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Violence against women in the Andean region

March - April, 2011



Report on violence against women in the Andean region: March-April 2022

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1. Summary

This report presents the general situation of violence against women in the Andean region during the months of March and April 2022. In order to give an account of the facts, first of all, an account is made of the events that occurred in the referred period, with special emphasis on the most serious cases of violence (femicides) monitored by the Commission of the Universidad de Los Andes against Gender Violence (ULA Women's Commission), to then total those perpetrated during 2022. Likewise, reference is made to the performance of the Public Prosecutor's Office in cases of gender violence and the impact of its actions on the victims' access to justice. Secondly, the protests that took place during the study period are presented in order to show both the problematic areas shown in them, as well as the lack of response from the State. Finally, reference is made to a female empowerment activity carried out by the ULA Women's Commission and the Human Rights Observatory of the University of the Andes (ODH-ULA) with women from the Mucuy sector, Santos Marquina municipality, Merida state, and the results of a survey on sexual/reproductive health and gender violence, applied to this group of women.

2. Methodology

The Commission of the Universidad de Los Andes against Gender Violence (Comisión ULA Mujer) and the Human Rights Observatory of the Universidad de Los Andes (ODH-ULA) have gathered information, based on documentary and testimonial research, on facts associated with women's human rights in the states of Mérida, Táchira and Trujillo.

The collection of information is carried out through a combination of techniques such as structured interviews and documentary observation.

Through the semi-structured interview, direct communication with lawyers, activists and defenders of women's human rights and women who have a life and career in political spaces is used. During the interview, questions about these or new topics of interest are incorporated to validate the information to be presented in the report.

Through documentary observation, data is collected from secondary sources, regional media publications, social network accounts of security forces and personal accounts of journalists covering events in the Andean region. All available material is reviewed and analyzed and then a selective reading of the sources is carried out and the most important aspects related to the patterns to be investigated are identified.

The ULA Women's Commission and the ODH-ULA emphasize that this documentation includes only those cases that are made public, knowing that many women do not denounce their aggressors and that others, who do, do not receive timely and adequate attention from the competent state agencies.

3. Violence against women in the Andean region. March-April 2022

In the period from March 1 to April 30, 2022, the ULA Women's Commission and the ODH-ULA registered 35 cases of gender violence: 17 cases in the state of Merida, 12 cases in the state of Tachira and 6 cases in the state of Trujillo. Every 42 hours an act of gender-based violence (GBV) occurs in the Andean region.

In spite of the scarce information in the digital media on the facts of GBV, in the 35 cases registered, 9 types of violence were identified out of the 21 typified in the Organic Law on the Right of Women to a Life Free of Violence: threats, psychological violence, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, labor violence, family violence, femicide (consummated or in degree of frustration), and patrimonial and economic violence.

40% of the monitored cases of GBV involve particularly vulnerable victims such as elderly women^{1, 2, 3}, minors^{4, 5, 6}, and migrant women.

Femicide is the most extreme form of gender-based violence: during the months of March and April 2020, 1 case of femicide and 1 case of frustrated femicide were recorded, which are described below:

(a) Femicide case:

- On March 28, 2022, Mariela Josefina Delgado Rivas, 46 years old, was murdered by her partner Néstor Javier Escobar León, 64 years old, after an argument. Escobar took his own life after committing the act, which occurred in the municipality of Fernández Feo, Táchira state⁷. Their son found the victim still alive, but she arrived without vital signs at the hospital where she was taken for treatment⁸.

b) Case of frustrated femicide:

- On March 25, 2022, a woman was sexually abused by 5 men, who also tried to take her life by hitting her in the head with a stone, when she was trying to cross a trail in the San

1 [@cactus24noticias] (March 19, 2022). Politáchira officials detained a man after being alerted about a possible sexual abuse attempt against an 89-year-old woman. [Instagram]

https://www.instagram.com/p/CbSy7hnuDHL/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

