



Fiji Women's Crisis Centre

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NEWSLETTER JAN 2014

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 and 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.

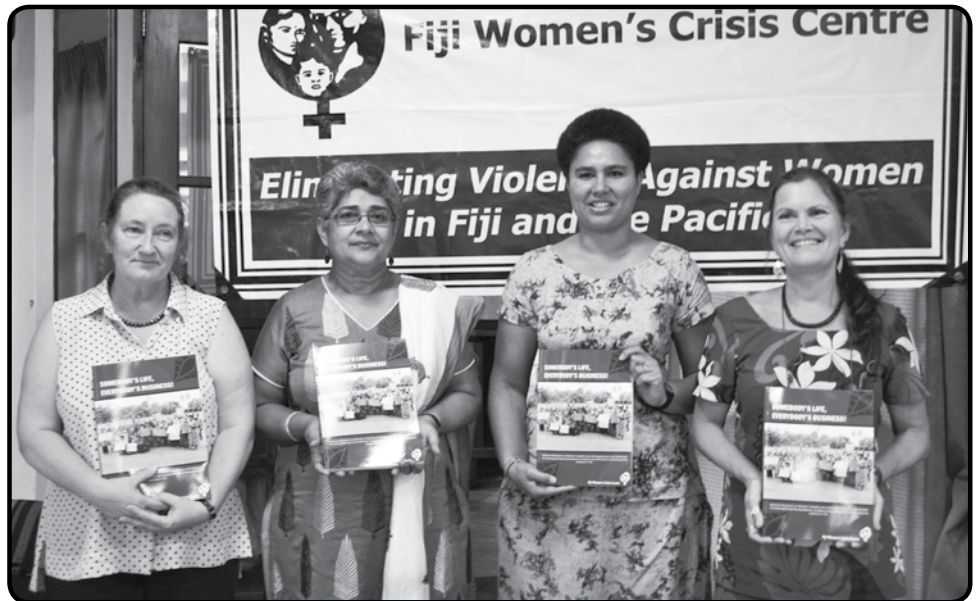
Titled, "Somebody's Life, Everybody's Business," the national research on women's health and life experiences was launched on 9 December. It explores the prevalence, incidence and attitudes to intimate partner violence in Fiji.

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.



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"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

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.

"Although so much work has been done over the last 30 years in responding to violence against women and prevention work, the entrenchment and pervasiveness of gender-based violence is a great impediment to prevention work," she added.

The FWCC used World Health Organisation methodology to carry out the survey, interviewing a randomly chosen woman from every household in all four divisions of the country. This means the results of the survey can be fairly compared with similar surveys into violence against women in other countries that used the same methods.

Of the 3538 households in the sample,

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THIS REPORT PLACES FIJI IN FOURTH OUT OF 25 COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD THAT HAS THE HIGHEST RATES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

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.

FWCC Coordinator Shamima Ali described the findings as appalling.

"This report places Fiji in fourth out of 25 countries in the world that has the

SHOCKING VIOLENCE



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FWCC marks 16 days of activism

The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre in Suva and its four branches around the country marked the 16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women from late November to mid-December.

Beginning on the 25th of November, activities were planned by the branches in Nadi, Ba, Rakiraki and Labasa, with the main centre in Suva staging a march on 10 December, marking World Human Rights Day

as well as the end to the 16 day campaign. The Ba and Nadi branches also held marches that saw the public coming out in numbers to support.

Apart from the marches, there were also open days that saw the centres providing free and confidential counselling, as well as reading materials and short films on the impacts and effects of violence against women. Community workshops were also held.

3389 interviews were completed of which 3193 were with individual women.

The purpose of the research was to provide updated data on the prevalence of violence against women in Fiji, the attitudes of people towards violence, its impact on women and children and women's coping strategies.

The report also highlights extreme gender inequality in Fiji, showing patterns of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, coupled with coercive control with men imposing power over women in a range of damaging ways including by intimidation and threats.

"What's more disturbing also is the fact that most women who are subject to abuse and violence agree with some so-called 'justification' for men to beat their wives," said Ms Ali.

"A lot of women we spoke to say that the violence is because of jealousy or her disobedience and some even said it's because he wants to show he is the boss and most women have accepted this behaviour as normal.

