



# FIJI WOMEN'S CRISIS CENTRE

## NEWSLETTER

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### More time in jail for sex offenders

**AFTER** years of lobbying women's rights activists are finally breathing a sigh of relief.

The parliament of Fiji has approved a Criminal Procedure Code which increases sentencing to those committing sexual offences.

Attorney-General, Qoroniasi Bale, when introducing the bill in parliament said they were ashamed to note the increase in sexual offences.

Even though the increase was welcomed by many the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre felt that there needs to be a proper rehabilitation program implemented for the offenders.

FWCC coordinator Shamima Ali said the offenders need to be rehabilitated to ensure that the crime is not repeated. The table on the right shows the revised penalties:

| OFFENCE   | OLD PENALTY | NEW PENALTY                          |
|---|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| Attempted rape  | 7 years     | 10 years                             |
| Attempted defilement of girl under 13 years                         | 5 years     | 12 years                             |
| Defilement or attempted defilement of a girl between 13 to 16 years | 5 years     | 10 years                             |
| Committing incest   | 7 years     | 20 years                             |
| Brothel owners employing girls under 16 years                       | 2 years     | 12 years                             |
| Detaining a girl/woman against her will for immoral purposes        | 2 years     | 12 years                             |
| Person who own or manage a brothel                                  | -           | 5 years or maximum fine of \$100,000 |
| Buying a minor for immoral purposes                                 | 2 years     | 12 years                             |

### Women march at night for a safer society

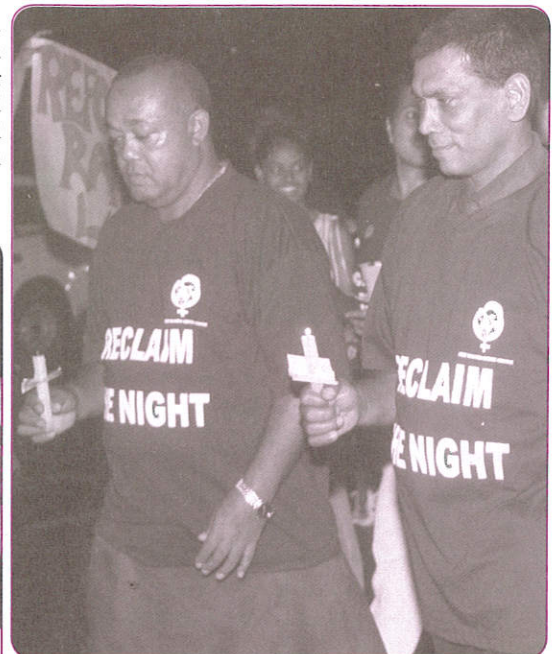
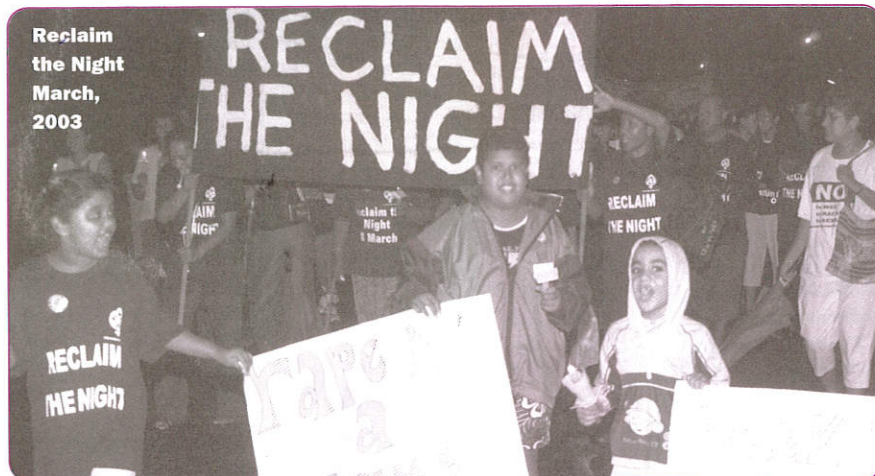
**OPPOSITION** leader Mick Beddoes vowed to help women after receiving a letter from the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre at the end of the Reclaim the Night March.

The letter had demanded that changes be made to the Sexual Offences Legislation, to make penalties for sexual offences harsher.

