



# Fiji Women's Crisis Centre

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JULY 2015



*FWCC Coordinator Shamima Ali with aspiring activists from all around the country who attended a 5-day workshop in Suva.*

*Picture source: Jone Luvenitoga, Fiji Times*

## 36 Aspire to work for women's human rights

**THIRTY-SIX** aspiring human rights activists from all around the country were trained by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre on human rights, gender issues and women's rights in early July.

The five-day workshop held in collaboration with Aspire Network focused improving participants' knowledge on human rights issues they faced in their communities.

Speaking to the participants, FWCC Coordinator Shamima Ali: "The workshop is about increasing your knowledge, talking about women's rights, developing and understanding gender issues and understanding about discrimination."

Ms Ali said it was important for women, girls and children to understand the impacts of violence against them. She said violence against women was an impediment to national development.

Officiating at the graduating ceremony, human rights activist, Virisila Buadromo told participants to continue to speak out against violence against women.

The five-day workshop was held at Suva's Southern Cross Hotel was funded by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade through the FWCC.

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### Aspire Network looks to further training

**ASPIRE Network, a youth-run empowerment NGO, has praised the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre for its training programme on human rights, gender and women's rights.**

**The FWCC collaborated with Aspire Network to facilitate a five-day training program, which gathered 36 aspiring human rights activists from all around the country.**

**Aspire Network's executive director, Kaajal Kumar said: "Most of the young people I spoke with during the training and afterwards found it very educational."**

**She said FWCC's training was "comprehensive" and went into the details of the dynamics of violence and gender issues but was also easy to understand.**

**"We are quite a large network so this is just one lot and so hopefully next year, we will run the same training with the next lot of people."**



# Calendar of crimes

## JANUARY

- A father was sentenced to 14 years and 6 months imprisonment on 27 January by Justice De Silva in Lautoka for raping his 13-year-old daughter in a forested area outside the house.
- A 22-year-old man raped a 12-year-old girl while she was in his care. He was sentenced to 14 years imprisonment on 30 January by Justice Madigan in Suva.

## FEBRUARY

- A 71-year-old grandfather was sentenced to 10 years and 8 months imprisonment on 16 February by Justice Fernando in Suva for raping and sexually assaulting his two granddaughters aged 6 and 7 years.
- A 26-year-old man raped a 14-year-old girl in a home invasion in Lautoka in 2011. He was sentenced to 13 years in jail by Justice De Silva.
- A 42-year-old man raped his 12-year-old niece on three occasions. He was sentenced to 13 years 11 months and 10 days imprisonment on 20 February 2015 by Justice De Silva in Lautoka.
- A man was convicted under the Penal Code of raping and sexually assaulting two girls aged 9 and 12 in Suva. He was sentenced to 40 months imprisonment by Magistrate Somaratne.
- A 62-year-old man was convicted of raping and sexually assaulting an 8-year-old girl. He was jailed for 12 years and eight months by Justice Madigan in Suva on 23 February.
- A man who sexually assaulted his sister-in-law was jailed for 32 months by Magistrate Somaratne at Taveuni on 26 February.

## MARCH

- A man was jailed for eight years for robbing and raping a 63-year-old male tourist in the Western Division. He was jailed by Justice Rajasinghe in Lautoka on 6 March.
- A 41-year-old man was convicted of burglary, rape and sexual assault of a

49-year-old woman in her home. The man was a family friend and blind-folded the woman after breaking in while her husband was imprisoned for 16 years by Justice Temo.