2 [@seguridad_buenvivir_mrd] (April 7, 2022). Cicpc captured a man for beating his mother in La Milagrosa. A 33-year-old man was apprehended for beating his mother with a blunt object in the city of Merida. The procedure was made by officials ...[Instagram]

https://www.instagram.com/p/CcCTeSQsNcy/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

3 [@seguridad_buenvivir_mrd] (April 25, 2022). Officers attached to the Cuadrante de Paz number 4 of the Police Coordination Center (CCP) Nueva Bolivia of Polimérica apprehended a 37-year-old man for assaulting his mother and for the crime of illegal possession of a firearm[Instagram]

https://www.instagram.com/p/CcylcuGu9Gc/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

4 [@jordin_morales] (April 7, 2022). A 33-year-old businessman was apprehended for allegedly raping a 14-year-old teenage girl in Ejido City. [Instagram]

https://www.instagram.com/p/CbylTKtrfIZ/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

5 [@jseguridad_buenvivir_mrd] (Apr 2, 2022). Polimérica arrested an alleged rapist in Ejido. Officers attached to Quadrant number 6 of the Police Coordination Center (CCP) Ejido of Polimérica apprehended a 27-year-old man for allegedly raping a 19-year-old girl [Instagram]

https://www.instagram.com/p/Cb2RR5lOjyZ/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

6 [@jordin_morales] (April 8, 2022). #Attention Polimérica arrested a vigilante for groping a girl in #Mérida. A 52-year-old vigilante was apprehended for allegedly groping an 8-year-old girl in the city of Mérida. [Instagram]

https://www.instagram.com/p/CcF8aOGuBDW/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

7 Rodríguez, M. (April 29, 2022). Man commits femicide against his partner in El Piñal. El Pitazo.

<https://epthelinkdos.tk/los-andes/tachira-hombre-comete-femicidio-contra-su-pareja-en-el-pinal/>

8 Idem

Antonio sector, Bolivar municipality, Tachira state, to go to Colombia⁹. This case represents one of the many that are not documented when violence against women in vulnerable situations occurs.

These types of acts that constitute violence against women are of concern, especially those perpetrated in municipalities near the border areas when women are kidnapped and then murdered, forced in some cases to expose themselves to dangerous situations due to the need to bring sustenance to their homes as a result of the complex humanitarian crisis that Venezuela is currently suffering.

During January 1 to April 30, 2022, this Commission and the ODH-ULA have registered 3 cases of femicides in the Andean region: 2 in the state of Merida, 1 in Tachira. In addition, 2 cases of femicide in degree of frustration, both in the state of Táchira.

3.1 Access to justice and performance of the bodies receiving complaints

The possibility of realizing all human rights rests on the right to justice¹⁰. Operators of justice, such as judges and prosecutors of the Public Prosecutor's Office, have the obligation to guarantee the realization of the rights that are inherent to people.

Notwithstanding the above, in cases of gender violence, it has been seen that justice operators such as prosecutors of the Public Prosecutor's Office do not respond to cases with the required promptness, thus contravening, in this specific case, Article 285 of the National Constitution, which establishes their obligation to guarantee procedural celerity and the correct administration of justice¹¹.

The above is also contrary to Article 2 of the Law of Partial Reform to the Organic Law on the Right of Women to a Life Free of Violence, which establishes that its purpose is to

9 (March 30, 2022). A woman is raped and attempted to be killed at the Colombian-Venezuelan border. La Verdad. <http://www.laverdad.com/sucesos/192714-violan-e-intentan-matar-a-una-mujer-en-la-frontera-colombo-venezolana.html>

10 Observatorio de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad de Los Andes (ODH-ULA) (2018). Human rights situation and humanitarian emergency in Venezuela with special reference to the Andean region. January-September 2018. P. 10. <https://www.uladdhh.org.ve/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Informe-Situaci%C3%B3n-de-los-Derechos-humanos-y-emergencia-humanitaria-en-Venezuela-con-especial-atenci%C3%B3n-a-la-regi%C3%B3n-andina.-Enero-septiembre-2018-Descargar.pdf>

11 2. To guarantee the speed and proper functioning of the administration of justice, prior trial and due process.

guarantee the exercise and expeditious, transparent and effective access to their human rights before the organs of justice¹².

