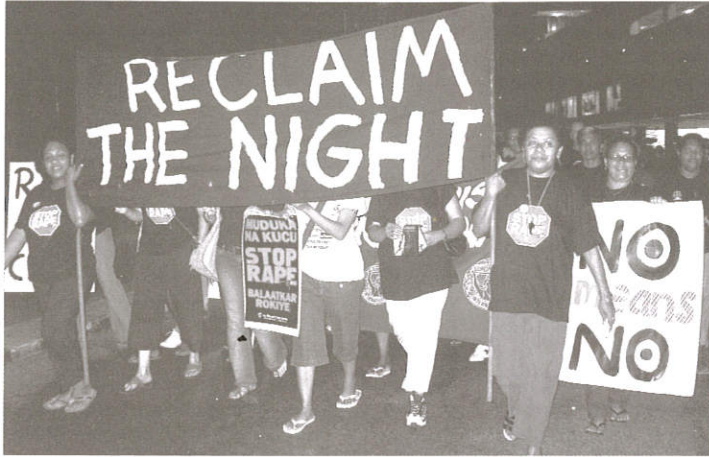




FIJI WOMEN'S CRISIS CENTRE

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2008



Women take back the streets of Suva supported by children and men on the eve of International Women's Day in March.

Women reclaim the night

AFTER A lapse of a year, Suva's women "reclaimed the night" on March 7 with a march through the capital city.

Some 150 women, men, youth and children held banners and candles calling for safer streets on the eve of International Women's Day.

They chanted, sang, cheered and blew whistles through the city, as curious people looked on.

The march began at the Flea Market and snaked through the central business district, past nightclubs before ending at Government Buildings, in a symbolic call on Fiji's military-led regime to put in more effort to curb the growing violence against women and children.

The march was organised by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre and supported by organisations such as the Fiji Women's Rights Movement, the Soroptimists and the Ministry of Women.

The annual Reclaim the Night march was cancelled last year because of a state of emergency imposed by the military after it seized power in December 2006.

Earlier in the day on March 7, about 120 women, children and men marched through Fiji's tourist town Nadi calling for women's rights to be enforced and respected.

The march was led by Nadi Mayor Timoci Koroioqica and Fiji Women's Crisis Centre coordinator Shamima Ali. Marchers went through Main Street and congregated at the Nadi Civic Centre where Koroioqica urged men to step up and lead the change in their attitude against women.

He said he continued to honour his marriage vows by helping his wife with

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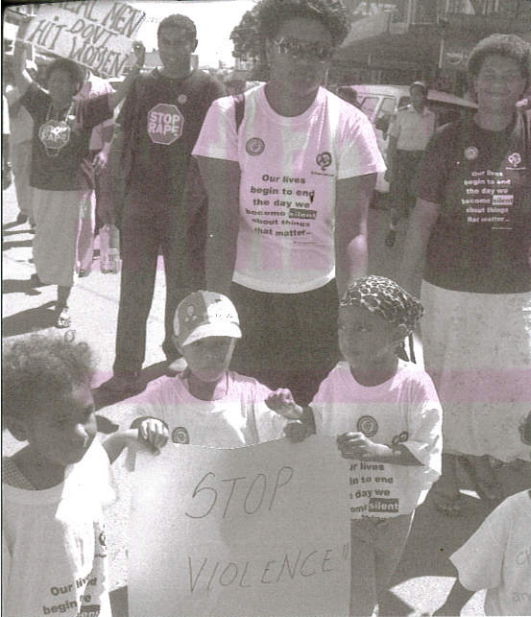


Edwina makes a speech on the front steps of Government Buildings.



The march through Nadi on the eve of International Women's Day drew women, children and men.





Children also voiced their concerns on violence.

