

# WATCHDOG

## Update from #CSW57

### What's at stake for women and girls?

By: Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights #CSW57 Delegation

Halfway into the second week of negotiations for the Commission on the Status of Women, many governments have spent the past days carefully scanning the latest draft compilation text that will eventually form the agreed conclusions of this 57th Session. Many hours have, and will, continue to be spent negotiating the removal of a certain word, the placement of a comma, questioning over a certain reference to a previously agreed instrument or convention.

As the negotiations progress, we are calling on all governments to remember the most pressing issue during this final week of negotiations, to remember the women whose lives, futures, health and well-being rest on the commitments within, and the implementation of the final agreed conclusions. We call on you to remember the women and girls that have risked their lives in the fight against inequality and violence, women and girls that are persecuted, stigmatized, attacked, ostracised, ridiculed, beaten and raped, simply because they question and fight inequality and defend their rights and the rights of others. Women and girls' Human Rights are violated and they are not allowed the freedom to make decisions over their own lives and bodies, to be free from stigma and discrimination, or to love how and who they want. They are simply denied the right to equal opportunity, recognition and respect.

Countless women and girls have risked and, in some cases, lost their lives due to inequality, violence and stigma, and many continue to fight for the rights of all women and girls. Women such as Pakistani girls rights and education activists, Malala Yousafzai, who was shot in the head by Taliban gunmen; and Savita Halappanavar, of Ireland, who was refused a life-saving abortion after a miscarriage, purely on religious grounds; or, Rizana Nafeek, a Sri Lankan women and domestic worker who was beheaded in Saudi Arabia for an alleged murder which took place when she was a minor.

We thank these women and girls for their strength, courage and commitment to ending inequality and violence and call on governments at the 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women to be as courageous as these women and girls in standing up for the Human Rights of all, by making concrete commitments to ending all forms of gender-based stigma, discrimination and violence.



Malala Yousafzai. Photo credit: www.guardian.co.uk



Savita Halappanavar. Photo credit: www.bbc.co.uk



Rizana Nafeek. Photo credit: ibtimes.co.uk

#### Featured Articles

**Ending the Culture of Stigma and Fear,** Savannah Mudd

**Violencia y carencia de servicios,** Jose Antonio Maldonado

**La Declaracion de Bali y la Violencia contra las Mujeres Jovenes,** Karen Molina

**Challenging Traditional Concepts of the Family,** Jakub Skzypczyk

**Las Mujeres Jovenes, Violencia de genero y vulnerabilidad al VIH,** Gabriela Garcia y Mariana Mancilla

**More than Just Biology,** Sarah Gold

**Thank you, Women & Girls Human Rights Defenders**

# Ending the Culture of Shame and Fear



Savannah Mudd (USA),  
16 years old, Ipas

Prevention,  
protection,  
and  
response  
- these  
key pillars  
have been  
reiterated  
by NGOs  
and official  
delegates  
alike in

relation to sexual violence during my time at CSW57. Prevention focuses on the empowerment of women and girls and engaging men and boys as equal partners; protection on the creation of enabling environments, safe spaces and legislation; and response on enforcing laws and supporting survivors. But what many delegates have overlooked is that it does not matter how harsh the laws are against perpetrators of sexual violence if sexual assaults are not reported in the first place. They neglect the challenges of getting survivors to speak out.

In my own country, the U.S., at least 54% - some estimate up to 85% - of rapes are not reported. But underreporting is not contained to any area or sector of the world - it is a global issue.

Many factors contribute to the staggering percentage of unreported rapes. According to RAINN - the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network - non-strangers perpetrate 73% of rapes in the U.S. Women and girls may fear accusing someone they thought they knew, especially if they're dependent on them, which is especially true for young women and adolescents who

are dependent upon parents or guardians.

What I argue as a more pervasive cause is the stigma surrounding sexual violence - women and girls are likely to be victimized not once but twice in cases of sexual assault. Women and girls who report rape are often dismissed; women and girls reporting "lesser" forms of sexual violence even more so. Women and girls are blamed for sexual assault, as families, communities, and the justice system interrogate them about their behavior and attire and accuse them of instigating the assault. Women and girls who survive sexual assault may also be burdened with an STI or an unwanted pregnancy - and to these people, the least amount of support is given as others battle over their right to basic health services.

