



SPOTLIGHT ON PUBLICATIONS: GENDER VIOLENCE IN LATIN AMERICA



This Spotlight presents some of the most important publications documenting the various manifestations of violence against women in Latin America. In particular, these publications provide an overview of gender violence in different spheres (domestic, urban, etc.), the impacts of violence on women's lives, and different measures adopted by Latin American countries to prevent, address and eradicate violence against women. These publications will be useful for practitioners, researchers and experts from other regions interested in learning about how Latin American countries understand and tackle violence against women.

OVERVIEW OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA

► [Addressing Gender-Based Violence in the Latin America and Caribbean Region: A Critical Review of Interventions](#)

Violence against women is a common problem across Latin American and the Caribbean where it is having serious impacts on the economy, social relations and women's well-being. This document presents an overview of the most common forms of gender-based violence in Latin America, such as intimate partner and sexual violence, and provides an analysis of interventions in four key areas - education, health, justice, and victim support services. The authors also identify good practices in law and public policy, institutional reform, community-level approaches, and strategies aimed at influencing individual behaviour change. Finally, the authors provide recommendations for adopting broader policy measures aimed at eradicating gender violence by reducing gender inequality and strengthening women's empowerment.

Full citation: Ellsberg, M., Morrison, A. 2004. *Addressing Gender-Based Violence in the Latin America and Caribbean Region: A Critical Review of Interventions*. World Bank and PATH. Washington, DC.



► [Causal Estimates of the Intangible Costs of Violence Against Women in Latin America and the Caribbean](#)

This report reflects on the causes of violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean and provides estimates of the costs of impacts on typically less-well understood areas, such as reproductive health, employment and family welfare. Using data from Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Honduras and Peru, this document demonstrates a strong causal relationship between physical violence and negative consequences on women's health, personal relationships, child-raising, and their ability to participate in labour markets.

Full citation: Agüero, J. 2012. *Causal Estimates of the Intangible Costs of Violence Against Women in Latin America and the Caribbean*. University of California, Riverside.

► [Enhancing Capacities to Eradicate Violence Against Women](#)

The main objective of this document is to develop an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of different methodologies for measuring and documenting violence against women. This report presents the outcomes of a two-year inter-regional project launched by the United Nations and the [Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean](#) to share experiences of initiatives aimed at building capacity in data collection, creation of indicators and dissemination strategies. Latin American countries, including Ecuador, Guatemala and Mexico, participated in this project by conducting surveys on physical, intimate and sexual violence and building databases of key indicators on violence against women.

Full citation: The United Nations Regional Commissions. 2013. *Enhancing Capacities to Eradicate Violence Against Women*. UN Regional Commissions, Geneva.

► [Intersecting Inequalities. A Review of Feminist Theories and Debates on Violence Against Women and Poverty in Latin America](#)

Covering some of the main approaches to poverty and gender violence in Latin America, the author, Patricia Muñoz, provides a review of the different political and economic causes of inequality and women's rights violations in the Latin America region, with a particular focus on the material and symbolic subjugation of women in Central American countries. Muñoz asserts that an intersectional approach provides the appropriate framework for understanding the complex interconnections between the multiple and structural causes of oppression and violence against women and their increasing impoverishment, particularly within a neo-liberal context.

Full citation: Muñoz, P. 2010. *Intersecting Inequalities. A Review of Feminist Theories and Debates on Violence Against Women and Poverty in Latin America*. Central America Women's Network, London.

► [Second Hemispheric Report on the Implementation of the Belém Do Pará Convention](#)

This second report from the Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI) presents an assessment of Latin American and Caribbean country compliance with obligations ratified in the [Belém Do Pará Convention](#), a regional agreement aimed at eradicating violence against women. The report draws on various sources of information, including responses by 28 national government authorities to a MESECVI questionnaire, comments and observations of 21 states on preliminary country reports compiled by MESECVI and on 8 reports produced by civil society



organisations belonging to the Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defence of Women's Rights (CLADEM). In doing so, the publication summarises achievements and on-going challenges relating to state legislation, national policy, access to justice, specialised services, budgeting, and information and statistics.

