



Fiji Women's Crisis Centre

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NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2012

Not in our game plan

FOR THE first time in Fiji, the call to eliminate violence against women featured prominently in a major rugby tournament in January.

The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre stepped up as a sponsor of the Uprising Fiji International Sevens tournament,

FWCC takes anti-violence message to rugby supporters

supporting the women's division of the tourney.

"Not only are we supporting the development of women's rugby, we are

also highlighting the problem of violence against women in a game synonymous with masculinity," says FWCC Coordinator Shamima Ali.

"We are bringing the message to an entirely new audience we had not previously reached."

Hundreds of rugby fans and players converged on the National Stadium in Suva from January 20-21. Two large signboards by the sidelines bore the message 'Violence Against Women: Not In Our Game Plan'.

The tournament's defending champions also adopted the title FWCC Red Rock with the Centre's logo featured prominently on the front of the team's jerseys.

Edwina Kotoisuva, the FWCC's Deputy Coordinator, says international trends have shown that intimate partner and family violence increases around major rugby tournaments – such as the 2011 Rugby World Cup in New Zealand – in part due to the emotional upset when men's teams lose, exacerbated by the increase in



FWCC's Shamima Ali and Lili Vuivasawa with the FWCC Red Rock team

Shamima named Pacific Person of the Year

THE PACIFIC'S premier magazine Islands Business has named long-time women's rights campaigner, political rights activist and Fiji Women's Crisis Centre Shamima Ali as its 2011 Pacific Person of the Year.

"For the courage to take on Fiji and the Pacific's mainly patriarchal society and systems, for her determination and battle to put women's rights on the agenda of every political leader, for the tenacity and sheer stubbornness to take the fight right into the pulse of male-dominated institutions in the military and the police force, all the time never losing her common and compassionate touch for the abused, the poor and the downtrodden, Shamima Ali is Islands Business 2011 Pacific Person of the Year," the magazine said in its December edition which went on sale around the Pacific.

"Twenty-six years of struggle aimed at breaking down a male-dominated and biased society and its varied systems does seem to bring its fair share of lonely moments," says the magazine cover article, authored by Fiji-based freelance journalist, Samisoni Pareti.

"She has to put up with name-calling and threats of violence directed at her and her family. Invitation to weddings of family and friends had dried up as she was deemed a 'bad omen' to marital alliances. So-called friends turned their backs on her. But Ali pressed on regardless."

Ms Ali is the Coordinator of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre. In response to the article, Ms Ali thanked all those who had wished her well, saying: "This has been a victory for human rights in the Pacific and it has been a great privilege. Let us continue to work in solidarity for

human rights, democracy and the rule of law in the Pacific."

This latest achievement adds onto a growing series of awards Ms Ali has won due to her work on women and human rights. In 2009, Amnesty International New Zealand gave her its inaugural Human Rights Defender Award. She was also named a Paul Harris Fellow by the Rotary Foundation, and in 2007 was awarded the American Government's 'Women of Courage' Award. She was also named one of Fiji's 100 most influential men and women in the book 20th Century Fiji.

Ms Ali is also the last lawfully appointed Fiji Human Rights Commissioner. She now joins a long list of illustrious influential Pacific women, men and institutions that have graced Islands Business' traditional December Pacific Person of the Year cover. Others included Fiji's founding Prime Minister Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, Tonga's pro-democracy campaigner 'Akilisi Pohiva, New Caledonian pro-independence fighter, the late Jean-Marie Tjibaou, Prime Minister John Howard of Australia and Dame Carol Kidu of Papua New Guinea.



(SOURCE: Pacnews)

National meeting on VAW brings results

A NATIONAL MEETING on the elimination of violence against women (VAW) held in Suva in November 2011 has already shown results with the setting up of a committee to tackle the issue in Nadi.

The National Network Meeting on the Elimination of Violence Against Women was organised by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre and brought together about 100 participants working in the area of violence against women.

The meeting agreed that while many advances have been made in bringing the issue to the fore, many challenges still remain.

Just 10 days after the meeting ended, an Elimination of Violence Against Women Committee chaired by the officer-in-charge of the Namaka Police Station in Nadi. It was the first of the many actions participants at the national meeting had agreed on.

