



FIJI WOMEN'S CRISIS CENTRE

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2010



Women and children RECLAIMING THE NIGHT during the FWCC's annual march to mark International Women's Day

Reclaim the Night march

"What do we want? SAFE STREETS! When do we want it? NOW!

What do we want? SAFE HOMES! When do we want it? NOW!"

This was the call of about 250 to 300 women, men and children who took to the streets of Suva on March 8 for the FWCC's annual Reclaim the Night march, which was also used to mark International Women's Day and to remember all the women in the past year that have lost their lives as a result of violence and or abuse.

They marched from the Flea Market to Government Buildings with candles, placards and banners which had "Stop Rape", "Human Rights for All", "End Violence against Women and Children". Coordinator Shamima Ali said the march was symbolic as the governance system and the rule of law have to be working to ensure equality and justice for women at all times and as women of this country, we have the right to claim this justice as well as the right to safer homes, safer communities and a safer country.

WOMEN/CHILDREN WHO HAVE LOST THEIR LIVES TO VIOLENCE IN 2009-10

5th April 2010 - 6yr old girl who drowned over Easter may have been sexually assaulted

5th Jan 2010 - A woman died after being struck with a cane knife multiple times by her de facto partner.

3rd Nov 2009 - Rajeshni Sharma, a 35yr old kindergarten teacher was strangled to death at her home. Her body was found by her de-facto partner, who has been charged with her alleged murder. The case continues.

23rd Oct 2009 - Prabha Wati's body was found burning in a plantation field by a security guard. The post mortem exam found that she was strangled and then set alight. The murder is still unsolved, investigations are ongoing and no charges have been laid.

24th Sept 2009 - Mereseini Burelevu, a 4yr old girl was sexually assaulted and strangled. Her body was found floating in the sea on 24th Sept.

14th Sept 2009 - Unise Tareguci, a 3yr old girl was strangled to death and then raped.

10th Aug 2009 - Sadikuini Yalewavukivuki, a 14month old baby was beaten to death by her father, who said that there was an evil spirit in the house and repeatedly punched her in the head. He was found not guilty of murder by reason of insanity.

Is sexual assault increasing?

IT IS great to see that the media, police, communities are seriously tackling the heinous crime of sexual assault against girls and children.

However, we are quite concerned at the misconceptions that continue to prevail regarding this issue.

Firstly the whole issue of increase in these crimes in the north. This idea is seriously flawed. There is no evidence to suggest that sexual assaults are more prevalent in Vanua Levu than in any other part of Fiji. What is evident is the increase in reporting which is quite different from a marked increase in incidents of sexual crimes.

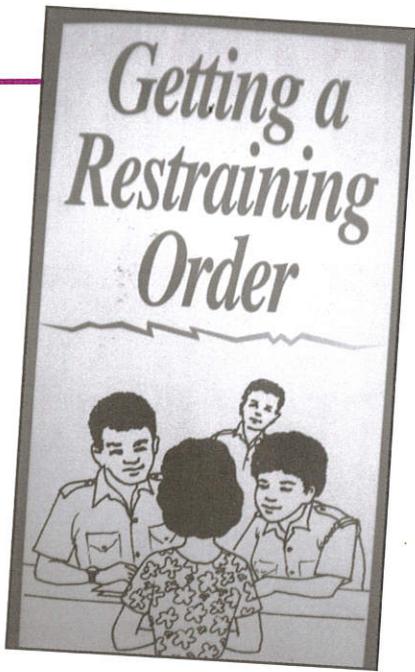
And the reason there is an increase in reporting in the North we believe is the amount of community awareness that is being undertaken, to a large extent by the Labasa Women's Crisis Centre, and to some extent by police and other NGO's.

The more awareness there is about this crime, and women's access to justice the more reporting there will be. We are very happy with the positive response we have received from community leaders in

the North to work out prevention strategies and develop appropriate responses to this crime; to involving the survivor, police, health, community leaders, women's groups and the justice system.

The second issue of concern we have is bringing in kava, marijuana into this discussion. While leaving children alone is one of the risk factors (let us not forget that fathers and grandfathers also rape women and children), where is the research to show that kava drinking or marijuana smoking are reasons for the attacks? How many parents of victims were drinking kava at the time of attack? How many convicted perpetrators were under the influence of marijuana when they committed the offence?