In the US and across the world, governments and communities respond to these threats by creating a complex system of "laws" - usually unwritten social codes - to "protect" women that in truth only hinder their autonomy and equality. According to these mores, women cannot walk outside at night without a male companion; they cannot wear short skirts; they cannot get drunk when males are present; they cannot have a variety of sexual partners; they cannot even glance at a man because it might be "suggestive". If any of these "laws" are broken, the woman is at fault for the sexual assault. This vicious cycle of victim blaming helps no-one except the perpetrators, because they are exempt from their actions; it contributes to a culture of violence that endangers everyone, not just women.

For governments to be serious about prevention and response to sexual violence, they must address

these issues behind unreported rape. Women and girls do not report rape if they will not receive support after reporting, and they cannot receive full support if sexual and reproductive health and rights are not afforded to them. They must know they will be supported in the aftermath of sexual violence if they require an abortion, emergency contraception, post-exposure prophylaxis, or other medical services, even if family members try to restrict their access to such services. Women and girls are empowered when they have control over their own bodies; thus, SRHR of women and young women is critical. But to completely end sexual violence, governments must further combat the oppressive system that silences sexual violence survivors. They must work with and educate individuals and communities to erase the stigma surrounding sexual violence. Governments must fully commit to gender equality as well, because inequality naturally leads to violence if the oppressor is to remain in a position of power.

Governments and civil society, women and men, boys and girls - everyone must cooperate and condemn all forms of sexual violence. A holistic approach is required to eliminate violence against women and girls - one that includes education, deconstructs and degrades stigma, balances power between genders, and provides full access to medical services. When women and girls are no longer silenced; when men and boys no longer ignore violence; when governments ensure women's full human rights are guaranteed - then women and men will participate as equals in all aspects of society; then children will not be raised in a culture of fear; then the world will be safer for everyone.

# Violencia y carencia de servicios: una realidad a la que se enfrentan las Mujeres y las jóvenes viviendo con VIH

José Antonio Maldonado, México. 24 años, joven viviendo con VIH. Coalición de Jóvenes por la Educación y la Salud Sexual (COJESS), Red Juvenil en Respuesta al VIH - RedJu VIH

• **Violencia no permite el reconocimiento de los derechos sexuales y reproductivos de las mujeres y las jóvenes que viven con VIH.**

• **Limitado el acceso a servicios de prevención y salud reproductiva en las mujeres y las jóvenes con VIH.**

En México se tienen registrados 160, 864 casos de VIH de los cuales 138,020 son hombres y 28,844 mujeres. Si bien estas cifras reflejan que la epidemia sigue afectando a un mayor número de hombres en relación con las mujeres que viven con VIH en México, tendríamos que poner atención a un problema social que afecta actualmente a las mujeres, y me refiero a la violencia. [i]

En este sentido, se han identificado tres rasgos principales de la violencia contra las mujeres; la invisibilidad, la normalidad y su impunidad. En otras palabras muchas de las mujeres sin importar su edad están sufriendo violencia en sus hogares, familias, trabajos, escuelas y en el peor de los casos por parte de las autoridades que se niegan a ver este problema social como urgente y en el cual se debe trabajar inmediatamente para

garantizar que tanto niñas, jóvenes y mujeres adultas acceden a su derecho de vivir libre de violencia.

Pero nos hemos preguntado y puesto a pensar sobre la violencia que sufren las mujeres y las jóvenes que viven con VIH. ¿Cómo están garantizando los gobiernos locales y nacionales el ejercicio de sus Derechos Sexuales y Derechos Reproductivos de las mujeres y las jóvenes que viven con VIH? ¿Las estrategias de prevención del VIH en verdad están siendo dirigidas a prevenir las nuevas infecciones por VIH en las mujeres? Son preguntas para las cuales tendríamos que mirar a nuestro alrededor y darnos cuenta que los avances y los programas nacionales sobre VIH en México y varios países de América Latina solo están siendo dirigidos a poblaciones clave. [ii]

No tendríamos que ser expertos en salud pública para poder responder estas interrogantes, en muchas ciudades y localidades rurales de México el acceso a condones femeninos es escaso, los gobiernos no han invertido en este rubro, por ejemplo en el estado de Campeche ubicado al sureste de México; los gobiernos no han invertido recursos económicos en la compra de insumos de prevención –condones femeninos-. Este podría ser un claro ejemplo de la invisibilidad y la impunidad que existe actualmente y afecta a miles de mujeres; lo cual genera violencia contra las mujeres que viven con VIH, negando y limitando su derecho a decidir sobre su cuerpo y sexualidad.

