

Thousands march across Australia demanding justice for women

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Protesters gathered outside parliament in Canberra and towns and cities across Australia to demand justice for women [Mick Tsikas/AAP Image via Reuters]

Canberra, March 15 (RHC)-- Tens of thousands of people have marched in protest across Australia amid widespread shock at allegations of sexual misconduct in the country's federal parliament and growing concern that the legal system is failing women who are victims of abuse and violence.

People took to the streets on Monday not only in the capital Canberra but other towns and major cities including Sydney and Melbourne. In recent weeks, former parliamentary staff member Brittany Higgins has alleged that she was raped by an MP, while historical rape allegations against Australia's attorney general, Christian Porter, have also resurfaced.

Allegations have also been laid by six women against a senior parliamentary aide Frank Zumbo, drawing attention to what many critics say is a toxic culture of masculinity within the nation's federal parliament.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison continues to refuse to hold an independent inquiry into the allegations against Porter, and on Monday also refused to meet protesters on the parliament's lawn in Canberra.

While Morrison instead invited protest leaders inside to discuss the issue, the move was viewed as yet another example of the secretive and hidden nature of the government's dealings with allegations of sexual assault within the corridors of power.

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