

CCSJ calls for community mobilization to end violence against women

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MEDIA RELEASE

On the occasion of International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (November 25) the Catholic Commission for Social Justice (CCSJ) calls for community mobilization to end violence against women in TT/the world.

We cannot remain silent/indifferent in the face of the onslaught of such violence. It dehumanizes all of us. It plagues all strata of every society; all religious and ethnic groups.

Catholics believe that God imprinted a right moral order in the hearts of men and women. But some have strayed from this path. Violence is fed by a lack of formation of conscience; and by the existence of a culture that allows it to continue unabated. The sanctity of life and the dignity of the human person are the foundation of the moral vision of a society.

On 8 September, 2017, during his visit to Columbia, Pope Francis condemned violence against women and called for respect for women. Inter alia, he asked: “How many women, in silence, have persevered alone?” As Reuters reported, he said women are weighed down by patriarchal and chauvinistic customs and violence against women is widespread.

On 10 March 2016 The Holy See said “crimes against women and girls...cannot anymore go unheard, unseen, overlooked or treated as an inevitable consequence in the horrible reality of armed conflict...the world is still confronted with old and new forms of violence and slavery directed at women...These include the use of rape as a weapon of war during conflicts; the trafficking of girls (who are treated as merchandise); the abuse of domestic workers (that remains, at times, unpunished); kidnapping of young women, forced marriage, forced conversion and forced abortion. All these types of violence occur more frequently where poverty and social instability are prevalent or even where some legal systems and traditions continue to

condone them and they cause serious and long-lasting physical, psychological and social effects.”

CCSJ urges our Government in particular, to act on the recommendations of the recently published UNDP-UN Report, *Commitment to Action: Public Policies to Eradicate violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean*. The Report highlights the fact that in spite of some progress, the region has the highest rate of violence against women. This “dire challenge” must be met head on. Therefore, CCSJ welcomes the Report’s recommendations e.g. that social pacts should be generated among governments, the private sector and civil society to engage all relevant actors in ending this scourge.

Legislation alone will not defeat this evil. Let us: address the root causes; socialize our boys/men to respect themselves and girls/women; play our part in building a culture of life, love and mutual respect: from an early age; redouble our efforts to promote the inherent dignity of each woman and to protect their lives; offer solidarity and support in parishes to the victims of violence. The time to act is NOW.

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