Women reclaim the night

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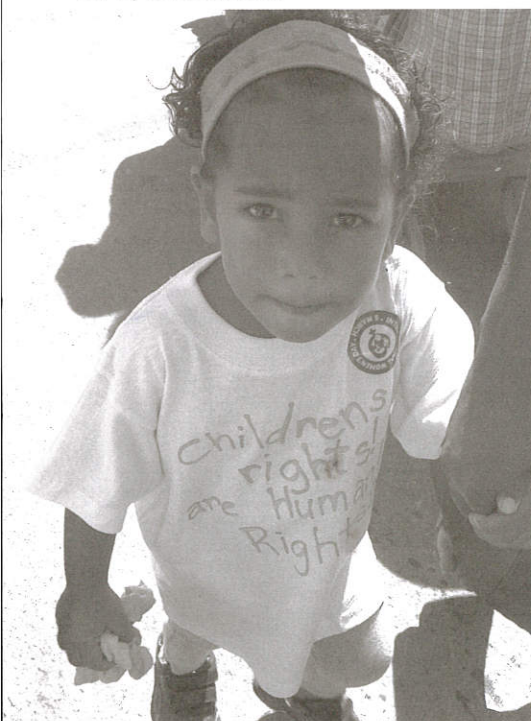
the housework and cleaning up despite his position.

Shamima Ali said despite women calling for change for more than a century, still more needed to be done to realize real change in women's status.

She urged solidarity among women, regardless of ethnicity, political affiliation or sexual orientation.

Mayor Koroiqica is hoping to declare Nadi a town that enforces zero tolerance to violence against women. If Nadi is declared a "zero tolerance town", it will become the first in the Pacific to have such a status.

Around the world, one in three women will experience violence in their lifetime, according to the World Health Organisation. In Fiji, 41 per cent of women who experienced violence reported being hit while pregnant, an FWCC survey found in 2001.



Children's rights are human rights.

Calendar of crimes

JANUARY

● **2nd** - A man was being hunted by police for allegedly attempting to rape a 16-year-old girl in Nausori. In another case, a 30-year-old woman was raped in her house while she was asleep with her seven-year-old son.

● **3rd** - A 68-year-old woman was raped as she lay sleeping in her house in the early hours of the morning.

● **5th** - A 33-year-old security guard, who threw a glass at his wife and injured her because she and a workmate were talking to two male youths, was told by the court not to re-offend or risk going to prison. In a separate case, a 20-year-old man was charged with defiling a 13-year-old girl who was playing with other children. Meanwhile, a taxi driver was jailed for nine months for indecently assaulting his wife's 14-year-old cousin.

● **8th** - Police were looking for a man who allegedly raped a 16-year-old girl who had been walking along the road when she was forced into a vehicle and raped in a secluded spot.

● **18th** - A 28-year-old farmer of Nadroga was charged with the rape of a 12-year-old girl after he allegedly lured her to a farm. In another case, police on Taveuni were investigating the attempted rape of a girl at her home on Taveuni. In another case, a 27-year-old man of Tailevu was charged with attempting to rape a 12-year-old girl who was sleeping when the incident happened.

● **23rd** - A 15-year-old boy was charged with the rape of a 9-year-old girl.

● **26th** - A 15-year-old boy was charged with raping his 12-year-old neighbour who he lured into his home on Malolo Island.

FEBRUARY

● **1st** - A man who tried to poison his wife so he could marry his girlfriend was jailed for three years by the Nadi Magistrates' Court.

● **2nd** - A magistrate jailed a 20-year-old man for five years for raping a woman in Navua. The man denied the charge but was convicted on witness testimonies.

● **11th** - Police were looking for a man who raped a 23-year-old woman in Lautoka. The woman sustained injuries in the attack.

● **20th** - A man who tried to rape a 58-year-old woman in front of her six-year-old granddaughter was caught by members of the public in a civic arrest.

● **23rd** - A 33-year-old man of Rakiraki was charged with the murder of a 15-year-old girl whose dismembered body was found in a sack. The girl was reported to have been living with

Father faces incest charge

By SERAFINA SUIALOFA and HAROLD KIOI

He said she was being kept in a house which was not been disclosed to the police or the court.

He said the allegations were that the girl was raped on numerous occasions between April 2000 and May 2002.

He said the police were not aware of the alleged offence until 2002 because the victim claimed she feared her father.

Police prosecutor Inspector Alan Ali said the accused took advantage of her when the girl's mother went out to drink bars. Ali said the accused had pleaded not guilty to the charge.

He said the girl was 15 years old at the time.

He said he would work to the police station and not to father with prosecution witnesses.

Meanwhile, a justice accused of incest against his daughter in the Northern Division has been suspended from church duties.

The divisional head of the Association of God, Church of the Southern Cross, Pastor Manasa Ramanulu, said they had held off trying the pastor's case.