The committee organised a march through Nadi on November 25, to mark the start of the 16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women campaign. Another



Archbishop of Polynesia, the Most Reverend Dr Winston Halapua opened the National Network Meeting on Violence Against Women in Suva where he talked of the need for religious bodies to practice what they preach when it came to women's rights

march was held at the end of the 16 Days campaign on December 10, International Human Rights Day.

Participants in the national meeting included those from the police force, social welfare, refuge homes, women's organisations and individual women's rights advocates.

The participants developed action plans for the next two years that included activities they would carry out in communities.

"Violence against women and children continues to be a major problem in our

communities with emerging challenges including lack of recognition of the vulnerabilities of women with disabilities," said Shamima Ali, coordinator of FWCC.

Discussions during the four-day meeting focused on the role of service providers in responding to violence against women and various strategies targeted at preventative measures.

Among the outcomes from the meeting were improving counselling and support for survivors of violence, with special attention on developing a code of ethics for refuge

homes. There was also a focus on women survivors of violence with disabilities.

Law and enforcement was also an issue raised, with the need for legal literacy on the Domestic Violence Decree and the Crimes Decree. A call was also made for continued support for police services such as the Sexual Offences Unit to ensure more easily accessible services for victim/survivors.

The participants also agreed that individuals must make a commitment to a zero-tolerance approach to violence against women and support the empowerment of women. They agreed the culture of violence still needed to be broken in many communities.

It was also agreed that Provincial Councils and advisory councillors must be sensitised to gender-based violence to enable them to assist and encourage victims of violence to report their cases to the relevant authorities.

Men were encouraged to become male advocates for women human rights to help advance the status of women throughout the country.

The meeting was opened by the Anglican Bishop of Polynesia, the Most Reverend Dr Winston Halapua, who challenged the disparity between beliefs and practice in Christian churches. He called on faith-based organisations to make a high-level commitment to end violence against women.

Participants agreed they would encourage their own religious organisations to address the issue through their welfare services or religious programmes.

The meeting recognised there was an urgent need to extend work on eliminating gender-based violence to the maritime zones where the issue of violence has been acknowledged as a growing problem.

The participants agreed to consolidate their networking and to hold an annual network meeting through which they could monitor work being done nationally.

Not in our game plan

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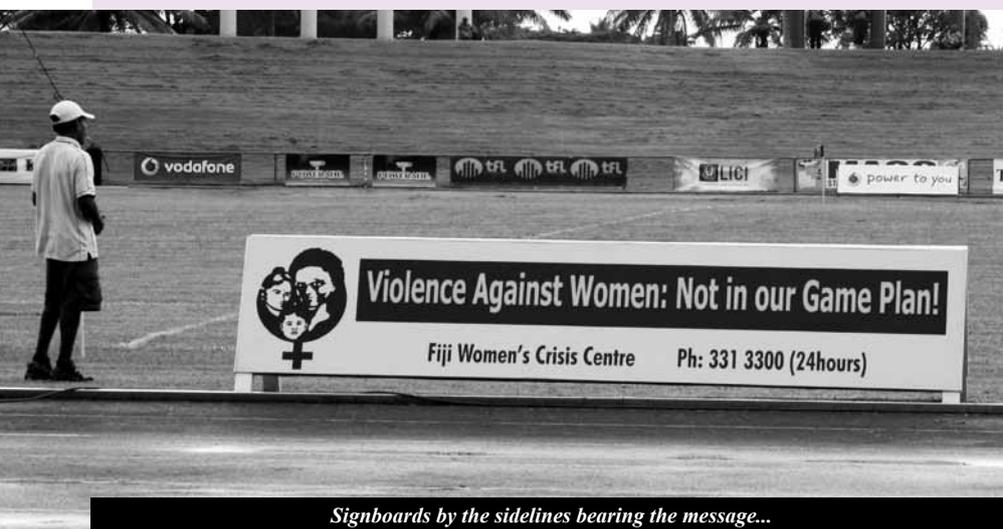
alcohol consumption. "It's an issue that women's groups are trying to tackle in many countries," Kotoisuva said.

When the All Blacks lost to France at the 2007 Rugby World Cup, there was a sharp increase recorded in domestic violence in New Zealand.

The inaugural Uprising Sevens tournament was held in 2011, and this is the first time women participated.

The women's division trophy donated by FWCC - a tanoa - was exactly the same size as the men's tanoa trophy signifying equality between women and men.