The cases described below show this and serious situations on which the State has had to act, such as, for example, the incapacity of officials whose obligation is supposed to protect the rights of the victims.

In the state of Trujillo, Jorgeanny Avila requested a restraining order and procedural celerity in the case of physical violence, consisting of bruises and blows to the face, caused to her daughter by her biological father, and called on the Venezuelan justice system and the Public Prosecutor's Office, since she has filed a complaint through the regular channels, but has not been heard and the father of her daughter moves to transit with impunity inside and outside the country. The lady needs the return of tranquility to her life and to achieve her psychological balance and that of her children¹³.

On April 5, 2022, in the state of Táchira, Luis Eduardo Durán, father of Jennifer Durán, murdered by her ex-partner on December 16, 2015, denounced that the murderer of his daughter was convicted, but is a fugitive from justice in another country¹⁴. Her femicide is Gaudis José Mejía Carillo¹⁵. Jennifer's father reported that the competent agencies have informed him that there is an arrest warrant by the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol), however, he believes that the warrant has not been activated¹⁶.

Meanwhile, in the State of Merida, in the case of Mairobi Tahiri Villareal Díaz, young woman murdered by her ex-partner on January 1, 2022¹⁷, the lawyer Iván Toro, Coordinator of the Legal Department of ODH-ULA (one of the proxies of the victims by extension,) reported that on April 12, 2022, for the second time the judge annulled the indictment against those involved in the femicide, because the 20th Prosecutor's Office with competence in the defense of women's rights did not carry out the investigation. It is worth mentioning that on March 17, 2022, the control judge had already granted a 10-day period for Prosecutor's Office 20 to proceed to file it again due to substantive defects, the lack of

12 Official Gazette of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela 6,667 of December 16, 2021.

13 [@palpitartrujillano] (Mar. 14, 2022) Enough abuse! Mother claims procedural celerity to protect the life of her daughter abused by her biological father. In order to protect the integrity of her daughter, Jorgeanny Ávila, a citizen, approached the Palpitar Trujillano headquarters @palpitartrujillano raising her ... [Instagram] https://www.instagram.com/tv/CbGWaZVrIoD/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

14 Durán, F. (April 6, 2022). "No se ha capturado al asesino de mi hija" (My daughter's murderer has not been caught). La Nación Web. <https://lanacionweb.com/regional/no-se-ha-capturado-al-asesino-de-mi-hija/>

15 (July 26, 2019). Four years without capturing the murderer of Yessica Durán López. La Nación Web. <https://lanacionweb.com/regional/cuatro-anos-sin-capturar-al-asesino-de-yessica-duran-lopez/>

16 Durán, F. (April 6, 2022). "No se ha capturado al asesino de mi hija" (My daughter's murderer has not been caught). Ob. cit.

17 Rodríguez, A. (January 5, 2022). Mairoby Villarreal was 12 years old when she met the man who murdered her in Mérida. El Cooperante. <https://elcooperante.com/mairoby-villareal-tenia-12-anos-cuando-conocio-al-hombre-que-la-asesino-en-merida/>

indication of the applicable norm and the adequacy of the conduct of the accused to the crime foreseen in the norms¹⁸.

Also, according to said attorney, the prosecutors with competence in crimes against gender violence were removed from their positions, but the prosecutor now assigned has under his responsibility another office located in another sector of the city of Merida, a fact that hinders the control of his functions, therefore, the administrative staff is the one who attends and processes the requirements of the defense¹⁹.

In the case of Leidy Carolina Andrade Peña, young woman murdered on June 11, 2021, in Tovar, Merida state, at the end of March of this year, her brother informed the ODH-ULA that the process was significantly delayed due to the change of the prosecutor, who requested time to prepare and know the case well. In the month of March 2022, the delay between hearings, lack of availability of rooms and continuous deferrals, characterized the whole process for the realization of the hearings of conclusions. It was only last April 5, 2022, that Nerkys Ramón Guillén Contreras was sentenced to 20 years in prison for the crime of simple femicide as a necessary accomplice²⁰. According to the victim's brother, 10 exhausting months elapsed between the investigation and the trial.