The opposition leader hailed the initiative

by the crisis centre in organising the march. "I am so honoured to be here amongst you all and be part of this great event," Mr Beddoes said. The cold easterly winds and the slight drizzle did not deter the young and old alike from Reclaiming the Night. Women

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These two men were part of the Reclaim the Night March



# Calendar of Crimes

## January 2003:

- 1st - a Namukailau youth was escorted to Suva by police for allegedly raping a teenager
- 4th - a fisherman was sentenced to 18 months for indecently assaulting an 18 year old girl
- 10th - a man remanded for rape faced another rape charge of a 12 year old girl
- 7th - a stepfather was charged with raping his 13 year old stepdaughter
- 11th - a man was in custody for allegedly attempted rape of his de facto wife
- 12th - a man is in custody for trying to rape ex-wife
- 14th - a 42 year old man was taken into custody after allegedly raping a 14 year old girl of St. Christopher's Home
- 18th - a 43 year old man was sentenced to five years for raping his 13 year old niece
- 20th - a man appeared in court for allegedly attempted rape of pregnant woman
- 22nd - a 53 year old man admits molesting 15 year old girl
- 27th - a 49 year old man is charged with raping and indecently assaulting his 21 year old daughter for the past 10 years
- 27th - a 71 year old masseur pleaded guilty to four counts of indecent assault

## February, 2003:

- 4th - Man, 53, in jail for sex crime
- 6th - Uncle jailed for sex crime
- 11th - Police mount search for rapist gardener
- 18th - Man gets five years in jail for raping his niece

## March, 2003:

- 3rd - Primary school in sodomy uproar
- 9th - Brutal murder shocks town
- 19th - Juvenile charged with Yasawa rape
- 20th - Father jailed for unnatural offence
- 24th - Pastor mows down boy, 9
- 31st - Bus runs over woman

## April, 2003:

- 1st - Judge jails rapist Dad
- 1st - Policeman on sex assault charges
- 2nd - Youths finally on trial for rape
- 3rd - Father in court for allegedly molesting daughter
- 5th - Sexual assault man walks free
- 5th - man gets 3 years for sexual assault



Navy and Army officers at the end of the "Gender Violence workshop". Lieutenant Colonel Meli Saubulinayau (with beret) was the chief guest.

## FWCC trains army, navy

AS part of the ongoing Men's Advocacy undertaken by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, 25 navy and army officers completed a two-week workshop. Facilitated by FWCC the course covered issues on, Gender Violence,

Human Rights and Basic Counseling Skills. At the end of the workshop all participants produced their individual plan of action which they hope to implement in their area of work.

Chief guest, Lieutenant

Colonel Meli Saubulinayau of the Fiji Military Forces, handed out certificates of completion to each participant at a special ceremony.

This was the second such workshop in the last two years.



International Women's Day celebrations at Bhawani Dayal Memorial School where FWCC coordinator Shamima Ali was chief guest. She spoke about the significance of the day and women's contribution to society.

## Kotoisuva talks to Police

POLICE Inspectors attending a Qualifying Course at the Fiji Police Academy last month were enlightened on the role of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre and Child Abuse by FWCC's deputy coordinator, Edwina Kotoisuva.

FWCC was invited by the academy, where 19 participants from around Fiji flooded Ms Kotoisuva with questions based on the two main topics.

In February coordinator Shamima Ali was also invited twice to speak to a group of police corporals.

This has been ongoing for the past few years.

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from all walks of life turned out in numbers in support of the march which was organized by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre to mark the International Women's Day.

The march which began at the Flea Market at 7 pm was also attended by some men supporters. The candlelight march took place through Suva city including the 'darker' streets of Suva. "We go through Cumming Street, Waimanu Road and Mark Street - streets which women would not normally walk alone through at night", said Crisis Coordinator Shamima Ali. The Reclaim the Night march is a call for safer streets and homes for women and children.

"There is a growing concern for the increasing reports of crimes of violence against women and children, in particular sexual assault. This is one way in which people can show their support by joining the march and calling for a safer society.

The march is an annual event organized by FWCC to mark International Women's Day.



# FWCC in Nigeria mission

**THE** Fiji Women's Crisis Centre received international recognition after coordinator Shamima Ali was invited to be part of the Commonwealth Observer Group to the Nigerian Presidential and the National Assembly elections in April.

Ms Ali who was invited by the Secretary General of the Commonwealth Secretariat praised the secretariat in recognising the importance for a gender perspective to the elections.

She said she was honored by the recognition given to women's human rights Non-Governmental Organizations to play a role in such a very important event.

In Nigeria Ms Ali was stationed in the Muslim state of Kano.

The only Pacific Islander in the 14 member group Ms



**FWCC coordinator Shamima Ali with women voters in Kano State, Nigeria where she was stationed during the elections**

Ali is encouraging more women to participate in such events.

"It is an excellent opportunity for women to use their knowledge and perspective and at the same time it can be a learning process."

She said it was important

for Fiji to have a domestic observer group within the country during elections for transparency and accountability.

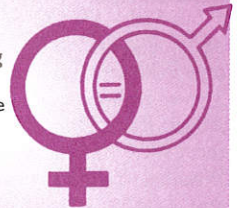
"The Elections office should always be prepared for elections and should always have updated voter's registers," she said.