El miedo, la inseguridad y el temor que vivimos los jóvenes con VIH ha sido resultado de toda la violencia y el estigma social que sigue imperando en nuestra actualidad. Si para mí ha sido difícil revelar mi estado serológico como un joven que vive con VIH, qué estará pasando en la vida de aquellas mujeres jóvenes que viven con VIH; las cuales son víctimas de violencia por el simple hecho de ser mujeres y

si le agregamos que ahora viven con VIH los actos de violencia se presentan en mayor escala.

Desde algunos años atrás se ha buscado que las y los jóvenes que vivimos con VIH seamos parte de la respuesta al VIH, es un reto para el cual los gobiernos deben garantizar que nuestros derechos se cumplan en su totalidad. Los discursos para la prevención de la violencia y el VIH son bueno, pero ¿lograremos que exista un acceso universal? ¿Se logrará que los servicios de salud sexual y reproductiva también ofrezcan alternativas a las mujeres y las jóvenes que viven con VIH? ¿cómo van a garantizarnos que en nuestros propios espacios –escuelas, trabajos, familias- no se nos discrimine por vivir con VIH?

Sí realmente queremos que tanto hombres como mujeres que vivimos con VIH, alcemos la voz para decir “Logremos el cero” y además de esto tengamos acceso a una vida libre de violencia, entonces los gobiernos deben comenzar a garantizar que el acceso a servicios de salud, educación y prevención sea una realidad para las mujeres y las jóvenes que viven con VIH. No podemos seguir permitiendo que las decisiones del cuerpo de la mujer estén en manos de alguien más, ellas tienen la capacidad de decidir y exigir su bienestar.

[i] (CENSIDA, 2012). Vigilancia Epidemiológica de casos de VIH/Sida en México. Registro Nacional de casos de Sida actualización preliminar hasta la semana 52 .  
[ii] (ONUSIDA 2012) Informe del Día mundial del sida 2012

## RECOMMENDED READING

**Bali Global Youth Forum  
Final Declaration**

**ACPD & YCSRR CSW 57  
Written Statement**

**YCSRR's 5 Priorities for the  
High Level Task Force on  
ICPD**



# La Declaración de Bali y la Violencia contra las Mujeres Jóvenes



Karen Molina, 26, CREARE, Guatemala

En diciembre de 2012 en Bali, Indonesia, se realizó el Foro Mundial de la Juventud – FMJ – el cual se constituyó como el espacio de expresión de las y los líderes juveniles de todo el mundo, para exponer los temas relevantes que afectan el desarrollo de las juventudes en cada uno de nuestros países. Las y los participantes del foro realizamos recomendaciones a los gobiernos para el informe final de la CIPD +20 y para la agenda posterior a 2015 de Naciones Unidas.

En el desarrollo del Foro se realizaron reflexiones en torno a los derechos humanos de las juventudes y los desafíos que enfrentamos como jóvenes para garantizar el ejercicio pleno de los mismos. Los temas abordados en las discusiones fueron: 1.) Mantenerse Saludable, 2.) Educación Integral, 3.) Familias, 4.) Derechos de las y los jóvenes y bienestar, incluida la sexualidad, y 5.) Transición al trabajo decente y liderazgo y participación efectiva.

El FMJ concluyó con una histórica declaración que refleja las inquietudes de las juventudes a nivel global, por lo que es una herramienta fundamental para las y los defensores de las juventudes en el mundo, a todos los niveles.

En el marco de la 57 sesión de la Comisión de Estado de la Mujer de las Naciones Unidas, la cual coloca en el centro de la discusión el tema de la eliminación y prevención de todas las formas de violencia contra las mujeres, es muy importante que las juventudes participemos activamente para abogar por este tema desde una perspectiva juvenil, por lo que es necesario conocer esta declaración y utilizarla como una herramienta de movilización e incidencia para el progreso de los derechos humanos de las mujeres jóvenes.