In accordance with the above and according to what the legal team of the ODH-ULA has also pointed out, the most worrisome thing is the entry of officials without the necessary suitability or capacity to perform their duties. In the Municipality of Libertador, Merida state, prosecutors assigned to Prosecutor's Office 20 of the Public Prosecutor's Office, do not know how to conduct a criminal investigation in this type of cases, to the point of indicating that in these cases the "post mortem psychiatric examination" is not carried out, a test contemplated in the Latin American Model Protocol for the investigation of violent deaths of women for gender reasons (femicide/feminicide)²¹.

Such facts together obviously negatively affect access to justice and impede the speed and proper administration of justice, revictimizing victims by extension, who are subjected to

18 Andean Human Rights Bulletin No. 141. (April 8 to 14, 2022). <https://mailchi.mp/6174b57e43a1/boletn-andino-de-derechos-humanos-n-141>

19 Idem.

20 (April 5, 2022). The accomplice in the femicide of Leidy Andrade was sentenced to 20 years in prison. Mérida Noticia. <http://meridanoticia.com/condenaron-a-20-anos-de-carcel-al-complice-en-el-feminicidio-de-leidy-andrade>

21 United Nations, UN Women and Unite Latin America. Model Latin American Protocol for the Investigation of Gender-related Violent Deaths of Women. <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2014/Modelo%20de%20protocolo.pdf>

repeated hearings that make it difficult for them to overcome the loss of a family member in such dramatic circumstances.

4. Protests and women's rights

During the months of March and April 2022, seven protests were held in the Andean region. These protests denounced gender-based violence and the lack of speed in cases of femicide. In addition, the difficulties faced by victims in accessing justice, the violation of the rights of trans people and, in general, to make petitions and raise awareness of the existence of problems that should be addressed by the Venezuelan State. The following are some of the protests and petitions made to the Venezuelan State:

-On March 8, International Women's Day. In the municipality of Libertador in the state of Merida, 15 non-governmental organizations marched in solidarity with the victims of gender violence and made demands for the promotion, defense and guarantee of their human rights²².

The ULA Women's Commission, ODH-ULA, Epikeia, Merida Feminist Network, Merida League against HIV, Preventive Youth, Justice and Peace Center, SOMOS Movement, Merida LGTBIQ+ Center, Peace Chair, Transparencia Venezuela, Venezuelan Observatory of Women's Human Rights, Emyca Civil Association and the Permanent Youth Forum²³ were the organizations and institutions that participated. These organizations and institutions submitted written denunciations and petitions to the Superior Prosecutor of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Bolivarian State of Merida Israel Silvestre Garcia Osuna, the Governor of the State of Merida Jehyson Guzman and the Legislative Council of the State of Merida (CLEBM).

Among the most relevant petitions presented to the Superior Prosecutor of the Public Prosecutor's Office were the request for the publication by the judicial bodies of statistics on gender violence complaints received, processed and brought to trial; the incorporation of the gender perspective in the procedures for receiving complaints and investigation; the development of education and training programs; the creation of shelters in conjunction

22 Andean Human Rights Bulletin No. 136. (March 4-10, 2022).

<https://www.uladdhh.org.ve/index.php/2022/03/11/boletin-andino-de-derechos-humanos-no-136/>

23 15 organizations in Mérida demand the State to protect women (March 8, 2022). UIA Mujer Commission.

<http://ulamujer.org/2022/03/08/2144-15-organizaciones-merida-demandan-al-estado-proteccion-a-las-mujeres/>

with other Venezuelan State bodies and civil society²⁴; and the request for speed in the judicial processes of gender-based violence and feminicides²⁵. It also requested the establishment of a date and conditions to carry out a technical roundtable in which victims and/or their representatives could present cases of procedural delays and institutional violence in order to articulate protective actions.