These are once again misconceptions which only cause our attention to be diverted from the perpetrators of these heinous crimes. What we would like to hear from the authorities is more constructive and effective ways to eliminate these crimes based on research and sound knowledge of the dynamics involved. We have to look at changing male attitudes and behaviour towards women and girls.



Domestic violence a crime

Under the new decree:

- Any woman experiencing violence can apply for protection orders from the Family Court
- Anyone can apply for a protection order for other family members.

It recognises that:

- Violence occurs in both family and domestic relationships
- Violence includes physical injury and sexual abuse, threats, intimidation and harassment. It also includes damaging of property, persistent abuse, cruel and inhumane behavior, loitering outside the workplace and stalking.

Protection orders:

- Includes non-contact, protection of children, orders relating to possessions, weapons, urgent financial compensation from the perpetrator and occupation or tenancy orders.

Occupation and tenancy orders allow survivors of domestic violence to remain in their usual homes and even if this does not or cannot occur; the Court will ensure that their accommodation needs are of the highest priority.

Duties of the Police are:

- To prevent domestic violence, to investigate, charge and arrest persons who commit domestic violence
- To help and take action quickly when a complaint is made.
- To apply for restraining orders.

If police are not helpful in a domestic violence case, we can lodge a complaint against them to his/her superiors and other authorities.

Calendar of crimes

DECEMBER 2009

- **31st** - A farmer appeared before the Labasa Magistrates Court charged with raping his de facto wife. Released on \$500 bail.
 - **27th** - A case of suspected rape by a male relative is being investigated in Valelevu.
 - **24th** - An Australian woman allegedly raped by a taxi driver.
 - **22nd** - A student was admitted at the Taveuni hospital after being raped.
- A 13yr old girl admitted at the Savusavu hospital after being raped.
- A 17yr old Lautoka youth charged with indecently assaulting a four year old girl was granted \$200 bail.
- A 46yr old Nadi man charged with indecently assaulting a 10yr old girl

Dad kills son

raping his two step daughters, who are believed to be aged 13 and 17 in a village in the Northern Division.

A man, charged with allegedly raping and indecently assaulting his 11yr old daughter repeatedly, seeks case transfer to the high court.

• **8th** - Six unemployed youths were taken into custody over allegations that they sodomized a 7yr old primary school student.

An unemployed youth sentenced to 15months in prison for indecently assaulting a 16yr old girl.

- **4th** - A closed court has been ordered for a Nabua youth who allegedly broke into a house and sexually assaulted two girls.
- **1st** - The Fiji football vice president has appeared in court charged with defilement. The 46yr old accused is a primary school teacher, who denied the three counts of defilement of a girl under thirteen and one count of indecent assault.

Court told of girl's ordeal

By SAMANTHA BINA

He is charged with a count of murder and rape. The court also heard that the suspect tried to commit suicide while in police custody.

Director of Public Prosecutions lawyer, Virginia Little, objected to bail on various grounds which included the location at Nakorobu's village.

She said the court that Naibla had allegedly killed the toddler before he raped her and went straight to hospital after the rape of her body on the morning of September 12 this year.

The court told the court that Naibla had previous convictions for rape, indecent assault and other offences.

Naibla was charged with the murder of his 11-year-old daughter, who was found dead in her room at the Nakorobu village on September 12.

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JANUARY 2010

- **27th** - A woman was critically injured and was admitted at the Lautoka hospital after her husband shoved a piece of wood into her mouth during a domestic dispute.
- **15th** - A young girl was physically assaulted by her uncle because of the way she dressed.

- **18th** - A 16yr old girl was raped while asleep, by someone known to her.
- **11th** - A man questioned by police for allegedly raping a 22yr old teacher.
- **10th** - A man charged with allegedly

FEBRUARY 2010

- **5th** - A man was taken into custody in relation to his de-facto's death.

MARCH 2010

- **8th** - A 10yr old boy was admitted at the Lautoka hospital after being badly beaten up by his dad.
 - **10th** - A 22yr old man from Naitasiri wanted by police for defiling a 15yr old girl.
- In Savusavu, a church pastor was questioned by police for allegedly having sexual relations with a group of school girls.
- **25th** - A Class Three student was physically assaulted and raped by a 21yr old and was admitted to the Colonial War Memorial Hospital for a few weeks before she was discharged.