El tema de la eliminación y prevención de la violencia contra las mujeres se encuentra contenido en la declaración, especialmente en las recomendaciones sobre derechos sexuales de las juventudes:

“ Los gobiernos, junto con otros interesados, deben garantizar un ambiente libre de todas las formas de prácticas tradicionales nocivas y la violencia psicológica, física y sexual, incluida la violencia basada en el género, la violencia contra la mujer; intimidación en el hogar, escuela, lugar de trabajo y la comunidad; coerción sexual; y la mutilación genital femenina, entre otros. Es necesario apoyar a las víctimas de violencia, incluyendo asesoramiento gratuito, servicios y reparación legal. ”

Definitivamente, la Declaración de Bali, es un documento multisectorial que unifica las voces de las y los jóvenes de todo el mundo, por lo que es una herramienta importante para las y los que luchamos a favor de los derechos sexuales y derechos reproductivos de las juventudes como derechos humanos, entre ellos la eliminación y prevención de la violencia contra las mujeres jóvenes, por lo que es fundamental que la conozcamos, difundamos y utilicemos, pues en gran medida dependerá de nuestra participación activa lograr el avance de estas prioridades en cada uno de nuestros países.

# Challenging Traditional Concepts of The Family to address Violence Against Women and Girls



Jakub (Kuba) Skrzypczyk, 25, Member of the YCSRR from Poland

Violence against women should be tackled every possible way and one of the first places where prevention should start is within families.

By understanding what a family really means, we can be more effective in creating policies and legal frameworks.

It is estimated that 70% of women experience violence in their lifetime. Most of the cases occur in intimate relationships. Many cases of violence are not reported to the police and very often women don't receive comprehensive help and counselling that would meet their needs. Since most violence against women occurs in families, it is absolutely crucial to develop and sustain efficient prevention and education programmes targeting societies, especially the most vulnerable groups. Developing sustainable prevention and effective response strategies also requires us to re-examine our traditional conceptions of the family. ...cont.'d on page 5

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Specifically, we need to recognize the diversities of families, as it is a concept that is constantly evolving.

The family is a structure that is constituted by the members of societies and therefore it has to be responsive to the needs of these individuals. At the same time, it also has to include all these individuals, especially those, who are usually marginalized or disregarded. The definition of a family should not be limited to the narrow understanding and the image of a heterosexual couple with 2 children, but should reflect different experiences and realities that are represented in societies.

To highlight the need of a broader understanding and recognition of families and its meaning for young people, we may look into the Bali Global Youth Forum Declaration, where families were clearly emphasized as inclusive forms that look to be inclusive of different lifestyles and meet various needs. Different forms of families include traditional families as well as same sex and LGBTQI couples. It also includes couples without children, people who are divorced, couples who cohabitate, fostered and grandparents raising children. Moreover, it is important to emphasize that temporarily separated, displaced, migrants and child-led are also equally recognized as families. In many cases we should also see groups of close friends as families, especially among young people, who often build stronger and deeper relationships with their peers rather than with parents. By this, we should acknowledge that they also play a role in preventing violence against women. Recognizing different types of families is a celebration of diversity that enriches every society. It is also a formal admission of all the benefits and responsibilities that stand behind a formal recognition of a family as such.

To make it happen, governments must take steps towards the vision, where every individual has his or her basic rights fulfilled and is not limited by restrictive or exclusive legal systems. Legal systems need to adopt inclusive and non-discriminatory approaches to the definition of the family, where women's rights, to live free from all forms of stigma, discrimination and violence, are not violated. It has been proven that reproductive and sexual rights, including the right to be free from violence, are strongly linked to empowerment, development, education and economy. By responding to the needs of young people and protecting them from violence, especially young women, we are investing in them as our future leaders.

## Las Mujeres Jóvenes, Violencia de género y vulnerabilidad al VIH



Gabriela García y Mariana Mancilla.  
Balance AC, Mexico.



La violencia de género es un elemento que normalmente

no se asocia de inmediato como un factor de vulnerabilidad de las mujeres al VIH, sin embargo diversos estudios han identificado al menos tres mecanismos por los que la violencia incrementa la vulnerabilidad de las mujeres al VIH:

- a) El sexo forzado con una pareja que vive con VIH;
- b) La inequidad que la violencia genera para negociar comportamientos preventivos como el uso del condón;
- c) El abuso sexual ofensivo

durante la niñez, mismo que hasido asociado con comportamientos sexuales de alto riesgo, así como el uso de drogas y alcohol durante la adolescencia y la edad adulta.