## GENDER EQUALITY IS...

Gender Equality is...  
I woman, I woman  
I mother, you mother  
I nurture, you nurture  
I'm considerate, you're considerate  
I help, you help  
I and you... Equal

Gender Equality is...  
You man, I woman  
You father, I father  
You're strong, I'm strong  
You initiate, I initiate  
You discipline, I discipline  
You and I... Equal

Gender Equality is...  
You man, I woman  
You plant, I plant  
You fish, I fish  
You drive, I drive  
You earn, I earn  
You and I... Equal



Who says I cannot think  
Who says I cannot lead  
I can drive the deepest sea  
And climb the highest mount  
Very few biological differences  
Man, you and I are equal

Sera Tukana Bogitini  
Fiji Women's Crisis Centre  
Labasa, 2003

# Law unfair to sex workers

**SEX** workers should be treated like any other, fairly and with respect. This was the call made by women's organisations and individuals alike after the Fiji Police Force mounted a campaign to clear the streets of sex workers and street vendors. The move was initiated as a build up to the South Pacific Games. Divisional Police Commander Eastern Romanu Tikotikoca said their first priority was prostitution.

DPC Tikotikoca told local media that the foremost preventative measure police are following was to stop the service of prostitutes and not the clients.

He said the police could not wait around all night for a client to pick up a girl so they had to stop the girl from plying her trade.

But the law in Fiji does not say that prostitution is illegal. So the police often charge prostitutes and street kids for loitering and soliciting as it is a crime under our laws.

"There is a need to understand the root causes of something like prostitution. There is so much poverty in this country. What alternatives are being offered to them when they are taken off the streets," questioned Fiji Women's Crisis Centre coordinator, Shamima Ali.

According to Ms Ali, if proper and economically viable alternatives are offered than it is very likely that these women will end up back on the streets.

"These women (and men) who are out on

the streets are human beings who should have the right to be treated in a just and humane way and the police should ensure that this approach is taken and that they are given appropriate support," she said.

"If we look at it in business terms, these women (and men) are out on the streets meeting a demand and we need to question why men are going out to look for the services of prostitutes and who are these men. That's another part of the problem that needs to be tackled," she said.

According to Ms Ali the issue of prostitution can only begin to be dealt with effectively if appropriate and viable forms of employment which meet the standard of living in Fiji are offered to those on the streets.

The crisis centre has also questioned why the police have put in so much effort for this operation when they are slow to act upon perpetrators of other more violent and dangerous crimes including robberies, rape, and the creators of civil unrest.

"There is so much effort put into prosecuting the vulnerable yet 'powerful' people including political

figures who are alleged to be involved in the political unrest of 2000 are walking around freely," Ms Ali concluded.

Fiji Women's Rights Movement believes that prostitution increases when poverty rises and it is an important means of employment for women, man and child sex workers.

"There should be a decriminalisation of prostitution in order to give the sex industry workers some kind of protection from harassing police," FWRM coordinator Virisila Buadromo said.

### PROSTITUTION ARREST 2001

| Month        | Indian   | Fijian   | Other     | Total    | Female    | Male      | Total |
|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-------|
| January      | 0        | 0        | 0         | 0        | 0         | 0         | 0     |
| February     | 0        | 0        | 0         | 0        | 0         | 0         | 0     |
| March        | 4        | 3        | 7         | 3        | 4         | 7         | 7     |
| April        | 0        | 0        | 0         | 0        | 0         | 0         | 0     |
| May          | 0        | 0        | 0         | 0        | 0         | 0         | 0     |
| June         | 0        | 0        | 0         | 0        | 0         | 0         | 0     |
| July         | 3        | 4        | 7         | 1        | 6         | 7         | 7     |
| August       | 0        | 0        | 0         | 0        | 0         | 0         | 0     |
| September    | 0        | 0        | 0         | 0        | 0         | 0         | 0     |
| October      | 0        | 0        | 0         | 0        | 0         | 0         | 0     |
| November     | 0        | 0        | 0         | 0        | 0         | 0         | 0     |
| December     | 0        | 0        | 0         | 0        | 0         | 0         | 0     |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>7</b> | <b>7</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>14</b> |       |

The table above illustrates that more male persons were arrested for the offense than the females. All were arrested at Western Division, 13 were from Nadi and 1 from Lautoka. According to police these offences were recorded under Penal Code Act 17.



# Crisis Centre Community Contact

## JANUARY:

• 9th- **ROTARY SUVA:** The Deputy Coordinator spoke on the services of the FWCC.  
 • 17th- **SSED, USP:** Edwina Kotoisuva (Deputy Coordinator) conducted a workshop for students at the University of the South Pacific on the role and services of the FWCC during orientation day.