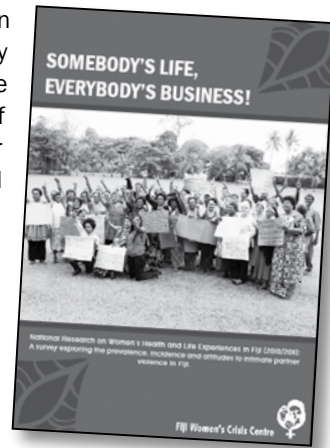
"There is nothing normal about this. There is nothing normal about inflicting violence upon women and children. In fact there is no excuse at all for violence and that is what this report is also highlighting," she said.

Covering a wide cross-section of communities across Fiji, this research is the most comprehensive to date.

"There's so much in the report that it cannot be simply summarised. One must read through the report to be able to properly understand it and realise the true impact that domestic violence is having on women and children and even the economy and what they can do to help."

The report also provides a list of recommendations which the FWCC strongly believes if met, will create the much needed awareness against violence against women and children.

The report can be found on the FWCC website, www.fijiwomen.com, or go to <http://tiny.cc/FWCCResearch>



visit us on the web @ www.fijiwomen.com



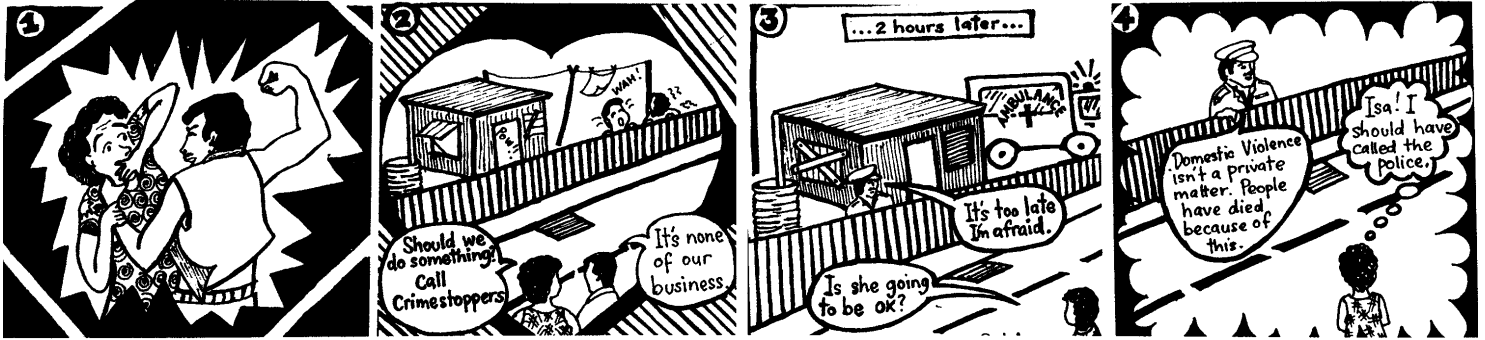
Get informed! Get involved!

Somebody's Life...

Don't wait till it's too late!

*You CAN save a life.
CALL for help immediately!*

Everybody's Business



Nadi salon joins efforts against violence

NITIN'S BULA HAIR Salon and Barber Shop in Nadi is promoting the work of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre after learning of it through advocacy work of the Nadi Centre staff.

Run by three women and two men, the shop has FWCC materials on display, and patrons are told of the services available at the Nadi Women's Crisis Centre.

"We first heard about the work of FWCC through Torika who came here to talk to us and I felt it was our duty to do something. So we tell our clients about FWCC," said business owner Sanita Dass.

The hair salon also has a "Thursdays in Black" event where hairdressers wear black FWCC T-shirts to create awareness and remember those that have died from violence or are survivors.



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200 march for human rights

ABOUT 200 women, men and young people marched through Suva on 10 December to mark World Human Rights Day.

Organised by the NGO Coalition on Human Rights, of which the FWCC's Coordinator Shamima Ali is the chair, the march included human rights organisations and individuals.

The march began at the Suva Flea Market, went through the central business district and ended at the Suva Civic Centre, where an exhibition on the former South African President Nelson Mandela was on display.

In his speech, the Citizens' Constitutional Forum's chief executive officer Reverend Akuila Yabaki reminded those



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gathered about Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

"Everyone has a right to take part in the government of his or her country and we should use it to keep the government accountable in the lead up to the 2014 election," Rev Yabaki said.