Marist Sea Hawks beat the Chinese provincial women's sevens rugby team Anhui 10-7 in the women's final, while Warden's beat the Fiji team 31-26 in the men's final.



Signboards by the sidelines bearing the message...

Majority of sexual offenders known to victims

STATISTICS COMPILED by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre show that an overwhelming majority of perpetrators of sexual violence against women and children are those related to, trusted by or known to the victim. The statistics are derived from those cases which were reported to the FWCC in 2011.

In all, 92.2 per cent of cases reported to the FWCC in Suva were perpetrated by those known to the victim. Cases in which the perpetrators were related

to the victim amount to 60.7 per cent, while in a further 31.5 per cent of cases, the perpetrators were in a position of trust or known to victim.

Relatives make up the single biggest group of perpetrators at 21.1 per cent, followed by fathers at 15.8 per cent, and boyfriends at 10.5 per cent.

Acquaintances of victims accounted for 7.9 per cent of the perpetrators, while grandfathers, neighbours and stepfathers each made up 5.3 per cent

of the cases reported last year. Other perpetrators included teachers, police and employers (2.6 % each).

The statistics prove that women and children are most vulnerable to attacks from those they know and trust. Strangers accounted for only 5.3 per cent of perpetrators.

The figures mirror the statistics collated by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre since data collection started in 1985.



Acting Australian High Commissioner Judith Robinson, centre, with Tongan women's activist Ofa Guttenbeil-Likiliki and facilitator Stephen Fisher with male advocates at the launch

Manual for men working for women's human rights released

THE FIJI Women's Crisis Centre and the Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women achieved a milestone on 25 November 2011 in its work to eliminate violence against women with the launch of a handbook to train men to advocate for women's human rights.

The Male Advocacy for Women's Human Rights Handbook was launched at the start of the 16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women campaign by Australia's acting High Commissioner to Fiji Judith Robinson.

FWCC Coordinator Shamima Ali says the launch was the highlight of nine years of work carried out in the area of engaging men to advocate for women's human rights.

The handbook – one of the first of its kind in the world – is for men who have been through a series of trainings and serves as a guide for communicating the language of women's human rights.

A home-grown Pacific initiative, the

handbook is also recognised by the men involved as important to their work as well as their daily lives.

"This is indeed a milestone and the men who have been involved in refining these materials are now very familiar with the materials which they have been testing through three stages of training," says Ali.

The Male Advocacy for Women's Human Rights program was officially launched in 2002 and developed further over the years using cases of best practices from around the world and adapting it to the Pacific context.

"This work is about involving men in efforts to eliminate violence against women from a rights-based approach and one of the key elements is these men firstly challenging their own behaviour before calling themselves advocates on women's human rights or trying to influence other men," says Ali.

DV cost Fiji \$498m in 2011

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE in Fiji in 2011 is estimated to have cost the country \$498 million, according to economic calculations.

The figure was arrived at by Professor Biman Chand Prasad, the Dean of the Faculty of Business and Economics at USP, who calculated the economic costs of family violence in mid-2011.

He acknowledged the difficulty in quantifying the costs involved with domestic violence, as good records and statistics are needed. He added more research also needs to be done to get an idea of how the costs are distributed in the community.

Professor Prasad pointed out that the government incurs the majority of the costs involved with domestic violence. These costs involve police, welfare and prison services, as well as the cost of medical treatment.

In 2002, the cost to the government was estimated by the Reserve Bank of Fiji at \$200m.

Professor Prasad's figure was calculated using a model developed in New Zealand in 1994 to estimate the economic cost of family violence. The same model was used by the Reserve Bank in the 2002 calculation.

Apart from the direct cost, costs borne by survivors of violence, their families and communities include loss of earnings, legal fees and medical costs taking the total cost to an estimated \$740m in 2011. In 2002, the total cost was calculated at \$300m.

Professor Prasad concluded that the reduction in domestic violence can lead to economic and social prosperity.

The economist's revelation was made at a panel discussion organised by the USP's School of Social Sciences on August 31, 2011.

Professor Prasad said more research was needed on family violence in Fiji, but at the same time he acknowledged the efforts of organisations such as the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre.