Woman tells of rape

IT must be happening to most women in Fiji said Deedee White, 46, as she described how a taxi driver raped her on Saturday.

As a victim, she is hoping to create awareness on the issue of sexual harassment among women.

She said she was raped by a taxi driver on Saturday night. She said she was alone in the taxi and the driver was rude when I asked him why he was leaving the car behind and told me that he did not like the ladies' said.

The driver then went to Princes Road saying he was going to drop me off. She said she was alone in the taxi and the driver was rude when I asked him why he was leaving the car behind and told me that he did not like the ladies' said.

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Note: All cases were reported in Fiji's mainstream media outlets, however these headlines were taken from the Fiji Times.

Male advocacy inspires tikina rep

"BUT BEFORE I do trainings on male advocacy, I must change my attitude first. My wife and children would be the first ones to benefit from this male advocacy training and I must thank the FWCC and Shamima Ali for this lifetime opportunity to learn something important".

This is what Cakaudrove Provincial Council Tikina representative in Vanua Levu, 54yr old Setareki Dugulele has said on the impact of the Male Advocacy Training organised by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC).

He said it was an inspiration and a good learning experience for him and added that he now thinks men need to be trained on advocacy for women's rights, because he has now learnt that women's rights are human rights.

The Vanuavou man said the Labasa Women's Crisis Centre have been consistent with their training and workshops in the villages and says that he will work closely

with them. Dugulele said that domestic violence in the rural areas and outer islands is a problem that needs to be addressed and that men should be the first ones to learn about the seriousness of domestic abuse in the family.

He is currently working on a proposal to submit to the Provincial Council to support him with the committee education trainings and workshops that will be carried out in Vatuova.

Dugelele said, "This is my first time to a regional meeting on male advocacy and I look forward to other meetings where I can learn more on how I can address this problem".

Dugulele also participated in the Pacific training to trial the Handbook for Male Advocacy.



Setareki Dugulele



Women marching through Tavua town for the first time to mark International Women's Day

Women march in Tavua town for the first time

"REPORTS FROM our network members and community workers have informed the Crisis Centre that sexual abuse does exist in Rakiraki, Tavua, Ba and Vatukoula whereby many of the cases are not reported".

These are the words of Ba Women's Crisis Centre's Project Officer, Wilma Eileen who said it is this fact that prompted a little more than a hundred women, for the first time, to turn up and march in Tavua on March 8th to mark International Women's Day.

The crowd, from Ba, Vatukoula, Nadi, Lautoka and Rakiraki, attracted shoppers and passers-by with their chants such as "Women's Rights are Human Rights", "Real Men don't Hit Women", "Stop Rape", "We want safe homes, safe streets", "We Demand Respect", "We Want Good Police" and "We Want Justice".

Eileen said their theme for this year was 'Stop Rape and Sexual Abuse' and added that there was growing concern on unreported marital rape and by having this march in Tavua town, the Ba Centre wanted to let the public know that any form of violence against women is wrong as women have the right to live a dignified and respectable life.

A minute of silence was also observed in remembrance of women and children who lost their lives as a result of violence inflicted on them.

Women discuss rape and child sexual abuse

"SOME WOMEN, at first believed that dressing was the cause for rape until we discussed the profiles of the victims and that of the offenders. They said that they had never seen it this way before and many were very angry to hear of a mother being raped by her mature married son and also of young girls being raped by their own fathers or close male relatives".

This is the view of Labasa Women's Crisis Centre Project Officer, Sera Bogitini on a three day workshop held for around 50 women who represented 10 villages, at Vanuavou Village in Vatuova, Cakaudrove on the issues of rape and child sexual abuse.

Anaseini Cabe of Vatukuca said that she had learnt alot from the workshop and now she really wants the women in her village to know about women's human rights, to live a life free of abuse and violence.

Bogitini said the workshop was part of the strategies laid out at the International Women's Day seminar that was held at the Hot Springs Hotel last year, where it was agreed to hold at least 15 workshops on Rape and Child Sexual Abuse all throughout Vanua Levu between March 2009 and March 2012.

Bogitini said there was a lot of honest sharing and dialogue among the participants who were at the workshop.

She said the workshop was an eye opener to many of the women participants who later requested for more training on the issue of rape.



