

Beneath Paradise

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THE MAGAZINE OF THE **PACIFIC WOMEN'S NETWORK AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

The passing of the Family Protection Bill has been seen as a milestone for Tonga.

Photo: Tonga Tourism

Family Protection Bill 2013

A MILESTONE FOR TONGA

THE PASSING of Tonga's Family Protection Bill 2013 has been seen by many as a milestone achievement for the Island Kingdom. The Bill was developed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), the Women's Affairs Unit within MIA and the RRRT/SPC Changing Laws, Protecting Women Project. The Family Protection Bill Taskforce was also involved which is made up of various Government Ministries and NGOs.

In September 2013, the Bill went through Parliament for its second and third reading, a historic move where all seventeen members attending Parliament that day voted in its favour.

The realisation of the bill being passed was not just critical for the victims and survivors of violence, but also, for those who have been advocating behind the scenes.

One such organisation is the Women and Children's Crisis Centre (WCCC) in Tonga which was at the forefront of campaigning for the Bill.

Director, Ofa Guttenbeil Likiliki said that while this was a tremendous achievement, there was still a lot more work to be done in ensuring that the public are properly educated on the Bill and how it can be used to protect members of the family who are victims of violence and provide justice to those whose rights have been violently violated.

"The strategy used by the WCCC during the 2nd and 3rd readings was to host regular radio programs and talk back programs where skilled staff was able to answer a range of myths and misconceptions about the bill.

The Community Education Advocate,

Male Advocates and Counsellor Advocates teamed up to ensure that clear and positive messages about the bill was being communicated to the public on a daily basis.

The Director was able to team up with the SPC/RRRT Country Focal Officer (CFO) Lepolo Taunisila, who is also a Trustee of the WCCC, to ensure that daily briefings were being provided to the Minister of Internal Affairs and his senior staff.

Briefing sessions were also held in the weekends which showed the dedicated commitment of the Minister to the bill.

During the debates in parliament the Director and the SPC/RRRT CFO were able to continue to provide critical briefings to the Minister via email, providing

► **Continued on Page 2**

IT'S BEEN almost eight months since the release of the first edition of the rebranded magazine of the Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women.

A long time indeed, but instead of greeting you with remorse for this delay, I do so with much optimism, taking into consideration the many positives that have happened in the last few months and the many more to come.

I would like to state categorically here that with the recent hiring of a Communications Officer by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, you can be rest assured that you will start receiving your copy of Beneath Paradise on time from here on out.

In the last edition, much focus was placed on the appalling acts of violence against women in Papua New Guinea.

This edition takes us on a journey to Tonga which like every other Pacific Island nation, has a problem of violence against women and children.

For the first time Tonga has a Family Protection Bill, thanks to the endless lobbying of women activists in the country as well as massive support from the Tongan government and other stakeholders.

The Tonga Women and Children Crisis Centre have also taken a lead role in adopting a One Stop Shop policy.

A great step and one I am sure will succeed with the leadership of Ofa Guttenbeil Likiliki and her team who I have worked closely with.

There has also been a milestone achievement in Fiji with the recent launch of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre report "Somebody's Life, Everybody's Business" detailing the harsh reality of what women are actually facing on a daily basis.

The report, conducted in 2011 in cooperation with the Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics points out alarming statistics which you will find a bit of in this edition of your regional magazine.

Success stories are also emerging out of Vanuatu where for the first time, there were Reserved seats for women, when the country's capital Port Vila, went to the polls to elect its 17 Municipality councillors as well as Samoa with the establishment of a human rights institution.

It is sad however, that despite these milestones, there are stories which will bring us back to the nasty truth that despite our endless fight against violence against women and children, this problem continues to plague the region.

Beneath Paradise is the quarterly magazine of the Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women, published by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre as the Network's secretariat. The FWCC has published a newsletter for the Network since its founding in 1992.

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88 Gordon St. PO Box 12882, Suva, Fiji ☎ (679) 3313 300
(679) 3313 650 ✉ fwcc@connect.com.fj 🌐 www.fijiwomen.com
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Family Protection Bill 2013, a milestone for Tonga

relevant information and facts to support the Minister's interventions and responses to myths, misconceptions, confusion and clarifying incorrect information.

Other members of parliament were also briefed via email and short meetings called and organised for the same purpose," said Ofa.