Full citation: Organization of American States - Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém Do Pará Convention. 2012. *Second Hemispheric Report on the Implementation of the Belém Do Pará Convention*. OAS-MESECVI, Washington, DC.

► [Violence Against Women in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Comparative Analysis of Population-based Data from 12 Countries](#)

Based on an assessment of existing demographic and health surveys (DHS) and reproductive health surveys (RHS) carried out in Bolivia, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Peru between 2003 and 2009, this report provides a comparative analysis of the circumstances, risks and consequences of violence against women in the region. The authors highlight regional trends in relation to the forms of violence committed against women, predominant characteristics amongst aggressors, social-cultural factors and impacts on women's rights. Finally, the report sets out recommendations for improving national surveys and designing public policies to assist victims and prevent violence.

Full citation: Bott, S., Guedes, A., Goodwin, M., Mendoza, J. A. 2012. *Violence Against Women in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Comparative Analysis of Population-based Data from 12 Countries*. Pan American Health Organization, Washington, DC.

STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING GENDER VIOLENCE IN URBAN CONTEXTS

► [En-Gendering the Police: Women's Police Stations and Feminism in São Paulo](#)

This publication provides an interesting analysis of the relationship between the police, a public institution in charge of citizen security, and the feminist movement. In particular, the author focuses on the experience of the first women's police station in Latin America created in São Paulo, Brazil, and the different positions assumed by this institution with regards to violence against women. In doing so, she argues that relations between police and women are often influenced by cultural factors, such as the patriarchy, which tend to reinforce stereotypical views and affect the credibility of police investigations into cases of gender violence. This document will be useful to readers interested in understanding the viability of implementing a gender-based agenda within public institutions through the creation of new agencies.

Full citation: MacDowell, C. 2004. En-Gendering the Police: Women's Police Stations and Feminism In São Paulo. In: *Latin America Research Review* 39 (3) 29-55.

► [Public Spaces, Citizen Safety and Gender-Based Violence: Reflections Emerging from Debates in Latin America in 2006–2007](#)

Latin American sociologist and feminist leader Virginia Vargas presents this publication as part of the United Nations Development Fund for Women's Regional Programme '[Cities Without Violence Against Women](#)'. Focusing on how women experience violence in urban spaces, the author proposes strategies for eradicating gender-based violence based on



principles of human rights and democracy. By establishing the conceptual relationship between public spaces, citizen safety and violence against women, Vargas emphasises the importance of the participation of institutional and social actors in the implementation of a democratic agenda that provides greater protection to women's rights.

Full citation: Vargas, V. 2007. *Public Spaces, Citizen Safety and Gender-Based Violence: Reflections Emerging from Debates in Latin America in 2006–2007*. United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), Brasilia.

► [Women in the City: On Violence and Rights](#)

The articles in this publication are adaptations of presentations given at the Second International Seminar of the Regional Programme 'Cities Without Violence Against Women, Safe Cities for All', held in Buenos Aires in 2008. The first half of the publication provides reflections on the ways in which urban violence is experienced differently by men and women in Latin American cities, arguing that the public and private characteristics of urban environments tend to exacerbate discrimination and violence against women. In Brazil, for example, women face a higher risk of sexual harassment in dilapidated urban areas that have emerged in socially segregated cities. In the second part of the publication, the articles focus on a range of strategies, such as urban planning and policies for crime and violence, aimed at responding to the particular needs of women living in cities.

Full citation: Falú, A. 2009. *Women in the City: On Violence and Rights*. Women and Habitat Network of Latin America/Ediciones SUR, Santiago.

