Defiled and raped	Unknown
25-Apr	7yr-old female	21yr-old male	Girl abducted on the way home and raped	Acquaintance
26-Apr	35yr-old female	59yr-old male	Raped on an isolated island	Unknown
8-May	21yr-old female	Age unreported	Raped during a home invasion	Stranger
12-May	18yr-old female	Age unreported	Raped in school compound	Unknown
13-May	13yr-old female	30yr-old male	Girl defiled	Unknown
14-May	22yr-old female	15yr-old male	Attempted rape at the victim's house	Friend
16-May	Teenage male	34yr-old male	Boy raped	Stranger
17-May	3 females	60yr-old male	Daughter and daughter-in-law both and raped over two decades at their home	Perpetrator is father father-in-law
17-May	15yr-old female	19yr-old male	Raped numerous times since 2006 at home	Brother
18-May	37yr-old female	3 males	Woman abducted and raped	Strangers
23-May	24yr-old female	Age unreported	Raped in perpetrator's house	Acquaintance
27-May	14yr-old female	Age unreported	Raped numerous times since 12 years old at home	Father
30-May	21yr-old female	29yr-old male	Raped at her home	Cousin
31-May	4yr-old female	28yr-old male	Girl raped in perpetrator's house	Known to victim
9-Jun	14yr-old, female	30yr-old male	Raped several times on separate occasions at home	Relative
9-Jun	16yr-old female	19yr-old male	Girl raped and perpetrator later attempted to rape her again	Unknown
11-Jun	32yr-old female	24yr-old male	Woman raped at knifepoint at her house	Stranger
10-Jul	13yr-old female	23yr-old male	Girl raped and assaulted at home	Cousin
18-Jul	14yr-old female	19yr-old male	Girl defiled	Known to victim
19-Jul	14yr-old female	51yr-old male	Raped several times at perpetrator's house	Neighbour
21-Jul	3yr-old female	13yr-old male	Attempted rape at perpetrator's house	Neighbour
22-Jul	11yr-old female	33yr-old male	Raped in bushes	Uncle
19-Aug	21yr-old female	29yr-old male	Raped in hotel room	Known to victim
12-Sep	27yr-old female	Unknown	Raped in park	Strangers
15-Sep	14yr-old female	Two males	Raped at home	Stepfather, stepfather's friend
16-Sep	14yr-old female	Age unreported	Raped several times at home	Stepfather
19-Sep	13yr-old female	Male in his 20s	Raped in cassava plantation	Unknown
1-Oct	7yr-old female; 14yr-old female	18yr-old male	Girls raped by same perpetrator; 7-year-old raped several times	Stranger
1-Oct	14yr-old female	49yr-old male	Raped several times at home	Father
23-Oct	23yr-old female	64yr-old male	Raped in bushes	Stepfather
24-Oct	18yr-old female	38yr-old male	Raped at bus shelter	Uncle
2-Nov	15yr-old female	Age unreported	Raped at hotel and on beach	Caregiver
4-Nov	22yr-old female	30yr-old male	Attempted rape at home	Cousin
7-Nov	70yr-old female	48yr-old male	Victim's home	Son
11-Nov	12yr-old female	31yr-old male	Perpetrator's house	Uncle
4-Dec	13yr-old female	Perpetrator profile unreported	Drugged in taxi, raped in bushes	Unknown
18-Dec	19yr-old female	50yr-old male	Woman raped several times since 1995 when she was 7 years old	Father



# IWD 152 years later

**EACH YEAR** on March 8, International Women's Day (IWD) focuses the spotlight on the violence, injustice and indignity women everywhere are still subjected to.

IWD has its roots in the women's labour movement in New York City 152 years ago, when women in the city's garment factories began demanding better pay and conditions.

More than a century and a half later, women still struggle for equality and freedom from violence and discrimination – and each year their call is renewed on March 8.

The story of IWD goes back to March 8, 1857, when women working in garment factories in the city staged a protest against inhumane working conditions and low wages.

The protest was broken up by police but two years later, again in March, these women formed their first labour union to protect themselves and secure some basic rights in the workplace.

Fifty-one years later, on March 8, 1908, some 15,000 women marched through New York City demanding shorter work hours, better pay, voting rights and an end to child labour.

They adopted the slogan "Bread and Roses" (see "Bread and Roses" poem), with bread symbolising economic security and roses a better quality of life.

Two months later, the Socialist Party of America designated the last Sunday in February for the observance of National Women's Day, which was celebrated for the first time on 28 February 1909. An international conference organised in Copenhagen, Denmark by socialist organisations in 1910 proposed a Women's Day which would be international in character.

The idea received the unanimous approval of over 100 women from 17 countries, including the first three women elected to the parliament of Finland.

Since those early years, International Women's Day has assumed a new global dimension for women in developed and developing countries alike.

In 1975, during International Women's Year, the United Nations began celebrating March 8 as International Women's Day.

Two years later, in December 1977, the General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming a United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace to be observed on any day of the year by Member States, in accordance with their historical and national traditions. For the United Nations, International Women's Day has been observed on March 8 since 1975.

