

Stop the violence against women and girls

- Post author By [Web administrator](#)
- Post date [September 30, 2020](#)
 - Sticky post



PRESS RELEASE

The Catholic Commission for Social Justice (CCSJ) calls on all citizens to respond urgently to the prevalence of violence against women and girls in T&T.

Leela Ramdeen, Chair of CCSJ, says: *“This heinous form of oppression/gender-based violence is an affront to the inherent dignity of each woman/girl and diminishes/dehumanises all of us. If we analyse these crimes, we will see that predatory violence involved planned acts. We all know the statistics, that globally, about one out of every three women have experienced violence in their lifetime. We need to move beyond statistics to take action at various levels in our society to put an end to this crime. We must step up and be our sisters’ and brothers’ keepers – yes, brothers, as perpetrators appear to have been socialised to respond to rejection in a certain way. We must re-socialise both sexes, address the unequal power relations between men and women, and play our part in building a culture of life, love, and mutual respect: from an early age. Attitudinal and behavioural changes won’t happen by vaps. We have serious work to do. For example, we must address the need for values/conscience formation and citizenship programmes – at home, in our educational institutions, in our faith communities, in our workplaces etc.”*

The UN rightly states that: “Violence against women continues to be an obstacle to achieving equality, development, peace as well as to the fulfilment of women and girls’ human rights... It is one of the most widespread, persistent, and devastating human rights violations in our world today and remains largely unreported due to the impunity, silence, stigma, and shame surrounding it. In general terms, it manifests itself in physical, sexual, and psychological forms, encompassing: “

The UN has described the increase in domestic violence and abuse as a “shadow pandemic”. Some estimates are that these cases have increased by 20% during the lockdown as the victims are now trapped in their homes with their abusers. (Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-53014211>)

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres is quoted as stating, “For many women and girls, the threat looms largest where they should be safest. In their own homes... We know lockdowns and quarantines are essential to suppressing COVID-19. But they can trap women with abusive partners.” (source: <https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/un-supporting-%E2%80%98trapped%E2%80%99-domestic-violence-victims-during-covid-19-pandemic>)

Each day the media assail our senses with news of more and more acts of violence against women and girls. We know that female victims far outweigh male victims e.g.

- domestic/intimate partner violence, such as the murder of 25-year old Reshma Kanchan, a mother of two, whose estranged male relative ambushed and chopped her on her way to work in Penal, almost severing her head; or
- violence perpetrated by strangers, such as the crime against the 17-year-old girl who responded to a Facebook advertisement about a job and was beaten, raped and thrown over a cliff by a 48-year-old man who is now before the Court in connection with several reports of sexual assaults, attempted murder and larceny along the North Coast Road, Maracas. Such Predatory **violence** involves **planned acts**; or
- the recent spate of rape/sexual abuse cases against girls and women. It beggar's belief that a mother could be before a Court charged with failing to report suspected rape of her 2 daughters for a number of years by their stepfather, her 40-year-old partner. The 17-year-old said she confided in her mother about the abuse on several occasions and that the mother allegedly did nothing to stop it. This raises the issue of the need to examine the reason why some women in such situations become complicit in the crime.

Legislation is not sufficient. Too often family members, neighbours, friends, co-workers know of or suspect abuse and do nothing about the situation. There are many avenues open for us to act. We have all heard stories of persons go to the police station in the district only to be ignored, the TTPS has established a Gender-Based Violence unit whose jurisdiction beyond local police stations. Let's step out of our comfort zones and assist these women to escape imminent death. We know that some of these perpetrators are themselves suffering from severe mental illnesses and may indeed be quite dangerous, take every precaution when treating with these situations, call on the authorities/experts but please by all means act.

CCSJ calls on each citizen/organisation to increase our efforts of advocacy and service provision. The media has an important role to play in eliminating such violence. Let's stand together, women and men, girls, and boys, to end this shameful stain on humanity.

For further information, contact Leela Ramdeen, Chair, CCSJ, at 299 8945.