WCCC staffs were also physically present on a daily basis outside parliament house as a way of showing solidarity with those members of parliament who were supporting the bill and to also be available to answer any questions from MPs who still needed further information or facts on the content of the bill.

"Some of the core areas of the Bill include the protection order, which increases the powers of the police to issue protection orders on the spot up to a maximum of seven days.

This was never available under the legal framework in Tonga. So this is very important for those of us who work with victims on a day-to-day basis because in order to get a restraining order you need to go to the courts and get a judge to issue the restraining order. On average, this takes up to anywhere between 48 to 72 hours.

By that time, the violence could have risen and the victim could have lost their life or the child could have lost his or her life by that time. Another area of the Bill that is equally important is Section 33, which ensures that the prosecutor during the proceedings informs the victim of all his or her legal rights and what is involved in the legal proceedings," Ofa added.

She goes on to say that equally important is the monitoring of the Bill to make sure it serves its purpose.

"Passing this Bill at the third reading and eventually getting it enacted is one thing, but the biggest and most critical stage is the implementation stage, where we will have to closely monitor and evaluate the use and access of this Bill and the impact this Bill has on situations and cases that counsellors will deal with, that police will deal with, that hospital staff will deal with. It's a very core and vital part of the Bill."



WCCC staff and government ministers after the passing of the bill

The Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women memberswomen's rights groups and agencies in Bougainville; Cook Islands; Fiji; Federal States of Micronesia; Marshall Islands; Kanaky; Kiribati; Niue; Papua New Guinea; Solomon Islands; Vanuatu; Tonga; Samoa. Send your network News and photos to fwcc@connect.com.fj

Violence in PNG



Rasta was accused of sorcery by the people in her village after the death of a local young man in 2003. She was set upon by a crowd at his funeral then beaten and strangled before she escaped. She lost her hand in the attack.

Photo: Vlad Sokhin

DURING MY first week in Tari, in the beautiful central highlands of Papua New Guinea, I came face to face with the terrible consequences of what is labelled “family violence”. I was at a clinic when the guard called over the radio for a stretcher. I grabbed one and went to the gate.

There, a young woman lay in the back of a ute, blood pooling in the tray, her clothes slashed open, soaked with it.

We shifted the lady to the stretcher and moved her to the emergency room where medical staff started treating her. They called the surgeon and requested the patient’s friend - an elderly lady - to wait outside the emergency room, where she told us what had happened. I asked one of the guards to translate. The injured woman had been beaten by her husband but did not know why.

On seeing my surprise our guard interrupted to assure me this is a daily occurrence in Tari.

Last month in Port Moresby a small group gathered in an attempt to deal with this problem. About 150 people, including representatives of the medical, legal and social-protection

services, came together to agree on a new plan to respond to family and sexual violence in PNG.

The Family and Sexual Violence Action Committee, a local organisation, convened the event together with Medecins Sans Frontieres and the PNG National Department of Health.

All of us faced with this challenge have pinned our hopes on this small group finding better ways of meeting the needs of people affected by the epidemic of family violence.

Before joining Medecins Sans Frontieres in 2004, I worked as a reporter and interpreter for a globally renowned newspaper, covering the “War On Terror” after the events of September 11, 2001, in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Being from Balochistan, Pakistan, where there is also a strong tribal system, I thought I would be able to relate to the culture in Tari.

But despite my diverse experiences I was in for a shock. Never before have I seen the prevalence and relentlessness of violence that occurs in PNG.

This is not simply a problem in the Highlands. Across PNG every week Medecins Sans Frontieres treats

dozens of survivors of family and sexual violence, in just a few hospitals and health centres. Frequently we treat survivors, overwhelmingly women and children, who have been chopped with bush knives (sword-like machetes), burnt or suffered other ruthless punishment from family members.

Although we have treated more than 18,000 survivors of family and sexual violence across the country since 2007, our patients represent a fraction of those affected.

Since 2007 we have seen that by providing good quality medical treatment, more survivors are motivated to seek help, and that survivors of sexual violence increasingly present within the crucial 72 hours after their assault. This showed us that through the experience of treatment, our patients could begin to understand this violence has serious medical consequences and is unacceptable.

After more than five years of work in the city of Lae, Medecins Sans Frontieres this year finalised its support and handed over daily management to Angau Memorial General Hospital, which continues to provide one of the best medical services in PNG to survivors of family and sexual violence. However, this is just one location and much remains to be done.