► [Women's Police Stations in Latin America: An Entry Point for Stopping Violence and Gaining Access to Justice](#)

An innovative response to gender violence in some Latin American countries such as Brazil, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Peru is the creation of women's police stations which aim to provide effective access to justice, as well as a variety of support services for victims. This study provides a comparative analysis of the experiences of women who have visited women's police stations in Latin American countries, as well as an evaluation of the effectiveness of these mechanisms. Divided into two parts, the first half of this publication presents an overview of violence against women in the region, as well as the main features of women's police stations. The second part of the document provides an assessment of different country case studies, drawing out key lessons and recommendations for each case. One important conclusion is that women's police stations have been helpful in making violence against women more visible, even where they have not driven greater improvements in access to justice.

Full citation: Jubb, N., Camacho, G., D'Angelo, A., Hernández, K., Macassi, I., Meléndez, L., Molina, Y., Pasinato, W., Redrobán, V., Rosas, C. and Yáñez, G. 2010. *Women's Police Stations in Latin America. An Entry Point for Stopping Violence and Gaining Access to Justice*. Centre for Planning and Social Studies, Quito.



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN LATIN AMERICA

▶ [A Place in the World. The Right to Adequate Housing as an Essential Element of a Life Free from Domestic Violence](#)

Produced by the [Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions](#), this report presents first-hand evidence of the impacts of domestic violence on women's lives in Argentina, Brazil and Colombia. The authors argue that the lack of housing and access to safe shelters represents the main obstacle for victims to escape abusive situations. They propose the creation of a network of private and public shelters and safe-housing as an important first step to supporting women in Latin America. To this effect, governments must adopt comprehensive policies that guarantee women the right to live in peace and dignity, which includes ensuring access to safe-housing and the effective punishment of abusers.

Full citation: Gómez, M., Ricciardi, M.V. 2010. *A Place in the World. The Right to Adequate Housing as an Essential Element of a Life Free from Domestic Violence*. Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions, Geneva.

▶ [From Adopting to Implementing Women's Human Rights: Domestic Violence Policy in Latin America](#)

Adopting legislation to address domestic violence has become a global trend among states that have shown real commitment to eradicating this phenomenon. In Latin America, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) such as feminist and human rights groups have contributed to this process by calling on governments to enact laws that deal with gender-based violence in a comprehensive manner. This report offers an interesting analysis of domestic violence policies implemented in Latin American countries, such as Chile and Argentina, including an assessment of enabling factors. The author argues that the development of special mechanisms in charge of coordinating and monitoring gender policies, in combination with a centralised political structure and bureaucratic capacity for making reforms operable, are key to the successful implementation of domestic violence policy.

Full citation: Franceschet, S. 2008. *From Adopting to Implementing Women's Human Rights: Domestic Violence Policy in Latin America*. University of Calgary, Calgary.

▶ [Handbook for Legislation on Violence Against Women](#)

Violence against women has become an urgent issue on the public agenda in Latin America. International and regional institutions, along with CSOs, are undertaking research to try to develop a better understanding of the problem and propose effective responses. In recognition of these efforts, the United Nations has published this compilation of international and regional legal and policy frameworks which attempt to address violence against women. This includes a comparative analysis between different laws and jurisprudence in Latin America, as well as from other regions. The handbook also provides an interesting analysis of the key features of domestic frameworks, such as the definition of violence, as well as special measures for victim support, investigation, prosecution and monitoring. Finally, it sets out recommendations for decision-makers and legislators for drafting this kind of legislation.

Full citation: United Nations. 2009. *Handbook for Legislation on Violence Against Women*. United Nations, New York.



► [Violence Against Women in Couples: Latin America and the Caribbean. A Proposal for Measuring its Incidence and Trends](#)

The Statistical Conference of the Americas was organised in 2000 to strengthen collaborations between national agencies for the advancement of women and between national statistics offices for building reliable databases on the magnitude of violence against women in the region. This document is a follow-up to that conference and provides a synthesis of different initiatives from across Latin America and the Caribbean. It also provides a diagnostic of the magnitude of violence against women in couples in recent years and stresses the challenges still to be overcome in adapting and improving data collection tools for the production of disaggregated indicators. Finally, the document sets out recommendations for implementing public policies to support these processes.