*(Adapted from the Division for the Advancement of Women, DPI, United Nations)*



An International Women's Day march during the 1990s in Suva

## We remember...

- ▼ **Alumita Naidradra Rosi**, 15, murdered and dismembered by her de facto husband in February 2008. Rajesh Deo Sharma has been charged with her murder.
- ▼ **Wendy Linda Singh**, 39, was knifed to death in her Namadi Heights home on May 11, 2008. Her husband Raymond Singh is serving a minimum sentence of 18 years for her murder.
- ▼ **Madhu Mala** was strangled to death by her husband in their Tacirua home on June 14, 2008. Her husband then committed suicide by hanging.
- ▼ **Zoya Bibi**, 16, was murdered in late June 2008 in Nasinu. Her partner and four other men are on trial for her murder.
- ▼ **Meena Wati**, 38, was stabbed to death not far from her home in Labasa on July 5, 2008. Her husband has been charged with her murder.
- ▼ **Mereleki Naqura**, 43, beaten up on December 27, 2008, at her home in Vatukoula. She succumbed to her injuries on February 4, 2009. Her husband has been charged over her death.
- ▼ **Merelesita Yavala**, 28, was beaten to death on February 8, 2009 at Nayau settlement, near Salia Village, Tunuloa in Cakaudrove. Her husband has been charged.



IWD celebration at the FWCC's old office on Gordon Street in 1986



IWD march through Suva in 1987



# WHAT MEN CAN DO♂

This year's International Woman's Day theme is "Women and men united to end violence against women and girls"

➤ **Set an example:** Be aware of the various forms of violence - physical, emotional and coercive control - and do not be violent yourself. Let other men know that violent and degrading treatment of women is unacceptable.

➤ **Speak out:** Take a stand against anti-women

language and jokes that create and tolerate violent and demeaning behaviour. When your friends tell a joke that is anti-women, say you don't find it funny.

➤ **Talk with women:** Learn from women's experiences of violence and advocate for

women's human rights.

➤ **Look within yourself:** Recognise the various forms of violence for what it is before you become violent. If you have been violent yourself seek help if you feel you may become violent again.

## How to avoid rape

This poem highlights the numerous restrictions on women and the myth that persists that women themselves can prevent rape. To completely prevent rape, the poem suggests that women should in fact not exist.

- ♀ **Don't go out without clothes - that encourages some men**
  - ♀ **Don't go out with clothes - any clothes encourage some men**
  - ♀ **Don't go out alone at night - that encourages men**
  - ♀ **Don't go out alone at any time - any situation encourages some men**
  - ♀ **Don't go out with a female friend - some male are encouraged by numbers**
  - ♀ **Don't go out with a male friend - some male friends are capable of rape**
  - ♀ **Don't stay home - intruders and relatives can both rape**
  - ♀ **Avoid childhood - some rapists are 'turned on' by the little girls**
  - ♀ **Avoid old age - some rapists 'prefer' aged women**
  - ♀ **Don't have a father, grandfather, uncle or brother - these are relatives who most often rape young women**
  - ♀ **Don't have any neighbours - these often rape women**
  - ♀ **Don't marry - rape is legal within a marriage**
- To be quite sure - don't exist.**

Originally published in *War on Rape*, War on Rape Collective, Melbourne, Australia 1977; reprinted from *Sexual violence: The reality for women*, The London Rape Crisis Centre, 1984.

## HOW TO HELP

The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre urges all those concerned about the issue of rape and sexual assault - and especially those in positions of authority - to learn about the dynamics of sexual attacks and how they can help survivors of rape and help in prevention work against violence against women.

For information contact the FWCC on 3313 300.

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➤ From page 1

girls during such disasters - this is not an isolated incident but rather is a part of a phenomenon that exists globally," says Ali.

Ali said those in positions of authority should become more aware of the gender dynamics that exist and the vulnerability of women and girls during times of natural disasters.

"Violence against women actually increases during times of natural disasters and this has been the experience in many other parts of the world so it is important that those in positions of power understand this and be more alert to it."

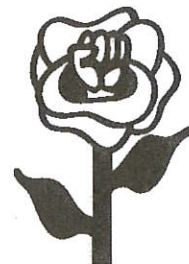
Ali says if rapes and sexual assault are to decrease it is vital that both men and women understand the dynamics of such attacks.

"It is never the raped victim's fault. The focus should be on the perpetrators. Male behaviour and how they view and value women must be changed if we are to see a decrease in rape and sexual assault."

## Bread and Roses

By James Oppenheim

*As we come marching, marching in the  
beauty of the day,  
A million darkened kitchens, a thousand  
mill lofts gray,  
Are touched with all the radiance that a  
sudden sun discloses,  
For the people hear us singing: "Bread and  
roses! Bread and roses!"  
As we come marching, marching, we battle  
too for men,  
For they are women's children, and we  
mother them again.  
Our lives shall not be sweated from birth  
until life closes;  
Hearts starve as well as bodies; give us  
bread, but give us roses!  
As we come marching, marching,  
unnumbered women dead  
Go crying through our singing their ancient  
cry for bread.  
Small art and love and beauty their  
drudging spirits knew.  
Yes, it is bread we fight for -- but we fight  
for roses, too!  
As we come marching, marching, we bring  
the greater days.  
The rising of the women means the rising  
of the race.  
No more the drudge and idler - ten that  
toil where one reposes,  
But a sharing of life's glories: Bread and  
roses! Bread and roses!*



\* The slogan "Bread and Roses" originated in a poem of that name by James Oppenheim, published in *American Magazine* in December 1911. It is believed he penned this poem after watching women march for decent pay and conditions.