- A 40-year-old man was convicted of defiling his 15-year-old niece on three occasions in Suva. He was jailed for 16 months by Magistrate Somaratne on 9 March.
- A 54-year-old father raped his 23-year-old daughter. She was the breadwinner in the family. He was sentenced to 11 years' imprisonment on 11 March by Justice Temo in Labasa.
- A 41-year-old man was jailed for the rape of his 17-year-old who was sleeping. He was jailed for 13 years by Justice De Silva on 12 March in Labasa High Court.
- A 20-year-old man grabbed a 16-year-old girl while she was watching a dance at a village hall in Labasa. He raped and indecently assaulted her. Justice Temo jailed the man for seven years on 13 March.
- A man who raped his friend's wife who



- was four months pregnant was jailed for nine years and 10 months by Justice De Silva on 18 March.
- A man was convicted of raping a 12-year-old girl in Nasinu and his wife was convicted of aiding and abetting in the rape. The man was sentenced to 13 years in jail while the wife was jailed for 7 years by Justice Fernando in Suva.
- A 33-year-old man was convicted of the rape and sexual assault of a 14-year-neighbour. The attack happened twice. He was jailed for 13 years by Justice Temo in the High Court at Suva on 27 March.
- A juvenile from Taveuni was convicted of three counts of rape and one count of attempted rape. The victims were two girls aged 8 and 11. The juvenile was sentenced to 15 months in jail by Magistrate Somaratne.

## APRIL

- A 38-year-old man was sentenced to 13 years and 9 months imprisonment by Justice Silva on 9 April for raping stepdaughter.
- An 18-year-old man raped four-year-old niece. At the time of the first offence he was a juvenile. At the second offence he was an adult. He was sentenced to



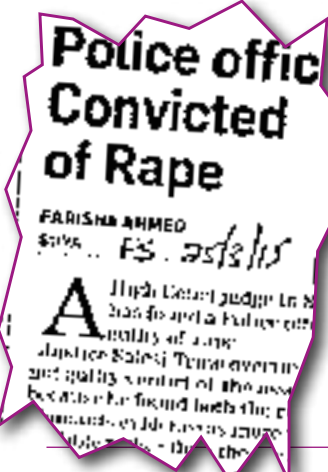
seven years in jail with a minimum of five years by Justice Madigan at Lautoka.

## MAY

- A man 44-year-old was handed a 13-year sentence by Justice Fernando at Lautoka on 6 May for two counts of raping the 9-year-old adopted daughter of his partner.
- A 19-year-old man convicted of the rape and indecent assault of a 10-year-old girl from the same village in the Northern Division. He was sentenced to 13 years imprisonment with a non-parole period of 11 years.
- A 70-year-old villager from the Northern Division was sentenced 13 years in jail for the rape, attempted rape and indecent assault of a woman aged 19 and a girl aged 13. Justice Temo imposed a non-parole period of 11 years while delivering judgment in the High Court at Labasa.
- A man was jailed for 10 year and six months by Justice Fernando in the Suva High Court for the rape of his partner's 18-year-old daughter.
- A 34-year-old man was jailed for 10 years and six months for the rape of a six-year-old girl in his village in the Western Division two three years ago. Justice Rajasinghe imposed a non-parole period of nine years.
- A 75-year-old man was sentenced for raping his granddaughter on various occasions from 2008 till 2011. Justice Temo handed a sentence of 11 years imprisonment with a nine-year non-parole period.

## JUNE

- A father was sentenced to 16 years imprisonment on 1st June by Justice Rajasinghe for raping his two daughters between January 2006 and February 2015. Justice Rajasinghe imposed a non-parole period of 15 years.
- A 54-year-old man was jailed for 13 years for the rape of a 13-year-old girl in the Northern Division. Justice Temo sitting in the Labasa court imposed a non-parole period of 10 years.
- A 65-year-old man was jailed for 13 years on several counts of raping his 14-year-old granddaughter in Labasa between 2008 and 2014. Justice Temo imposed a non-parole period of 11 years.



## Law student aims to be change agent

**MATILA BULIMAIBAU** is a 21-year-old law student who already has her sights set on becoming an agent of change in the legal fraternity.

"In the legal fraternity, men are always given the first chance and this needs to change," says Ms Bulimaibau, a third-year law student at University of Fiji.