Full citation: Almerás, D., Bravo, R., Milosavljevic, V., Montaña, S., Rico, M. N. 2004. *Violence Against Women in Couples: Latin America and the Caribbean. A Proposal for Measuring its Incidence and Trends*. ECLAC, Santiago.

IMPROVING WOMEN'S ACCESS TO JUSTICE

► [Legal Standards Related to Gender Equality and Women's Rights in the Inter-American System: Development and Application](#)

This report by the Rapporteur on the Rights of Women, Luz Patricia Mejía Guerrero, provides a regional overview of the influence and impact of legal standards set by the Inter-American System in relation to the protection and defence of gender equality and women's rights. Based on surveys carried out amongst country members of the Organization of American States, CSOs, academics and government institutions, the author evaluates country progress towards building legal frameworks and implementing policy measures for addressing gender violence and discrimination against women in national courts. The report includes case study examples from judgements across the region which have advanced gender equality and women's rights, and analyses the application of legal standards by domestic courts.

Full citation: Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. 2011. *Legal Standards Related to Gender Equality and Women's Rights in the Inter-American System: Development and Application*. Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Washington, DC.

► [State Violence Against Detained Women in Mexico](#)

Presented to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), this report represents a collaborative effort by the Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights (CLADEM), the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT), and the Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Human Rights Center (Center Prodh) - all leading human rights organisations in Mexico. It describes how women's rights were abused by agents of the Mexican state in San Salvador Atenco, during a conflict between municipal authorities and flower vendors belonging to the social movement called *Frente de Pueblos de Defensa de la Tierra* (United Peoples' Front in Defence of Lands) who were impeded from working in the main square. Confrontations between both groups escalated and resulted in police repression. In particular, this publication focuses on how sexual violence was used as a method to torture and intimidate women, as well as the obstacles faced by these women in gaining access to justice. Finally, the document sets out various recommendations that call on the Mexican state to assume full responsibility and provide adequate reparation measures to victims.

Full citation: CEDAW. 2006. *State Violence Against Detained Women in Mexico: The San Salvador Atenco Case*. Center Prodh & CLADEM, Mexico City.



► [The Path to Gender Justice in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights](#)

This publication shows how regional courts in Latin America are improving access to justice and, in turn, helping safeguard women's rights across the region. Historically, cases involving gender issues and violations of women's rights were rarely submitted before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Furthermore, many judges lacked the awareness and capacity for interpreting the law from a gender perspective. However, increasing violence and discrimination against women in Latin America has led the Inter-American Court to renew its commitment to protecting women's rights, with particular reference to the Convention of Belem Do Para. Based on this analysis, the author of this report proposes a strategy for integrating a gender approach into the Inter-American Human Rights System. This paper won the Audre Rapoport Prize for Scholarship on Gender and Human Rights from the University of Texas School of Law in 2007.

Full citation: Palacios Zuloaga, P. 2007. *The Path to Gender Justice in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights*. University of Texas School of Law, Austin.

► [Violence Against Women by Private Actors: The Inter-American Court's Judgement in the Case of Gonzalez *et al.* \(Cotton Field\) v. Mexico](#)

This publication provides an analysis of the Inter-American Court ruling in the landmark 'Cotton Field' case in Mexico in which the government was found to have violated human rights laws by failing to adequately investigate and prosecute the murders of three young women. Reflecting on the relevance and appropriateness of the reparations ordered by the court, the author concludes that the judgment has helped make the problem of violence against women in the region more visible and has also set important precedents for governments to follow in terms of state responsibility for preventing, addressing and eradicating gender violence.

Full citation: Tiroch, K. 2010. Violence Against Women by Private Actors: The Inter-American Court's Judgement in the Case of Gonzalez *et al.* (Cotton Field) v. Mexico. In: von Bogdandy, A., Wolfrum, R. (eds.). 2010. *Max Planck Yearbook of United Nations Law* 14 371-408.

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To learn more about gender and violence in Latin America, read the [ELLA Guide on Gender-based Violence](#), which has a full list of the knowledge materials on this theme. To learn more about other ELLA development issues, browse other [ELLA Themes](#).



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