He said the accused allegedly took advantage of her when the girl's mother went out to drink bars. Ali said the accused had pleaded not guilty to the charge.

He said the girl was 15 years old at the time.

The matter came to light when the victim shared the experience of what happened in 2006 at a church camp in Nadi last month. It is understood the pastor is in a counselling session at the time of the writing and that he was reported at the Nadi Police Station which was referred to police in the North police.

The allegation is believed to have happened in the family farm house which sits in the village.

The 200 pastor in Dreketa, Macuata, is believed to have had sex with his daughter between December 2005 to early 2007.

Mr Ramanulu said the daughter, who did not consent to the act by her father was threatened not to

him. He has been ordered to undergo psychiatric assessment.

● **27th** - A woman was admitted to hospital after she was stabbed with a kitchen knife in a motel during an argument. The accused has appeared in court.

● **29th** - A 26-year-old man accused of stabbing a woman and setting her home alight was refused bail.

MARCH

● **4th** - A Nausori man who allegedly raped his 14-year-old daughter several times was charged with three counts of incest.

● **6th** - A woman who was allegedly raped by a burglar, who invaded her home, said she clearly recognised the man's face because he only had a towel tied around his mouth. The accused is a serving prisoner on trial in the Magistrates' Court.

● **8th** - A Labasa man who punched and kicked his partner in a drunken frenzy was sentenced to 18 months in prison for manslaughter after the court found him guilty.

● **15th** - Police were investigating a villager in Vanua Levu who allegedly defiled his 11-year-old niece between February 22 and 29.

● **19th** - A case involving a woman who was chopped with a cane knife was adjourned because she was still in a critical condition. The accused man, the woman's landlord's son, was charged with attempted murder.

● **20th** - A Vatuwaqa fisherman was told to control his temper and to respect his wife after assaulting his wife while he was drunk. In another case, a 48-year-old man who indecently assaulted his two teenage stepdaughters was jailed for six years.

● **28th** - Police were looking for a man who assaulted his girlfriend following an argument. The 21-year-old woman was admitted in hospital with injuries.

● **29th** - A 25-year-old electrician appeared in court charged with the rape of a 15-year-old student, who was left unconscious.

● AND MORE

Five years for rapist

Q SERUWAIYA TAVUKILEVI

A MAGISTRATES court in Suva yesterday slapped a five-year jail term on a 20-year-old man charged with attempting to rape a 12-year-old girl who was sleeping when the incident happened.

But the victim kept walking and refused to answer Ravutan's question. She was grabbed from behind by Ravutan and carried to the east of the church.

Inspector Ravutan said the victim was 12 years old at the time of the incident.

Man told to control temper

FISHERMAN was told to control his temper and to respect his wife.

Salesh Kumar, 32, of Waitea settlement, Vatuwaqa appeared before Magistrate Alan Ramanulu charged with one count of assault.

While delivering Kumar's sentence yesterday, Magistrate Ramanulu issued stay proceedings for 12 months for unlawfully assaulting his wife under the influence of alcohol. The court heard that Kumar was drinking beer with his friends at his home in Vatuwaqa before he punched, kicked

Human rights defenders arrested



Shamima chats with Nadi Mayor Timoci Koroiqica.

Nadi says no to violence

NADI HAS become the first town in the Pacific to declare itself a zero-tolerance zone to violence against women.

Mayor Timoci Koroiqica has written to the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre confirming the Nadi Town Council has endorsed the move. This followed an International Women's Day march through the town on March 7, at which Mr Koroiqica was chief guest.

Mr Koroiqica is seeking the FWCC's assistance on the best way to implement the zero-tolerance policy.

The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre hailed the declaration as another small but important step in the struggle against violence against women and children.

A GROUP of 17 human rights defenders holding a peaceful vigil outside the Chinese Embassy on Queen Elizabeth Drive in Suva were arrested on April 10.

Among those detained by police was FWCC Coordinator and Fiji Human Rights Commissioner Shamima Ali.

The Fiji Tibet Support Group was holding a silent vigil on the seawall opposite the embassy in solidarity with those struggling against Chinese occupation of their tiny nation.

Unrest began in what the Chinese call Tibet Autonomous Region with demonstrations on March 10, 2008, the 49th anniversary of the failed 1959 Tibetan uprising against Beijing's rule.