Ms Bulimaibau attended a five-day training facilitated by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre in July. She says the training has broadened her knowledge of women's issues.

Ms Bulimaibau was part of a five-day training program on human rights, gender issues and women's rights facilitated by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre in collaboration with Aspire Network in Suva in July.

"The training will help me to get the message out that women are capable and can be even better if they are given the opportunity," Ms Bulimaibau said.

"The training has taught me much more than the basics of human rights and women's rights and has broadened my knowledge on the issues of women," she said.

Ms Bulimaibau said before the training she assumed rape was the only abuse perpetrated against women but she now realises violence against women can come in all ways, shapes and forms.

She urged people to wake up to the critical issue that violence against women posed for the country. She also urged survivors of violence to seek help through the services offered by FWCC.



Bulimaibau



Participants having discussions during the week long training on Violence Against Women and Gender Issues in Suva

## Course is eye-opening for teacher

**PRITIKA MALA** will now have something extra that she will be able to teach. The 24-year-old Lautoka, secondary school teacher underwent an intensive human rights and women's rights awareness workshop through the FWCC and Aspire Network in July.

Ms Mala, who lives at Kashmir, Lautoka said the training was an eye-opener. "I learnt a lot of things that I was not even aware of," Ms Mala said.

"Women in the country face a lot of problems and they suffer in silence. We need to break the culture of silence and demand action," she said.

Ms Mala said the training helped raise her awareness about the vulnerability of women and girls to violence.

The 24-year-old is also a community worker and aims to use her new-found knowledge to advocate for women, raise awareness about the implications of domestic violence and ways to eliminate it.

She said community education awareness sessions carried out by the FWCC in rural and semi-urban communities was an important tool in the struggle to eliminate violence against women.



Mala

# Lest we forget...

**A**T LEAST four women have died during the first seven months of 2015 allegedly as a consequence of intimate partner violence.

Over the Easter weekend in April, **Losana McGowan**, 36, died after allegedly being beaten up by her partner at their Suva flat after a night out.

The 28-year-old accused has been remanded in custody and is due to go on trial for murder next year.

McGowan had also worked at the Fiji Women's Rights Movement between 2002 and 2003 before she joined the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre as a communications officer from March 2003 to September 2004.



McGowan

On the same day as McGowan's death, April 4, **Sheral Kumar**, 36, was set on fire in Lautoka. Kumar was shopping with her daughter at Vitogo Parade when she was allegedly set alight by her estranged husband. Kumar died of her injuries in hospital.

Her husband has been charged with her death and has been granted bail. He was ordered to pay \$50 per week in maintenance for his three children.



Lata

A Navua woman, only identified as **Rozina**, died by suicide in late May after suffering years of domestic violence.

The matter was reportedly still being investigated by police to determine whether her death can be attributed to suicide.

In the most recent incident, a woman's decomposing body was discovered on 8 July in Cuvu, Sigatoka by a farmer. **Shaleshni Lata**, 29, was reported missing by her husband on 1 July but he has now been charged with her murder.

The most comprehensive research into violence against women carried out in Fiji by the FWCC and published in late 2013, revealed its horrific extent.

The research shows that about 43 women are injured every day due to intimate partner violence, one woman is permanently disabled, 71 lose consciousness and 16 are injured badly enough to require health care.

# FREE COUNSELLING SERVICES

**THE FIJI** Women's Crisis Centre is calling on women, girls and children to take advantage of its free, non-judgemental and confidential counselling and advocacy services.

FWCC Coordinator Shamima Ali said the counselling and advocacy services are offered to women, girls and children at major centres in Ba, Labasa, Suva, Rakiraki and Nadi.

Counselling and advocacy services are offered to victims/survivors of domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, child abuse, harassment and discrimination, among other issues.

The Centre has a 24-hour confidential counselling line and provides advocacy services on behalf of women.

"We provide moral support to the victims and when service providers do not respond appropriately, we intervene on behalf of the survivor," she said.

