



2011: CENTENARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Today, a century later, we should [look back](#) and put ourselves in the shoes of the women who fought for an egalitarian world in which all human beings could enjoy the same rights, regardless of their gender. Now is the time to thank them for their struggles and achievements. For example, at the time of the first March 8 celebration, in 1911, women were entitled to vote only in two countries in the world. Despite the countless achievements, there are still situations of inequality that must be overcome, including violence against women and girls.

The extent and scope of violence against women makes it the most widespread violation of **human rights**. There is strong evidence that the implications of this violation are extremely serious not only for directly affected women but for society as a whole. This cultural problem is rooted in the most diverse societies in the world, and shows itself in equally harmful ways. Effective policies to advance the eradication of this type of violence have not yet been implemented.

Studies show that one out of every three women will be or has been a victim of some form of violence in her lifetime. Femicide, that is, the murder of women for the fact of being women, is the most serious manifestation of this type of violence, but not the only one. Psychological, physical, sexual and economic violence undermines women's ability to live a free and dignified life.

Y si en el contexto mundial la situación es grave, en América Latina y el Caribe los datos son alarmantes hasta el punto que podemos hablar de verdadera pandemia. (ver cuadro 1)

While the situation is serious at the global level, data for Latin America and the Caribbean is alarming and suggests we are facing a true pandemic. (See Table 1)



Violence against women is not something natural

The roots of violence against women can be found in the social and cultural patterns that have been developed over centuries of learning about what it means to "be a man" and to "be a woman." Men are socialized to be strong, enterprising, wield power and dominate the public space. Meanwhile, women traits attributed weakness and taught submission and how avoid confrontation and stay invisible, confined to the private area. This results in a different way of experiencing and suffering from violence. While men's violence takes place outdoors, "out there in the world", women's often occurs indoors, "at home" (family or domestic violence). Further, the various forms of discrimination against women at the workplace and the political arena also make them vulnerable to violence in the public space.

Ending violence against women requires a transformation of historical socially-constructed power relations. It is necessary to transform the macho culture that sees violence against women as something natural, boost social and cultural change, a change that starts during childhood at home, at school, within the communities... Several studies have shown that children who live and/or experience violence during their childhood are more likely to be victims and/or perpetrators of violence (PAHO, 2010).

The **UNiTE to End Violence Against Women and Girls Campaign** calls upon every man to join the promotion sexism- and violence-free societies. Men invite other men and women to create and believe in a better world without violence against women. The Secretary General of the United Nations has been promoting a [network of male leaders](#) who work all over the world to inspire other men to End Violence Against Women and Girls.

UNiTE to end violence against women and girls in Latin America and the Caribbean invites citizens, politicians, artists, entrepreneurs, professionals, security forces... to commit to this change. **We cannot wait any longer, your daily actions should contribute to ending violence against women.**



Congratulations on the recent [creation of UN Women](#), the United Nations entity for gender equality and women's empowerment, whose vision is one where men and women have equal opportunities and capacities, women are empowered and the principles of gender equality are embedded in development, peace and security agendas.

Move from words to action:

Babasónicos already did

On March 8th, Babasónicos unite to end violence against women.

Watch video <http://www.youtube.com/unetelac#p/f/6/VUV5VYNBWrI>

You can also UNiTE, send your video, testimony or message through the Campaign's facebook site or twitter: [facebook](#), [twitter](#) (unetelac)

It's time for a change!!

Table 1

FAST FACTS ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:

- **Nine of the top 11** recorded femicide/feminicide rates occur in Latin America and the Caribbean (El Salvador, Guatemala, Colombia, Honduras, República Dominicana, Bolivia, Paraguay, Panamá y México), according to a study carried out in 43 countries around the world.
- About 60% of **mexican women** have suffered from domestic violence at least once in their lifetime, thousands have been killed.
- **In Brazil**, five women are severely battered by men every two minutes. According to the Ministry of Health, 10 women die every day at the hands of their partners or expartners.
- According to the latest available CTS data, three of the top ten recorded rape rates occur in **the Caribbean**, including the top rated: the Bahamas then St Vincent then Jamaica.

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