300 monks had demanded the release of other monks detained since the last quarter of last year, triggering the unrest.

Soon after, political demands surfaced and the protest turned violent resulting in several deaths and a bloody crackdown by Chinese troops.

The Fiji Tibet Support Group was also supporting human rights defenders in China. Ali said: "Under the Constitution of Fiji everyone has a freedom of speech. There is nothing wrong with holding a peace vigil in solidarity of human rights violation in Tibet."

She questioned whether the Constitution was suspended given that the human rights defenders were not allowed to hold their peaceful vigil.

The group was held in the officers' mess next to the Central Police Station in Suva for several hours until they were released late at night. No charges were laid against any of the protesters.

First for Pacific men

IN A milestone event for the Pacific, 30 men have committed to continue working in the area of violence against women following the end of the first regional workshop for Male Advocates.

The men from the Cook Islands, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu attended a weeklong workshop at the Lagoon Resort in Pacific Harbour.

The men had already undergone Male Advocacy Training in their own countries, but this is the first time a regional training involving all of them has been held.

One of the main focuses of the workshop was breaking down the myths surrounding gender-based violence and exposing the common excuses men - and society in general - use to justify violence.

Organised by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, the workshop was facilitated by Stephen Fisher, a masculinity and gender relations consultant based in Melbourne who has more than 20 years' experience in the field.

The men learnt to challenge some of the



Some of the men from Fiji and the Pacific at the workshop.

common excuses used to justify violence against women such as:

- "Why doesn't she leave?"
- "The Bible supports men as head of the household."
- "Some men just have anger issues."

Part of the training involved learning to become confident in promoting nothing less than equality between men and women in both private and public life.

The participants were police and prison officers, government officials, religious representatives and NGO representatives.

They have committed to changing their own attitudes and lifestyles first before putting their training into practice in their own areas of work.

The men have also agreed to set up a Pacific Male Advocates' Network to keep informed and encouraged. The men will work with established women's group in advocating for change in other men's attitudes to women. They will also act as middlemen in helping women's groups set up workshops or training in areas that have not been covered.

FWCC coordinator Shamima Ali says they don't expect miracles from training but reaffirmed her faith in Pacific men.

"Even if men (at the workshop) change themselves and one or two men around them, that is enough," says Ali.

The workshop, from March 31-April 4, was funded by AusAID.

Workshop inspires officer

SIMIONE BALE, the newly-appointed station officer at Tukavesi Police Station in Vanua Levu, was one of 30 men from Fiji and the Pacific who attended the first Regional Male Advocacy Workshop in April.

Tukavesi is second to Keiyasi in its notoriety for marijuana cultivation, a factor that Bale says leads to a significant number of sexual abuse and violence against women cases. Bale says Tukavesi police station records the second-highest number of violence against women cases in Fiji. "Marijuana is a factor," he says.

Bale realised he needed to change his own attitude and mindset first, before he could implement the ideas he learnt during the training.



Simione Bale

"I thought I came (to the workshop) just to represent the police force, but now I've realized that the struggle against violence against women will take a real commitment from me," Bale says.

He says he will begin at home, changing the way he treats his wife, who is also a police officer.

As part of a "restructure" at his police station, he is hoping to appoint a police officer to be in charge of cases involving violence and sexual abuse of women and children.

He is working on compiling data from his jurisdiction of cases involving violence against women and child abuse beginning from 2000. The results of that research will be a basis for strategies to fight the growing problem of violence and sexual abuse in the area.

Ba men in advocacy training

THIRTY-SIX MEN from Sokoba in Ba underwent Male Advocacy Training in April. The training was conducted by Fiji Women's Crisis Centre's Mere Rauluni, from the Suva branch and Vani Tuvuki of the Ba Women's Crisis Centre.

Some of the men gave their thoughts about the training and what it meant to them:

Kaliova Naisau, 22

During the workshop, I have learnt that domestic violence, rape and child abuse have a long-term effect not only on victims but also on the family and community. I will apply the knowledge that I've learnt to become a better person, role model to my peers and how to have a good happy family in future.



Naisau

Josua Saviri, 36

I have learnt so much from this workshop. It has built my self-esteem and has taught me to take domestic violence, rape and child abuse issues seriously. I've also learnt to respect and love women and children. As a Sunday school teacher and a youth leader I have to be aware and sensitive to these issues, and most of to blame the offender and not the victim.