Here in the mountains of Tari, resources are limited. Medecins Sans Frontieres continues to fill a significant gap supporting the hospital. Without our support, even basic emergency medicine and trauma surgery would be unavailable to patients.

► **Sayeed Aleemullah Shah is Tari project co-ordinator for Medecins Sans Frontieres.**

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/comment/epidemic-of-family-violence-in-png-requires-a-coordinated-response-20131120-2xvu4.html#ixzz2mM5O3lvT>

Source: Sydney Morning Herald



ENOUGH: Lemalu Sina Retzlaff a few days after she was attacked by her former partner, Muliaga Brian Lima in public.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

By SOPHIE BUDVIETAS

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE is not a Samoan issue, it is a universal issue.

So says Lemalu Sina Retzlaff, after taking out a protection order against a former partner, Muliagatele Brian Lima, who assaulted her – in public during the weekend.

A former Manu Samoa, Muliagatele was arrested on Friday, Assistant Commissioner, Fauono Talalelei confirmed yesterday.

“He will be remanded at large until his case is mentioned in Court on 13 January 2014,” he said.

Fauono said Muliagatele has been charged with causing actual bodily harm and being armed with a dangerous weapon. Police have obtained his travel documents. He has also been ordered not to approach or have contact with Lemalu.

During an interview with the Samoa Observer yesterday, Lemalu said from her experience, it didn’t matter whether you were rich or poor, educated or not, if you lived in Apia or within the rural areas within the village council setting, women everywhere are being affected by it.

“It doesn’t have any boundaries in terms of culture or religion it can happen to anyone and I believe it does happen to women from all walks of life,” she said. Lemalu is speaking now simply because she has had enough.

She has been divorced for two years, and recently her ex-partner assaulted her again – this time in public.

“I should have gotten a protection order earlier and I learnt that the hard way,” she said. “My face is saying you

should have gotten a protection order. You feel that you have left and that is enough then you try and make it an amicable situation where you take the children to breakfast together once every one month or two months.

“That is where I thought we were at, we would go together and take the children.

“There was a concert for our children just a couple of weeks ago where yes you can sit apart but then you get together and say hello and you are there because your children have a concert.

“What I was trying to avoid by not getting a protection order earlier is a relationship that was mature and healthy, the fact that we had three children. I am now learning the hard way that we need to assess situations where we need to be strong and women need to get a protection order when they leave.

“The moment you leave then you get a protection order and maybe for at least the first three years until everybody is used to it.”

Why didn’t she get one earlier?
 “I thought it would have angered him...it was the eggshell approach I thought that anything to keep the peace,” she said. “And the protection order might even trigger some violence towards me that was unnecessary.

“I didn’t fully understand that I really needed it.”

Thankfully, Lemalu had a support network that rallied around her to ensure that the protection order was in place.

SOURCE: SAMOA OBSERVER

Call for Solomon Islands legislation

COMMUNITY LEADERS in Solomon Islands are calling on provincial governments to introduce legislations to prevent families from marrying off young girls to workers at logging camps.

The Chairman of the Child Protection Unit in Honiara Aaron Olofia told Radio Australia’s Pacific Beat, teenagers under the age of 18 in Solomon Islands need parental consent to marry.

He says many families have been marrying off their young daughters in return for food or money.

“The families themselves, because they do not have plenty of money at their disposal allow their daughters to be married to these loggers, so these loggers could maintain them by giving money or food,” he said.

“There is an assumption that parents allow their daughters to be married.

“When you are in a state of powerlessness, what can you do? Sometimes the girls themselves were forced to be married.”

Logging is the largest industry in Solomon Islands and accounts for 60 per cent of its export earnings.

Despite this, locals say they’ve seen little benefit and instead claim their lives are now much worse.

Financial hardships have led to greater inequality and a violation of human rights, such as the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

The sexual exploitation of young girls remains a huge problem in the Malaita province.



Large scale logging in the Solomon Islands began 30 years ago

SOURCE: ABC NEWS



Dr Juliet Hunt, Shamima Ali, Edwina Kotoisuva and Henriette Jansen at the launch of the report

SHOCKING VIOLENCE

Milestone FWCC research points to alarming Fiji figures

A MAJOR two-year study conducted across the country by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre in cooperation with the Fiji Bureau of Statistics has revealed the prevalence and widespread nature of violence against women in Fiji.

The research shows 43 women are injured, one is permanently disabled, and 71 lose consciousness every day in Fiji through domestic violence.