Community education

AUGUST

- Discussion with Taulevu women's group in Naitasiri on role of FWCC, DV, CSA, rape
- Talk with Taulevu women's group in Naitasiri on role of FWCC, gender, DV, SA, CSA and action plan on women's rights
- Visit to Nasavu women's Group, Naitasiri to talk about gender, DV, SA, SH
- Talk with Labasa Correctional Centre officers' children on CA, CSA and eight rules of safety
- Talk with Labasa Correctional Centre officers' spouses on DV, SA and the law
- Meeting with Nadala women's group in Ba on role of FWCC, DV, CA and rape

Talk with Assemblies of God women's ministry, Saru, Lautoka, on role of FWCC, DV and gender

- Meeting with Moala Village women's group, Nadi on role of FWCC, DV and rape
- Talk with Namata community in Lautoka on role of FWCC, DV and gender
- Talk with Narewa/Sikituru youth, Nadi on role of FWCC, DV, CSA and rape
- Meeting with AOG women's ministry at Waiyavi and Naikabula in Lautoka on role of FWCC, domestic violence and rape
- Visit with Namaka and Votualevu Methodist youth in Nadi on role of FWCC, gender, rape and DV

SEPTEMBER

- Korovou, Naitasiri talk on gender, DV, SA, SH and action plan on women's rights
- Talk with Nabena community in



Naluwai Women's Group, Naitasiri

Naitasiri on role of FWCC, gender, DV, rape, CSA and action plan

- Discussion at Sasa Village, Macuata on DV, rape, SH, CSA and action plan
- Talk with Yaladro women's club in Tavua on role of FWCC and DV
- Briefing at Lovu HART Homes, Lautoka on role of FWCC, DV, CA and rape
- Male advocacy training in Savatu Tikina (district), Nadarivatu on gender, role of FWCC, DV, CA and rape
- Korotogo Youth holiday programme in Sigatoka on rape and CSA
- Talk with Malevu Village women's group in Nadroga on role of FWCC, gender and DV
- Talk with Laselase Indo-Fijian women in Sigatoka on role of FWCC, gender and DV
- Discussion with Namoli Village women's group in Lautoka on role of FWCC, rape, gender, DV
- Briefing at Nasau Training Centre in

Nadroga on role of FWCC, rape and gender

- Briefing with Sabeto police officers in Nadi on role of FWCC and DV

OCTOBER

- Briefing with Catholic teachers on CSA
- Talk with Crime Stoppers Committee in Cakaudrove on the myths and effects of DV and rape
- Talk with Nadalei Village, Tavua on role of FWCC, DV and rape
- Meeting with Drumasi women's club, Tavua on role of FWCC, DV and rape

- Talk with Tubenasolo women's group in Nadi on role of FWCC, DV, CSA, rape and gender
- Meeting with Namotomoto/Navakai women's group in Nadi on role of FWCC, DV, rape and gender

NOVEMBER

- Talk with Vunivesi community in Cakaudrove on DV, rape, CSA, myths and effects of DV and rape
- Meeting at Batinikama in Labasa on DV, rape myths and effects, and the law
- Talk with Tavua Indo-Fijian women on role of FWCC, DV, CA, rape
- Talk at Cuvu settlement in Sigatoka on role of FWCC, DV and rape

DECEMBER

- Visit to Naluwai women's group in Naitasiri to talk on role of FWCC, gender, DV, rape, child abuse, and action plan
- Talk at the Revival Church youth camp in Labasa on CA and CSA
- Male advocacy training at Naweni Tikina (district), Cakaudrove on gender, DV, SA and what the law says about VAW
- Talk with Garampani women's club, Tavua on the role of FWCC and rape
- Talk with Nakavu women's group in Nadi on role of FWCC, DV, CSA, rape and gender
- Discussion with a group of people at Hexagon Group in Sabeto Nadi on role of FWCC, gender, human rights, CEDAW, DVRO, DV, CSA, rape

KEY: CA – Child Abuse; DV – Domestic Violence; CSA – Child Sexual Abuse; SH – Sexual Harassment; SA – Sexual Assault; VAW – Violence Against Women; CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination Discrimination Against Women; DVRO – Domestic Violence Restraining Order

Join us at the Flea Market in Suva at 6.30pm on March 8, 2012 for the RECLAIM THE NIGHT MARCH to mark International Women's Day.* Bring your candles as we light up the night and take back our streets.

**Pending permit approval*