Basic legal services are also offered through the FWCC's legal department.

She said for women in violent situations, emergency accommodation is also provided when required.

Ms Ali said women were also provided with medical support, transportation, emergency needs, children's education and arrangements for schools.

"For survivors of child sexual abuse, the Centre arranges for tertiary education if they don't have any other support. We look at local fundraising," she said.

Ms Ali said women who come to the Centre for counselling and advocacy support are provided with options and information on their rights, build their self-esteem and working out the way forward with them.

The Centre is secular and multiracial.

Ms Ali said information and support is also offered to men who come to the Centre seeking help.

She said some men go through emotional trauma in their relationships, men are raped by men and also face violations of their human rights.

Ms Ali said counselling and advocacy services were also offered to members of the LGBTQI community and people living with disabilities.



## IMPORTANT 24-HOUR COUNSELLING NUMBERS

Suva Office .....	3313 300/9209 470 (24hrs)
Labasa Office.....	9377 784 (24hrs)
Ba Office .....	9239 775 (24hrs)
Nadi Office.....	9182 884 (24hrs)
Rakiraki Office.....	9129 790 (24hrs)

# FWCC welcomes PM's speech on family violence



FWCC Coordinator Shamima Ali being interviewed by Fiji TV

**THE FIJI** Women's Crisis Centre welcomed the remarks by Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama in April on the problem of intimate partner violence in Fiji and across the Pacific.

Bainimarama acknowledged the "appalling incidence of family violence" needed to be addressed "as a matter

of urgency" and that despite the government's best efforts, a lot of work was still required to address it.

FWCC Coordinator Shamima Ali said the Prime Minister's remarks highlighted the issue of family violence at a high political level and forced officials to take seriously the zero-tolerance policy

towards domestic violence.

"The Prime Minister's comments about the crisis of family violence in Fiji and the Pacific is an important political step in giving new impetus to the laws that are already in place and that should be protecting women and children," said Ms Ali.

Ms Ali continued: "The simple message that violence is not acceptable in any form is a milestone event for the struggle to eliminate violence against women and children in Fiji."

However, Ms Ali said it was now up to the relevant officials, especially the police force and social services, to enforce the laws relating to domestic violence.

"We need police officers who know the laws relating to family violence and who will not be influenced to ignore them or who would advise women against seeking redress through the judicial system."

She said that laws governing domestic violence were in place but that police needed to do more to put them into action and to refrain from passing judgement on those who report cases or from bringing cultural considerations into play.

"The Police Commissioner and all officers under him need to know thoroughly the legal provisions in place and that is also something Bainimarama has acknowledged," said Mr Ali.

The zero-tolerance policy on domestic violence has, in theory, been in place since the late 1990s, but has only been sporadically implemented. Ms Ali said with Bainimarama's unequivocal calling out of the government services that should be implementing this policy, it is now up to the relevant officials to begin to put it into practise.

"We look forward to working in greater collaboration with the government and its agencies to better address the issue of family violence at all levels," Ms Ali.

## PM reaffirms promise on VAW crisis

**PRIME MINISTER** Voreqe Bainimarama reaffirmed off his government's commitment to addressing the pandemic of violence against women in Fiji during a high level meeting in April.

During his address at the Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnership Forum at Suva's Novotel Hotel in April, Mr Bainimarama said family violence in the Pacific was at crisis point and must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

"It is an issue of vital importance for every society, every government. And it is a fundamental test of our values as Pacific people which, I am sad to say, we are failing," he said.

Mr Bainimarama says tackling domestic violence is at the core of the Government's efforts to improve the position and status of Fijian women generally.

Mr Bainimarama said the current level of violence "woefully, unacceptably high."

"It is, in fact, cause for regional shame. And we must all do a lot more to stop it.

"The Government I lead takes this issue extremely seriously. Tackling domestic violence is at the core of our efforts to improve the position and status of Fijian women generally. To empower them. To give them more of a stake in our economy. To enrich their lives and those of their families. To enable them to reach their full potential. And above all, to provide them with an environment free from intimidation and fear."