La violencia estructural también es uno de los elementos que aumentan la vulnerabilidad de las mujeres y de las mujeres jóvenes, pues se relaciona con la negación de oportunidades educativas, laborales y sociales, la falta de respeto a los derechos de las mujeres y mujeres jóvenes y ...cont.'d on page 6

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la falta de acceso a servicios de salud adecuados a sus necesidades.

Durante el 2009 como parte de una investigación en el centro de México se indagó sobre la experiencia de violencia entre un grupo de mujeres mexicanas con VIH, la mayoría de las mujeres entrevistadas habían sufrido violencia de género en algún momento de su vida (80.64%). Las mujeres describieron la violencia como una barrera para ejercer su autonomía física – para decidir sobre las relaciones sexuales en general, y en específico, para el uso del condón.

Las mujeres reportaron haber vivido violencia sexual durante todos los ciclos de la vida, desde abuso sexual durante la niñez y adolescencia (generalmente por parte de familiares hombres –padres, hermanos, tíos) hasta violación por parte de la pareja.

Existe poco reconocimiento de la violencia experimentada por parte de las mismas mujeres, varias de ellas inicialmente no identificaron ningún tipo de violencia, pero durante la entrevista a profundidad contaron que eran sobrevivientes de abuso sexual durante la niñez y adolescencia, violencia física por parte de la familia y la pareja, coito forzado, chantaje y hostigamiento. La paralización de la violencia de género también fue evidente en la minimización del grado de la violencia que habían experimentado.

Es fundamental incluir la violencia de género como parte de las políticas relacionadas con la prevención del VIH

para fortalecer la equidad y la negociación de prácticas protegidas y para promover la prevención positiva. Por otro lado los servicios especializados de VIH deben incluir la identificación y atención de la violencia contra las mujeres, para determinar la orientación adecuada en los casos de mujeres con VIH que viven violencia y para sensibilizar a las mujeres que sufren violencia y resultaron VIH negativas sobre los vínculos entre la violencia de género y el VIH.

La falta de acceso a servicios adecuados para las y los jóvenes impide que aunque esta población tenga información suficiente sobre métodos anticonceptivos (El 97% de las adolescentes y jóvenes de 15 a 24 años y 98% de las jóvenes de 24 a 29 conocen por lo menos un método anticonceptivo) las mujeres no tenga las herramientas adecuadas para negociar su uso.

Los servicios de salud existentes no son accesibles para las mujeres jóvenes ya que se enfrentan a serios obstáculos para acceder a ellos , incluyendo el temor de que su privacidad no sea respetada; asimismo, experimentan vergüenza, los servicios les quedan lejos, y hay proveedores de servicios de salud que se niegan a proporcionarles servicios.

Es por eso que es necesario contar con servicios amigables para adolescentes y jóvenes, es decir, adecuados a las necesidades de las y los jóvenes, los cuales sean asequibles, cuenten con horarios accesibles para nosotras/os, con personal capacitado y sensibilizado para atender sobre todo las necesidades de las mujeres jóvenes, donde exista un

ambiente de confidencialidad y se tengan herramientas para poder identificar la violencia desde temprana edad, además de información y talleres para saber como identificarla y prevenirla.

[1] Maman, S., Campbell, J., Sweat, M. D., Gielen, A.C. (2000). The intersections of HIV and violence: directions for future research and interventions. *Social Science & Medicine*, 50(4), 459-478.

[2] Campbell, J. C., Baty, M. L., Ghandour, R. M., Stockman, J. K., Francisco, L., & Wagman, J. (2008). The intersection of intimate partner violence against women and HIV/AIDS: a review. *International Journal of Injury Control and Safety Promotion*, 13(4), 221-231.

[3] Kendall, T., y López-Uribe, E. (2010). Improving the HIV response for women in Latin America: Barriers to integrated advocacy for sexual and reproductive Elath and Rights. *Global Health Governance* 4(1)

[4] ENADID 2009.

## MUCH More Than Biology

Sarah Gold. *International Women's Health Coalition*

At this year's Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the topic of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) has emerged as a priority concern for adolescents and young people. Having spent last year working with Restless Development's Youth Empowerment Programme in rural Uganda, I am intimately aware of the empowering role that CSE can play, particularly for girls. Through activities like condom demonstrations and gender dialogues, CSE equips young people with technical

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# MUCH More Than *Biology*, cont.'d

...cont.'d from page 6  
information, protective sexual behaviors, and the skills and confidence to negotiate condom use and refuse unwanted sex.