Saviri

Filimoni Nakase, 48

I have always thought that men are the rightful leaders and the head of the house, that we have the power and control. To be honest, I've always controlled my family, but I've repented and gone into preaching. I am privileged to have attended this workshop as it has completely changed my mindset and most of all I am aware and of the issues that concern women and children. I want to be a better husband and a better father. I will share my knowledge of what I have learnt from this workshop with the people of Sorokoba.

Viliame Naliva, 26

I have learnt so much from this workshop: gender awareness, domestic violence, rape and child abuse issues. It has made me open my eyes and ears to the struggle and call of women and children. I want to be a better youth and a good role model to help in eliminating violence against women and children.



Participants at the Male Advocacy Workshop in Sorokoba, Ba.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

JANUARY 2008

- Fiji School of Nursing - Domestic violence
- Rotaract Youth - Gender and development
- Vatukarasa women's group - Role of FWCC, domestic violence

FEBRUARY 2008

- Women's Prison - Domestic violence, sexual violence, human rights, CEDAW, CRC, law

MARCH 2008

- Women's Prison - Domestic violence, sexual violence, human rights, CEDAW, CRC, law
- Assembly of God Youth - Role of FWCC, domestic violence, rape, sexual, harassment, role of community.
- Tavua College, Tavua - Role of FWCC, child abuse, rape, sexual, harassment
- Fiji Teachers Union - International Women's Day
- DAV College, Ba - Role of FWCC, child abuse, rape, sexual harassment
- Natutu Villages, Ba - Role of FWCC,

child abuse, rape, sexual harassment

APRIL 2008

- Sorokoba Male Advocacy - Gender, domestic violence, child abuse, power and control, equality
- Post-graduate Diploma in Legal Practice (USP) - Domestic violence
- Nasoso Bible College - Role of FWCC and domestic violence
- Balivar Sangam Primary School (Class 1-4) - Child abuse, child sexual abuse, eight rules for safety
- Balivar Primary School (Classes 5-8) - Child abuse, child sexual abuse, pornography and eight rules for safety
- St. Augustine Primary School (Classes 1-2) - Child abuse, child sexual abuse, eight rules for safety
- Savusavu Anglican Kindergarten - Good touch/Bad touch, child sexual abuse (to pupils), pornography and paedophilia (to parents)
- Youths Training at Ministry of Youth - Gender and domestic violence

Thumbs up!

Woman PM please
WHY not a woman prime minister?
 Why not a country run under a woman's leadership?
 If other countries can, why not ours?
 I will definitely give my vote to the next woman PM. Women who can overcome manly dominance and lead by example.
 Don't you think so?
MANISH SINGH
 Sigatoka
Fiji Times, March 20, 2008

Thumbs down!

Thumbs down to Ba Magistrate Salote Kaimacuata for allowing a man who defiled a 12-year-old age to walk free. The 30-year-old man, a father of one, received a nine-month sentence suspended for two years on May 22, for defiling his wife's niece.

Thursdays in Black

'THURSDAY'S IN BLACK' is a human rights campaign started by the World Council of Churches as a peaceful way of saying "I support the human right of women to live in a world without violence, rape and fear" and has grown to become an international phenomenon that also includes men.

Aruna Gnanadason, coordinator of the Women's Desk of the World Council of Churches, when visiting former Yugoslavia in the late 1990s was aghast at the violence being perpetrated by Serbian soldiers in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

At the time she said the systematic rape of women in refugee camps was part of Serbia's military strategy was part of the ethnic cleansing programme.

With roots in groups such as 'Mothers of the Disappeared' in Argentina, 'Black Sash' in South Africa and the 'Women in Black' movements in Israel-Palestine and the former Yugoslavia, 'Thursdays in Black' encourages people (not just women) to wear the black campaign T-shirt, other black clothing or simply a campaign badge every Thursday as a sign of their support. The 'Thursdays in Black' campaign is not just confined to countries officially at war. It is a chance to say no to weapons such as domestic violence, sexual assault, rape, incest, murder, female infanticide, genital mutilation, sexual harassment, discrimination and sex trafficking.

Staff profile



NAME: Sera Vakalala
POSITION: Administrator

Working at the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre for the past seven years has empowered me to understand and respect other women. It has taught me that women's rights are human rights.