

# *Latin America and the Caribbean, One of the World's Most Dangerous Regions for Women*

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Despite advances in the past few years in terms of legislation to counter violence against women, Latin America and the Caribbean continues to be one of the most dangerous regions in the world for women due to the high rate of violence against their sex within and outside their homes, according to data compiled by the United Nations and disclosed a few hours ago.

This chronic problem claims a high toll of mortal victims every year and extended suffering among the feminine population.

In some areas, such as the Northern Triangle of Central America, covering the territories of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, as well as all of Mexico, the murder of women just because they are women has reached intolerable levels.

Last year, twenty six, eighteen hundred and thirty one women were murdered just because they were women, one of the highest such criminal rates in the whole world, according to statements by Lara Blanco, the United Nations Assistant Regional Director for Women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

She stressed that in Honduras, the murder of women has skyrocketed to ten slayings for every one hundred thousand citizens.

Precisely in that Central American nation presidential elections were held this past Sunday, and women's organizations have severely criticized and deplored the fact that the main Presidential candidates did not include any reference in their Government programs to gender equality or gender violence, a major problem in that country.

The United Nations document notes that strong patriarchal and macho patterns persist in Honduran society, which gives rise to gender violence despite existing gender equality and equal opportunities laws.

In Mexico, for instance, it is still normal for a woman to have to request permission from her husband in order to accept a job outside the household, and the violation of this rule might bring upon her a hostile, aggressive reaction.

The situation in Mexico is further endangered by the undeclared war between the State and organized crime organizations, many of these dealing with the traffic of human beings and drugs.

Furthermore, this twenty fifth of November the world celebrated the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, on the occasion in which many institutions and personalities all over the world raised their voices against this negative reality, whose elimination is an important issue in the Millennium Development Goals, to be met by the year twenty thirty.

According to United Nations figures, thirty five percent of the world's women have been the victims of physical or sexual violence.

This intolerably high rate has led to the situation being recognized as a public health problem and as a challenge to the area's authorities, who must adopt effective actions, even beyond existing legislation, to guarantee the lives and security of a vulnerable sector, that of women, representing one half or more of the world's population.

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