

Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation News

Congregation of the Sisters of Bon Secours

Violence Against Women During COVID-19



November, 2020

Vol. 6, Number 3



Impelled by the Holy Spirit...we, women of audacious hope...
work to eliminate violence in all forms;

Chapter 2019 Chapter Direction Statement, Congregation of Bon Secours

Despite the adoption of the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) by the UN General Assembly in 1979, violence against women and girls remains a pervasive problem worldwide. Since 1981, the United Nations has designated November 25 as a day to raise awareness of gender-based violence.

This year with the outbreak of COVID-19, there is emerging data and reports from those on the front lines, that show all types of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, has intensified. Our Sisters in Peru testified to this reality at our recent International JPIC Committee meeting. This is the Shadow Pandemic growing amidst the COVID-19 crisis, and we need a global collective effort to stop it.

As Sisters of Bon Secours we are committed to eliminating violence in all forms and take this opportunity commemorating the International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women to raise awareness of this critical global issue.

November
JPIC Days of Remembrance

November 3
St. Martin de Porres
Patron of Race Relations

November 9
Birthday of Rev. Thomas Berry



November 13
St. Frances Xavier Cabrini
Patron of Migrants

November 19
World Day of the Poor

November 25
International Day for
Elimination of Violence
Against Women

November 29
International Day of Solidarity
with the Palestinian People

Violence Against Women

- Globally 243 million women and girls aged 15-49 have been subjected to sexual and/or physical violence perpetrated by an intimate partner in the previous 12 months.
- 1 in 3 women and girls experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, most frequently by an intimate partner.
- Only 52% of women married or in a union freely make their own decisions about sexual relations, contraceptive use and health care.
- Worldwide, almost 750 million women and girls alive today were married before their 18th birthday.
- 200 million women and girls have undergone female genital mutilation (FGM).
- 71% of all human trafficking victims worldwide are women and girls, and 3 out of 4 of these women and girls are sexually exploited.

Source: UN Women



"Women have often become victims of domestic violence locked down with their abusers, as unpaid caregivers in families and communities, and as workers in jobs that lack social protection."

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women

Gender Based Violence During COVID-19 Via Internet

Violence Against Women (VAW) is a human rights violation, a universal issue, with severe impact on victims/survivors, their families, and communities. As the COVID-19 pandemic deepens economic and social stress coupled with restricted movement and social isolation measures, gender-based violence is increasing exponentially. During COVID19, violence against women is manifested in different forms, including domestic violence and online Information and Communications Technology (ICT) facilitated violence. These forms of violence and abuse take place in a context of widespread systemic gender-based discrimination.



- ∞ In the U.S. two out of every ten young women, aged 18-29, have been sexually harassed online and one in two say they were sent unwarranted explicit images.
- ∞ In France, 15 % of women said they experienced some form of cyber harassment.
- ∞ In the European Union, 1 in 10 women report having experienced cyber harassment since the age of 15.

Women and girls are using the internet with greater frequency during the pandemic while there is a gender digital divide. COVID-19 is being described as the first major pandemic of the social media age. More than half of the world's population was under lockdown conditions by early April. Quarantine measures and self-isolation policies have increased internet usage between 50% to 70%, as women and men turn to the internet for work, school, and social activities. During this period, users with limited digital skills are more at risk of cyberviolence. Concerningly, given the digital gender divide, women and girls are at a higher risk for these forms of violence. *Source: UN Women*

Since the beginning of Covid-19 restrictions in Ireland, we have seen a 43% increase in calls to our helpline, a 71% increase in visits to our website and a 25% increase in calls to Gardaí from women terrified in their own homes.

Women's Aid, Ireland

Prayer to End Violence Against Women

Loving God of all, help us to be silent for a moment so we can hear the cries of girls and women; some loud, many muffled, who are enduring violence in every area of our global community.

Help us to be still for a moment so we can recognize the terror on the faces of

- ♥ Ten-year-old schoolgirls raped in the Congo
- ♥ Girls of fourteen in Pakistan shot for wanting an education
- ♥ Eighteen-year-old sex slaves in Europe
- ♥ U.S. college students, raped on campus
- ♥ Young wives in India threatened with burning
- ♥ Battered women in every country.

Help us to take the time to reflect on the fact that the majority of human rights violations across your world are acts of violence toward women. The roots of such hatred are deep and tangled, and justice is long overdue. We ask your help to act so we may become agents of transformation, willing to work to change systems and structures that have fostered and allowed such violence to continue, to this day, in the human community. Help us, for a moment, to be silent and still so we can recognize you in the faces of every girl and every woman. Amen

Source: Education for Justice, Jane Deren



Thousands of women — many of them girls and adolescents — have gone missing in Peru since January, including at least 1,423 reported missing since the country entered a state of emergency amid the COVID-19 pandemic in mid-March.

Domestic Violence in Peru

Peru saw a jump in missing women reports after it eased some of its pandemic restrictions at the start of July: 508 women and girls were reported missing in July, compared with 358 the prior month.

This pandemic has exposed "another emergency" that's been made invisible for decades, and that's the multiple forms of violence women live with inside their own homes.

It's impossible to know for sure the fate of the women reported missing. That's because Peru lacks an up-to-date, national database for tracking missing women, even though a law requiring the creation of such a database has been on the books since 2003. That means there's no way to track information like the circumstances under which they disappeared or whether they were later found alive or dead.

Source: NPR

International Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Committee

Sr. Teresa Margot Benites Montero, CBS (Peru)
Eileen Fernandini, CBS Associate (USA)
Sr. Fran Gorsuch, CBS (USA)
Camille Grippon (USA; France Liaison)
Sr. Mary Beth Hamm, SSJ Co-chair
Sr. Mary Leamy, CBS (Ireland)
Sr. Anne Marie Mack, CBS (USA) Chair
Sr. Maria Pintado Peña, CBS (Peru)
Sr. Katherine Tierney, CBS (Ireland)
Sr. Yolanda Morales Valiente, CBS (Peru)
Sr. Chris Webb, CBS (USA)