NGO Coalition on

Human Rights chairwoman Shammia Ali said the new Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission must be established on international human rights mechanisms and standards.

The march also marked the end of the 16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women.

Men urged to check behaviour during merry-making

THE FESTIVE season should be a time when women and girls can be proud of the men in their lives, rather than fear sexual assault and harassment, says the FWCC Coordinator Shamima Ali.

"We're in the festive season now. There will be a lot of merry making and I urge you to enjoy yourselves but please be responsible," Ms Ali told Tamavua villagers during a community sports and awareness programme on 13 December.

"Many times women and girls are targeted during this merry-making season. There is always sexual harassment, passing remarks of sexual nature, touching, joking about women and even forcing them.

"Men, I call on you to make us proud of you. If you are doing these things, change your behaviour and help change other men's behaviour," she told the community gathering.

Ms Ali also called on village elders, church leaders and youth leaders to report any offences against women they may be aware of and not keep the perpetrators hidden.



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Life in jail for killer husband

A MAN who poured kerosene on his wife and set her alight in 2011 and later claimed she tried to commit suicide, was jailed for life in November.

Roneel Chand was convicted for the murder of Karishma Nath who suffered first-degree burns to 40 per cent of her body and died later in hospital.

The trial lasted nine days in the High Court at Suva, with all assessors hearing the case unanimously giving a guilty opinion.

Judge Justice Salesi Temo agreed and convicted Chand, sentencing him to life in prison with a non-parole period of 16 years.

FWCC Coordinator Shamima Ali said: "Domestic Violence has dire consequences and sometimes ends up in death. We all need to take violence against women by intimate partners seriously to avoid tragedies such as this."

Ms Nath's family could not hold back their tears as the sentence was passed down.

"I will never wish for anyone to be sentenced to life in prison but Roneel has to pay for what he has done," said Ms Nath's father Jitendra Nath. "We are happy, not just because Roneel is behind bars, but because we have waited two long years and finally justice has been served."

We'd love to hear from you!

We want to hear from you! If you have any comments regarding current cases of violence against women or wish to air your views on women's rights or on the work of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre - write to us via fax, email or post.

Please include your name and contact details. We will select the best comments for publication in the newsletter and you could win an FWCC T-shirt.



COMMUNITY EDUCATION

FROM OCTOBER to December this year, the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre and its branches around the country held some 22 workshops, reaching more than 1000 people.

- **Naitata Community, Navua:** Domestic violence (DV), rape, legal, sexual harassment and child abuse (CA)
- **Nadalala, Ba:** Gender, DV, rape, child sexual abuse (CSA) and sexual harassment
- **Nokonoko, Rakiraki:** Role of the Centre, DV, sexual assault/rape, sexual harassment, CA and family law issues
- **Nadonumai stakeholders, Lami:** Gender, violence against women (VAW) Lokia Youth Group, Rewa: Gender and VAW
- **Nalawa Women's Group, Ra:** Gender, DV, rape, CSA and sexual harassment
- **Police national sports event, Suva:** Advancing gender in police sports Nadonumai community, Lami: Gender and VAW
- **Fiji Disabled People's Federation, Nausori:** Gender and VAW and girls with disabilities
- **Nalaba, Ra:** Gender, DV, rape, CSA and sexual harassment
- **Nabouono and Nukudamu, Macuata:** Gender, rape, DV
- **Qalela, Tavua:** Role of the Centre and DV
- **Nakavika settlement, Ba:** Gender



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- awareness, DV, rape, CSA and sexual harassment
- **Young Women's Forum, Suva:** History of feminism
- **Catholic Women's League, Nadera Parish:** 16 days of activism against violence against women, girls, individual workshop
- **Naqali Women's Group, Naitasiri:** Gender, VAW
- **Motusa Methodist Women's Fellowship, Wasewase, Suvavou:** Violence against women in the church, mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationship

- **Sawani Community, Nausori:** Rights of women and Human Rights Day
- **Nadrau Women's Group, Ba:** Gender, DV, CSA, sexual harassment
- **Tamavua Village, Suva:** Awareness on good touches and bad touches, rape, child abuse, domestic violence
- **Fiji Early Education Association, Nausori:** Child abuse
- **Wailevu community, Labasa:** Domestic violence, rape, child abuse
- **Emily Community, Labasa:** Domestic violence, rape, child abuse