Women during the Vatuova workshop

Mother's Day Proclamation



Arise then...women of this day!
 Arise, all women who have hearts!
 Whether your baptism be of water or of tears!
 Say firmly:
 "We will not have questions answered by irrelevant agencies,
 Our husbands will not come to us, reeking with carnage,
 For caresses and applause.
 Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn
 All that we have been able to teach them of charity, mercy and patience.
 We, the women of one country,
 Will be too tender of those of another country
 To allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs."

From the bosom of a devastated Earth a voice goes up with
 Our own. It says: "Disarm! Disarm!
 The sword of murder is not the balance of justice."
 Blood does not wipe out dishonor,
 Nor violence indicate possession.
 As men have often forsaken the plough and the anvil
 At the summons of war,
 Let women now leave all that may be left of home
 For a great and earnest day of counsel.
 Let them meet first, as women, to bewail and commemorate the dead.
 Let them solemnly take counsel with each other as to the means
 Whereby the great human family can live in peace...
 Each bearing after his own time the sacred impress, not of Caesar,
 But of God -
 In the name of womanhood and humanity, I earnestly ask
 That a general congress of women without limit of nationality,
 May be appointed and held at someplace deemed most convenient
 And the earliest period consistent with its objects,
 To promote the alliance of the different nationalities,
 The amicable settlement of international questions,
 The great and general interests of peace.

Julia Ward Howe, Original Founder of Mother's Day, Boston, 1870



Provincial council on DV

THE TAVEUNI Provincial Council does not condone any acts of violence by a perpetrator.

Assistant Roko Aloesi Rasaciva stressed this to more than a 100 women at the International Women's Day celebrations in March in Somosomo, Taveuni, where he was Chief Guest.

He advised the women present to take heed of the call from the FWCC and to report cases of domestic violence as there was a lot of unreported cases which was not helping the situation.

Meanwhile, President of the only gay society in Taveuni, Lipo Roqo also expressed his concerns on the number of unreported violence such as sexual assault, which



Volau Yavalanavanua who organised the International Women's Day in Somosomo

members of his group were victims of.

The women highlighted accessibility of support and counseling services and also stated that to help they could use their different churches as shelters and referrals.

At the meet Police and the Health Ministry were also asked if they could be more supportive and responsive to cases of crimes of violence.

CMF circuit pastor in Taveuni, Saiyasi Lesu, accompanied his wife to the meeting and shared his past violent habits which saw him spending most of his time in prison.

He also said that he supported the stand by FWCC.

Male advocacy training impact



PACIFIC CONFERENCE of Churches' Peter Emberson said the training was a timely opportunity to assess and re-evaluate his gender prejudices and gender stereotypes and added that gender theory can be learnt or taught and gender misconceptions deconstructed, if one is determined enough to make time and put in the energy to

understand the dynamics of 'patriarchal power' in society.

FOUNDATION OF the Peoples of the South Pacific International's Albert Cerelala said the training had made him re-look at his actions and attitude towards women and girls at home and added that once he changes, he can then get other men to change their negative perceptions of women, that they need to be respected and treated as equals.



Community Education

JANUARY 2010

- Talks to the Tuatua Arya Samaj group in Labasa on Child Sexual Abuse.
- USP TESOL students on FWCC Services

FEBRUARY 2010

- A three-day workshop to the Vunimoli/Korotari Womens' groups on domestic violence.
- Talks on Child Abuse to students and teachers of Korotari, Arya Primary School, also gave Prefects' badges.
- A three-day workshop to the communities of Soti/ Droca & Biligau communities, Nasarawaqa

in Bua.

- Talks on Domestic Violence to the women of Korotari/ Vunimoli/ Waikisi.
- Arya Samaj Women's Club, Vatukoula on the role of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre and Domestic Violence.
- Garampani Women's Club, Tavua on the role of the Centre and Domestic Violence.
- Davota Women's Club, Tavua on the role of the Centre and Domestic Violence.

MARCH 2010

- International Women's

Day Programme in Nabouwalu, Bua.

- Talks on Roles of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre to the Savusavu Women's group.
- A three-day workshop to the women of Vaturova District, Cakaudrove.
- Session on Abortion to Fiji College of General Practitioners
- Session on Domestic Violence for Men's Fellowship Dept. Of the AOG Church, Central/ Eastern Division
- Workshop on Domestic Violence in Baulevu organised by Women's Ministry.