He said for too long, Fijian society - in common with other Pacific societies - has turned a blind eye to what goes on in the privacy of people's homes.

"Worse, we've tolerated, even encouraged, a culture in which spouses or partners are entitled to use violence to resolve disputes or bring supposedly errant family members into line. For

too long, there was a saying in Fiji that so-and-so 'deserved a hiding'. But those days are over.

Mr Bainimarama said in Fiji, the issue was a burning one after a string of incidents in which women have been killed.

"In the latest, we lost one of Fiji's best and most respected journalists, Losana McGowan, in an alleged incident of domestic violence that shocked not only those who knew her but the entire nation.

"Yet these killings are merely the most obvious manifestations of a culture that we know extends across the Pacific of men resorting to violence against women in domestic confrontations." He said the days of sweeping the extent of this crisis under the proverbial mat for cultural reasons or to save face are over.

Mr Bainimarama said men must be repeatedly told that real men don't hit women.

"Real men protect women and treat them as equals. And women need to be encouraged to stand up more for themselves - to keep repeating the mantra that violence is unacceptable in any setting whatsoever, let alone the family."

In February, while opening a women's centre in Kadavu, the Prime Minister appealed to men to "think long and hard" about the treatment of Fiji's women and girls.

When he made the comment, there were 739 cases of sexual assault before the courts.

Mr Bainimarama said these were cases pending in all courts, including the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal.

He said of these, 477 were cases of sexual assault against people over the age of 13, another 262 cases of child sexual assault - and the overwhelming majority of all these cases are assaults on females - women and girls.

## Norway's ambassador visits FWCC



*The Royal Norwegian Ambassador to Fiji, Unni Klovstad visited the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre office in Suva on 8 July where she met FWCC Coordinator Shamima Ali, the counsellors and staff.*

## Labasa men's workshop

A **SECOND** workshop for men on women's human rights was held in Labasa in June. The week-long training is a collaboration between the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre and the Ministry for Women's Zero Tolerance to Violence Against Women Program.

The workshop was attended by 29 men from various parts of the Northern Division namely, Dreketi, Lekutu, Kioa, Rabi, Taveuni, Bua, Savusavu, Namoli, Savudrodoro, Vunivesi and Tawake.

"The male advocacy program for women's human rights was developed 13 years ago and is aimed at educating men on the root causes of violence against women. The program allows men to help other men and boys recognise how violence against women is perpetuated and what changes they can make to their own attitudes and behaviours," said Shamima Ali, Coordinator of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre.

"The program also teaches men to help promote and protect women's human rights," said Ali.

"The Male Advocacy Program is recognised internationally as a best practice model for addressing violence against women, and helps men become effective role models within their own communities for other men and boys," said Ali.

## FWCC supports Mid Central Volleyball

The FWCC sponsored uniforms for the Mid Central Volleyball Association men's and women's teams in April. This is part of FWCC's efforts to eliminate violence against women through sports and using sports to raise awareness about the prevalence of violence against women and about what young people can do to prevent violence from occurring. The jerseys were presented to the Mid Central volleyball teams at the FMF Gymnasium in time for the Easter Tournament where 75 teams from the Western, Central and Eastern Divisions participated.



Mid Central Volleyball team

## IWD marked around Fiji

**ABOUT 300** women, men, young people and children marched through Suva on 6 March in the first 'Reclaim the Night' march after Fiji's return to democratic government.

The marchers chanted slogans demanding safe spaces for women in all spheres of life and symbolically took back the night for women.

There were also events

at FWCC's other branches around the country including open days and a march through Nadi to 'Reclaim the Night' on 7 March.



Ba Crisis Centre held an Open Day on 8 March



Participants of the Reclaim the Night March in Suva

## FWCC signs Red Rock Rugby contract

**THE FWCC** entered into a \$10,000-a-year contract for two years with Red Rock Rugby Club ahead of the FWCC Red Rock Rugby Tournament in March.