## FEBRUARY:

• 5th-12th- **FWCC Senior Counsellor, Salote Malo,** was invited by Magistrate Laisa Laveti, to tour **Lakeba in Lau** as part of the Court Sittings. The workshops were on the topics Child Sexual Abuse, Rape, Domestic Violence and the role of the FWCC. These were held in the villages of Waitabu, Yadrana, Vakano, Waciwaci, Tubou and Levuka. The workshops which were all conducted at the respective village meeting houses saw a huge turnout of both men and women.  
 • 10th- **RATU FINAU JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL:** The topics were on Domestic Violence, Rape, Child Sexual Abuse, Teenage Pregnancies, Sexual Harassment and

the role of the FWCC. There were more than 200 male and female students in attendance.

• 10th- **WOMEN'S GROUP OF TUBOU AND LEVUKA VILLAGE:** Violence against women, Role of the FWCC, legal matters on family law.

• 19th- **METU CHURCH HALL, NAULU-SENTUIDA WOMEN'S CLUB:** Family law bill.

• 26th- **KULUKULU, NADROGA WOMEN'S CLUB:** Violence against women, FWCC's role.

## MARCH:

• 14th- **NADI CIVIC CENTRE:** Both men and women attended this workshop which was on Violence Against Women.

• 24th- **VALELEVU MOTHER'S CLUB:** the women were familiarized with Domestic Violence and the FWCC's role and its stand on the issue of Violence Against Women.

## APRIL:

• 4th- **ARYA SAMAJ PRIMARY SCHOOL, LAUTOKA.** Edwina (Deputy Coordinator) and Yishu Lal (Senior Counsellor) conducted this workshop which was on Domestic Violence, Violence Against Women and Child Abuse. The participants who were all Indo-Fijians, were all interested in learning more about the issues and expressed the need for more workshops to be conducted.

• 4th- **ROTARY CLUB OF**



Research officer, Naemah Khan speaks to the children of Sabeto Muslim Primary School during the International Children's Day celebrations

SUVA: extended an invitation to FWCC where the 30 men and 3 women learnt about the role of the FWCC.

• 14th- **WOMEN'S GROUP FROM LOLOLEVU AND KOROWERE VILLAGE:** workshop on Violence Against Women and the Role of the FWCC.

• 14th- **RABULU VILLAGE:** Violence Against Women.

• 15th- **WOMEN'S GROUP OF NASOMO VILLAGE:** Senior Counsellor, Salote Malo, conducted a session on the role of the FWCC.

• 15th- **NANANU VILLAGE:** Child Sexual Abuse, Violence Against Women and the Family Law Bill.

• 15th- **YASIYASI VILLAGE:** Domestic Violence, Child Sexual Abuse and Legal Literacy.

• 16th- **MATANIWAI:** Domestic Violence, Child Sexual Abuse, Abortion.

• 25th- **SABETO MUSLIM PRIMARY SCHOOL:** Yishu Lal (Senior Counsellor), Adelle Khan and Naemah Khan were guests at the International Children's Day Celebrations, where the main focus of the day was on Child Sexual Abuse. There was also an open forum where students enquired about other issues.



Bhawani Dayal teachers at the IWD celebrations where FWCC coordinator Shamima Ali was chief guest.

## STAFF PROFILES



**NAME:** Manju Lata (Ba Centre)  
**POSITION:** Receptionist  
**EDUCATION:** Fiji School Leaving Certificate Examination  
**JOB DESCRIPTION:** Answering phone calls, preparation of weekly and monthly statistics, filing of records and looking

after petty cash

**REFLECTIONS:** "I joined Ba Women's Crisis Centre as a volunteer in January 2002. I enjoy working with BWCC as it is a challenging experience. I am privileged to assist the need of our women and children. I also feel that the centre provides a lot of needed services for women and children."



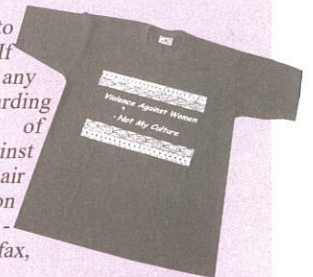
**NAME:** Filomena Saukuru (Ba Centre)  
**POSITION:** Counsellor  
**EDUCATION:** Pre-School Teaching Certificate (USP)  
**REFLECTIONS:** "I first joined Ba Women's Crisis Centre as a volunteer in 1996.

Working here has been a very interesting and challenging work for me.

Each time I counsel a client I am determined to help her deal with her problems effectively and at the end of the day I realised that I have been able to make a difference in her life. I also believe that raising awareness on violence against women and children can change peoples' attitudes."

**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 - 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 a FWCC T-shirt.