## *The Role of CSE in Ending Violence Against Women and Girls*

We may all agree that CSE is a critical intervention, but as advocates we should know how to call upon the existing evidence to effectively define and sell CSE, particularly in the context of CSW57's priority theme: Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls. CSE plays a critical role in curbing violence against women and girls by empowering young people to interrogate and challenge harmful gender norms. Transforming the attitudes about gender that validate violent practices such as early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation, marital rape, and intimate partner violence is the essence of primary prevention. Even in places like my small rural village in Uganda, where engaging in discussions about politically charged issues like abortion or sexual orientation can be a challenge, CSE programs that challenge discriminatory attitudes about gender can still yield positive outcomes—and can be an entry point to challenge harmful norms, attitudes, and practices.

When evaluated as a health intervention, the evidence shows that CSE must enable young people to critically reflect on gender and gender norms in order to yield positive health

outcomes such as reductions in sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies. But in order to capture the transformative effects that CSE can have with respect to attitudes and behavior, it should not exclusively be evaluated through biomedical indicators. Rights-based and gender-focused CSE curricula can curb violence by addressing the underlying gender norms and attitudes that permit and promote violence against women and girls. Positive teaching outcomes have also been demonstrated more broadly, as the participatory methods central to CSE curricula equip teachers with new skills that can be translated into other subject areas.

In addition to explicitly addressing gender and power while also mainstreaming discussions of gender equality throughout curricula, CSE must be thorough, scientifically sound, and culturally appropriate. CSE programs should start early and take place in safe and healthy learning environments, and facilitators should use participatory teaching methods to ensure young people take ownership of their learning. When young people are educated about effective condom use alongside human rights, gender equality, and the role of power in relationships, we are not only equipped with the tools to negotiate our own healthy relationships, but we are also able to challenge, educate, influence, and become power-brokers in our communities.

## Key Outcomes from the 45th Session of the Commission on Population and Development:

We demand that **all practices that violate the human rights of girls such as early and forced marriage, violence, and female genital mutilation, be eliminated.** Governments must create laws and programs that help to ensure that we are not harmed even in situations of conflict, natural disaster and humanitarian emergencies. [OP8, OP9, OP12]

We are able to and have the **right to make free and informed choices about our sexuality and reproduction,** particularly when we have access to comprehensive education on human sexuality, access to sexual and reproductive health care and services that do not discriminate against us and respect our confidentiality, rights, and gender equality. [OP26]

Governments must **remove obstacles that affect our lives such as discrimination, violence, stigma and inequality.** [OP32]



youth coalition





# Thank you, Women and Girls' Human Rights Defenders Worldwide

**Missing and Murdered Women of Ciudad Juarez and the Women That Continue to Seek Justice, Mexico.** Hundreds of young women who are missing or murdered since 1993 and the women that continue to search for missing women, and seek justice for the high number of women murdered there in past 20 years.



Photo credit: www.womensviewsonnews.org

**Delhi Rape Victim and Sexual Violence Protesters of India.** 23 year old woman who died after violent rape and attack on way home in Munirka, Delhi. Women and men alike took to the streets to call for an end to the high incidence of sexual abuse and violence towards women in the country.



Photo credit: www.telegraph.co.uk

**Joan Sandy Achieng and LGBT Rights activists of Kenya** Kenyan woman who committed suicide after parents held her hostage and married off to older man after discovering she was a lesbian. African LGBT organizations continue to call for the rights of LGBT people to be upheld and to end violence and discrimination against them.



Photo credit: www.bet.com

**Kapari Leniata, Papua New Guinea.** 20 year old woman accused of sorcery, tortured and burned alive in Papua New Guinea. Women in the region continue to fight for the end of violence against women and girls, including related to harmful traditional and cultural practices.



Photo credit: www.tumblr.com

**Women Human Rights Defenders, Cairo.** Increasing numbers of cases of sexual assault against women in Egypt, and the women that are fighting to empower women to protect themselves and for prevention of violence and sexual abuse.



Photo credit: www.hereandnow.wbur.org

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