FWCC Coordinator signed the agreement with FWCC Red Rock Malakai Yamaivava. The contract is conditional on all players and team management abiding by a pledge to prevent and eliminate violence against women and to be advocate for women's human rights.

Any breach of these conditions by the players or management will require disciplinary action or the termination from the squad.

Failing any action, the FWCC will withdraw sponsorship. So far none of the non-violent conditions have been breached. Yamaivava thanked the FWCC for coming on board to support the club and said they firmly believe in eliminating violence against women.

The players and management are to undergo at least two workshops

on gender sensitisation and women's human rights during the year, one of which they have already completed.



Members of the Red Rock rugby team at the Reclaim the Night March

# Workshop for men on women's human rights

**A WORKSHOP** for men on women's human rights was held in June at the Nadave Training Centre in Tailevu. The weeklong training was a collaboration between the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre and the Ministry for Women.

"The male advocacy program for women's human rights was created over a decade ago and is aimed at educating men on the root causes of violence against women," said Shamima Ali, FWCC coordinator.

"The advocates then use the knowledge and skills taught during the male advocacy program to help other men and boys recognise how violence against women is perpetuated and what they can do to change this."

"The collaboration gives men who are part of the Ministry for Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation's 'Zero Tolerance to Violence Against Women' program an opportunity to learn and identify their own acts of violence and learn to change these types of behaviours, while helping women promote and protect their rights," said Ali.



FWCC Coordinator Shamima Ali with participants of Women's Human Rights workshop in Labasa

## Men urged to stand up and advocate for women

**THE WORK** to eliminate violence against women and achieve gender equality cannot be successful unless men are also involved.

That is the basic premise of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre's flagship Male Advocacy Programme, which trains men in influential positions to be advocates for women's human rights.

Men comprise more than 90 per cent of perpetrators of violence against women, according to FWCC statistics. The Centre documents more than 1000 cases of violence against women and girls each year, but in 2014 this number soared to more than 2000.

FWCC Coordinator Shamima Ali said the Male Advocacy Programme is aimed at changing the ingrained attitudes towards women that promoted and perpetuated gender inequality.

Ms Ali said violence against women is largely perpetrated by men and stems from the inequalities that exist between men and women.

"The inequalities are compounded by religious and cultural beliefs and practices and are so institutionalised that initial work on violence against women has struggled to make inroads while experiencing backlash and resistance from various quarters," Ms Ali said.

Recognised internationally as a best practice model for addressing violence against women, FWCC's male advocacy programme ensures men address their own violence and coercive control before they can become effective role models.

The training was opened by Chief Administration Officer ACP Unaisi Vuniwaqa, who in her opening address acknowledged the gaps in service delivery by key stakeholders including the Fiji Police. "We are losing innocent lives, our economic burden increases due to expenses as a result of domestic violence. This is where your roles will also need to focus; to advocate for improvement in our policies and practices."

"It simply takes a genuine heart and commitment to walk the extra mile. The role of the participants will be about changing mindsets, challenging generational social norms, and deep seated beliefs in order to prevent domestic violence."

"It begins with us, and the next three days will ensure that we are first transformed, in order to transform others," said Vuniwaqa.

## WHO IS A MALE ADVOCATE?

**MALE ADVOCATES** work to improve and support gender equality within the spheres of their personal life (e.g. their own families and marriages), their work life (in the workplace or as part of their work duties) and in their communities (e.g. church meetings, kava bowl, sporting events, festivals etc).

A male advocate works towards women enjoying greater:

- Equality of access to resources and services;
- Equality in decision making at all levels – home, community, church and government and
- Access to, and enjoyment of, their human rights

Ms Ali said it is also important to note that at times, the most useful work of the male advocate maybe to attempt to stop a certain activity occurring rather than initiating a new activity.