Up to 16 women are injured badly enough every day to need health care but because women under-estimate the impacts of violence on their health and well-being (an important coping strategy for many women), only about one in 10 tell a health worker the true cause of their injury, and many do not get the health care they need.

These are just some of the shocking results of a survey conducted by the FWCC and Bureau of Statistics researchers between 2010 and 2011.

Titled, "Somebody's Life, Everybody's Business," the national research on women's health and

life experiences was launched on 9 December. It explores the prevalence, incidence and attitudes to intimate partner violence in Fiji.

The report's author and independent consultant on gender and development, Dr Juliet Hunt, said the findings were alarming when compared to global figures.

"The global average for physical and or sexual violence is one in three. We have 64 per cent. All of the prevalence figures we have are higher than the global average. Many of them are twice as high as the global average," Dr Hunt said.

Referring to the high rate and prevalence of violence against women in Fiji revealed in the report, Dr Hunt said what many women in Fiji are experiencing borders on torture.

"Very few women are saying that it's happened only once and they're experiencing several different types of physical violence," Dr Hunt said.

"Many of them are also experiencing

sexual violence in intimate partner relationships, and then you have them experiencing several different types of emotional violence, being insulted, being humiliated being threatened or having someone they care about threatened.

For those women who are experiencing violence, it describes a situation of repeated attacks and it describes a situation of oppression and for me, that's torture," said Dr Hunt.

The FWCC used World Health Organisation methodology to carry out the survey.

"This report places Fiji fourth out of 25 countries in the world where the WHO model has been used, that has the highest rates of violence against women, just behind Kiribati.

"That's very disturbing and I really hope that these figures will jolt authorities to wake up and start realising that more needs to be done to protect our women," Ms Ali said.



WCCC staff together with the Tongan Police Commissioner Grant O'Fee and guests during the launch of the model

A first for Tonga and the Pacific

One Stop Shop Crisis Model

AT LAST WOMEN and children who are living in violence in Tonga will not have to travel to and fro, scraping together what little finances they have to get the help they need.

In what was a historic move, the Tongan Women and Children's Crisis Centre (WCCC) launched its One Stop Shop Crisis Model on the 25th of November, 2013, during the 16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women.

For the first time, not just in Tonga but in the Pacific there's now a centre that provides access to counselling services as well as access to police, health and legal services.

WCCC Coordinator Ofa Guttenbeil Likiliki says this initiative was prompted by the many stories and experiences shared by women and children who visited the centre every day.

"The ultimate goal of the One-Stop-

Shop Crisis Model is to decrease the burden of reporting for women and children.

Anecdotal evidence from our client's experiences clearly shows that there are many who cannot or are not able to access other key services without our advocacy and support.

For example, we could be the first point of contact for the client and through her counselling session she has decided that she will need to access police, health and legal services.

What this means is that she would have to travel between four different locations.

Now, the reality is, most of our clients do not have access to transportation or financial means to get from A to B to C and D and then to return to the services that she needs to access on a regular basis." Ofa says one of the main aims also of adopting the One Stop Shop Crisis

Model was to give women and children the confidence and courage to come forward and share their problems.

"What I love about it the most is that when the victim walks through our doors the WCCC can assure her or the child of a safe space, confidentiality, non-judgmental counselling advocacy and support and access to key agency services."

Last year a national study on violence against women and girls in Tonga by Ma'a Fafine mo e Famili, found that 77% of Tongan women and girls are affected by violence perpetrated by their fathers or teachers.

So it goes without saying that the WCCC has its work cut out and even with the launch of the One Stop Shop Crisis Model, Ofa knows too well the challenges that lay ahead. But its challenges she and the rest of the WCCC staff are only too ready to take on.

79 percent of Tongan women and girls have experienced physical or sexual violence

SEVENTY NINE percent of women and girls in Tonga have experienced some sort of physical or sexual violence in their lifetime by a partner, someone they know or strangers.

That's according to a report from the United Nation's entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

According to Radio and TV Tonga, the report states that women and girls account for half of the human capital available to reduce poverty and achieve development - Yet gender-based violence undermines human rights, social

stability and security, public health, women's educational and employment opportunities, and the well-being and development prospects of children and communities - these are all fundamental factors to achieving long term stability and growth.

Factors that contribute to violence include the low status of women legally and culturally, and the lack of access to services including the justice system and other protective measures.