"For example, government may be planning to reduce women's access to reproductive health services and so a male advocate would work to prevent this regressive change."

In carrying out the duties of a male advocate, men should be able to:

- Respond to misunderstandings or unhelpful views about the nature of men's violence against women and gender quality and inequality;
- Communicate in different context and media;
- Lobby (or support women to lobby) to implement changes in law, policies or organisational procedures that promote women's rights and equality;
- Communicate with men who may be actively resisting moves towards gender equality;
- Support the work of women advocating for equality and rights and
- Offer positive interventions in crisis situations.

Ms Ali said the Centre has developed the country's first-ever manual on male advocacy for women's human rights designed to train male advocates who want to be the change.

She said the Centre has trained successful male advocates in the country who are now successfully working in their respective communities to promote women's rights and eliminate all forms of violence against women.

## Thumbs Up



↑ **WE** commend Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama on his statement on violence against women in Fiji. Mr Bainimarama reaffirmed off his government's commitment to addressing the pandemic of violence against women in Fiji during a high level meeting in April. In his address at the Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnership Forum at Suva's Novotel Hotel in April, Mr Bainimarama said family violence in the Pacific was at crisis point and must be addressed as a matter of urgency. He said tackling domestic violence is at the core of the Government's efforts to improve the position and status of Fijian women generally.

↑ **WE** welcome the decision by the Methodist Church of Fiji and Rotuma for putting domestic violence on its agenda for the week-long church conference.

↑ **WE** commend High Court judge Justice Salesi Temo for his consistency on judgements passed on to convicted sex offenders.

## Thumbs Down



↓ **WE** give thumbs down to the Fiji Sun for insensitivity in reporting the story of the 9-year-old girl who was allegedly raped in Nakasi this month.

## Call for sensitivity after girl dies

**THE FIJI** Women's Crisis Centre expressed its condolences to the family of Lautoka student Navneeta Devi, who reportedly died by suicide on March 25 after she was allegedly shamed at school by a school teacher, who read out messages from her mobile phone to teachers and other students.

"Navneeta's death is tragic and if the circumstances as reported are true, it is even more tragic," said Shamima Ali, FWCC coordinator. "Children and young people are very sensitive to actual and perceived criticism, humiliation and "shaming". What may seem trivial or "fun" to an adult can be felt very deeply by a child and this can lead to tragic consequences."

"We encourage adults, and especially adults who work with children, to be much more sensitive to and considerate of young people," Ali added.

"Bullying and embarrassing children is an unfortunate tradition that still continues in our schools. We often get reports from children that they are subjected to various forms of bullying, including shaming, by adults in authority. While many teachers have shown improvement in the way in which they treat children over recent years, unfortunately, some teachers still continue old practices which cause harm to children."

"The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre calls on schools to recognise that times have changed and that technology plays a huge part in young people's lives.

"That this young women should, as alleged, have been moved to take her own life over bringing a mobile phone to a school event is simply unacceptable. Schools must find ways to deal with students without resorting to the reported shaming and bullying."

## COMMUNITY EDUCATION

From January to June this year, the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre and its branches around the country reached hundreds of people across Fiji with scores of sessions relating to domestic violence (DV), violence against women (VAW), rape, sexual harassment, child abuse, legal advice, gender, the role of the FWCC.

### FWCC (Suva and Greater Suva)

- Naitasiri EVAW Committee

- Saumakia, Naitasiri
- Naganivatu Women's Group

### Labasa Women's Crisis Centre

- Savusavu secondary school students
- Shiri Guru Nanak College
- IWD Forum on eliminating VAW in Savusavu

### Ba Women's Crisis Centre

- Ba senior citizens
- Nasolo Village
- Nasomo Village
- Bangladesh settlement
- Tagitagi Mothers Sangam

### Rakiraki Women's Crisis Centre

- IWD Open Day
- Vaidoko Women's Club



Participants engaging in discussions during the Community Education Programmes around the country