SOURCE: RADIO TONGA

Former Fiji Human Rights Commissioner lauds Samoan Government

FORMER FIJI HUMAN Rights Commissioner Shamima Ali congratulates the Samoan Government and commends it for this progressive development.

Ali said protection and promotion of human rights is at the moment needed more than ever in the Pacific and particularly in the area of women's human rights, given recent data indicating high rates of violence against women and girls as well as environmental rights.

She said a National Human Rights mechanism holds government and the people accountable to universal HRS standards.

"This is a sign of robust governance and we hope that other Pacific Island leaders are open to such development."



Samoa establishes its national human rights institution

SAMOA HAS been commended by the United Nations in the Pacific for establishing a national human rights institution. The institution is part of the Komesina o Sulufaiga (Ombudsman), and has the mandate to protect and promote human rights in the country.

The national human rights institution of Samoa was officially launched on International Human Rights Day, 10 December, by the Deputy Samoan Prime Minister H.E. Fonotoe Pierre Lauofo in a ceremony attended by government officials, civil society and international partners in Samoa.

"The establishment of a national human rights institution marks Samoa's accession to the rank of countries which regard the enjoyment of people's human rights and freedoms among their most essential priorities.

The creation of this institution signifies that human rights are not merely acknowledged as a symbolic issue for the country, but rather, the launch of this institution creates for the people of Samoa a place where they may seek assistance and advise for concrete human rights issues they face in their day-to-day lives," said Lizbeth Cullity, the United Nations Resident

Coordinator for Samoa.

"Samoa's achievement is a milestone not only for the country but for the region as a whole. In fact, the process that led to the establishment of the national human rights institution, and especially the commitment demonstrated by the Government and civil society groups, is an excellent



(Samoa human rights institution) Solamalemalo Hai-Yuean Tualima, Dr Melanie O'Brien, Dr Nancy Robinson, Ms Nileema Noble (UN Resident Coordinator & UNDP Resident Representative), Afioga Maiava Iulai Toma (Ombudsman), Ms Rosslyn Noonan, Mr Ashley Bowe.

example that other countries in the region can look to," she said.

The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in close cooperation with the Asia-Pacific Forum on National Human Rights Institutions, UN and regional partners, provides technical cooperation and advisory support that help establish or strengthen national

human rights institutions across the world.

"Independent and effective national human rights institutions have a central place in national human rights protection systems, and in addressing the most critical human rights issues, promoting the rule of law and ensuring accountability. As actors for positive change, national human rights institutions are well-placed to address, and also to prevent, human rights violations," said Erik Friberg, OHCHR Deputy Regional Representative for the Pacific.

"I reiterate the UN Human Rights Office's commitment to continue to support, with partners, the Samoa Ombudsman with its broadened mandate and function as a national human rights institution, with a view towards achieving full compliance with international standards, the 'Paris Principles', and joining the international cooperation frameworks of national human rights institutions ahead," he concluded.

The national human rights institution has the mandate to promote and protect human rights in Samoa.

SOURCE: SCOOP.CO.NZ



UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay

UN: Political will, laws to protect human rights lacking

THE POLITICAL WILL, including human and financial resources to implement laws to protect human rights, is still lacking, the United Nations says.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay said in a statement to mark World Human Rights Day:

“The fundamentals for protecting and promoting human rights are largely in place. These include a strong and growing body of international human rights law and standards as well as institutions to interpret laws, monitor compliance and apply them to new and emerging human rights issues. The key now is to implement those laws and standards to make enjoyment of human rights a reality on the ground. The 20 years since Vienna have also unfortunately seen many setbacks and a number of tragic failures to prevent atrocities and safeguard human rights.”

Pillay pointed out instances where deplorable, large scale violations of international human rights law were occurring.

She said the international community was too slow, too divided, too short-sighted or just plain inadequate in its response to the warnings of human rights defenders and the cries of victims.

She said the Vienna Declaration should be viewed as a blueprint for a magnificent construction that was still only half built.

She said there had been remarkable developments in the past 20 years with the expansion of civil society organisations and individual human rights activists.

“Along with independent national human rights institutions, these are the bedrock of human rights development at the national level. But it is a matter of deep concern that they are also facing increasing harassment and intimidation in many countries.”

SOURCE: THE NATIONAL



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List any requirements of trainee regarding health, diet, language, etc in an attachment to this application. Also attach a one-page summary with more details of the applicant's work and interest in working on violence against women, and include a brief statement of your position on women's rights

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