The governor of the state of Merida was also asked to publish statistics; to promote the creation of shelters and training programs (for teachers on gender equality and the eradication of gender stereotypes); the creation of breast milk banks and programs for the prevention of hate crimes against lesbian, bisexual and transgender women²⁶.

For their part, the women legislators of CLEBM were asked to pass laws to strengthen the protection of women and the competencies of regional bodies, against hate crimes and all forms of discrimination against women; as well as the establishment of guarantees to ensure the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in the budget of the state of Merida and public policies; and the promotion of civil society participation in the design of laws and policies for the benefit of girls, adolescents and women in the state of Merida²⁷.

Thirty days after the requests were made, according to Karol Moreno of the Fundación Red Feminista Mérida, she and representatives of the Centro de Justicia y Paz, and Transparencia Venezuela, ratified the requests and filed new communications with the governor's office and the superior prosecutor of the Public Prosecutor's Office.

Although it is true that some of the requests require time for their materialization, such as the passing of laws, it is no less true that if there was a will, some of them could have already been answered, as is the case of the technical round table requested to the Public Prosecutor's Office to establish actions.

It should be noted that, as of the date of publication of this report, more than 60 days have elapsed since the requests were made without any response from either the governor's office or the Public Prosecutor's Office.

-On March 17, 2022, relatives of Mairobi Villarreal, protested outside the Criminal Judicial Circuit of the Judicial District of Merida State because the conclusions were deferred. On

24 In accordance with the provisions of Article 32 of the Law on the Right of Women to a Life Free of Violence.

25 According to a communication filed with the Public Prosecutor's Office on 08.03.2022.

26 According to a communication filed with the Governor's Office of the State of Merida on 03.08.22.

27 According to a communication filed with the CLEBM on 08.03.22.

the same date, in San Cristóbal, Táchira state, women held an awareness day on gender violence²⁸.

-On March 19, 2022 a "Vigil for the victims of gender violence" was held in the municipality of Libertador, Merida state. The activity was called by the Federation of University Students for Human Rights of Venezuela (FEDEHU), with the support of the Civil Society Organization Active Merida, the Venezuelan Women's Observatory and the Women's Broad Front, among others²⁹.

-On March 21, 2022, in the Libertador municipality, Merida state, relatives of the girl Anubis Manantial Contreras Peña, sexually abused and murdered on January 6, 2020³⁰, protested to demand the transfer of her aggressor, Daniel Matamoros Rojas, from the Autonomous Institute National Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents, to a higher security detention center, since he has already reached the age of majority³¹.

-On March 31, 2022 International Trans Visibility Day, activists of the SOMOS movement, who fight for the rights of the LGTBIQ+ community, protested in front of the headquarters of the National Electoral Council (CNE), Libertador municipality, Mérida state, to demand the effective recognition of the gender identity of trans people, laws that accommodate gender identity and the creation of public policies with a human rights approach to ensure the full dignity of trans, non-binary and intersex people³².

-On April 13, 2022, in the context of the 22nd anniversary of the Organic Law for the Protection of Children and Adolescents, in the municipality Sucre, Trujillo state, students from the Educational Unit Las Americas, the Autonomous Institute National Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents, Council of Law, Council of Protection and the Ombudsman for Children and Adolescents, held a protest at traffic lights to raise awareness and stop sexual abuse in children and adolescents³³.

28 [@lanacionweb] (March 14, 2022). In San Cristóbal they carry out awareness day on gender violence starring organized women's groups in Táchira state. [Instagram]

https://www.instagram.com/p/CbOA2DMrcC7/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

29 Andean Human Rights Bulletin No. 138. (March 4 to 24, 2022).

<https://www.uladdhh.org.ve/index.php/2022/03/25/boletin-andino-de-derechos-humanos-no-138/>

30 (January 15, 2020). Young man who abuses and murders girl in Merida is released from prison.

<http://www.laverdad.com/sucesos/163035-privan-de-libertad-al-joven-que-abuso-y-asesino-a-nina-en-merida.html>

31 (January 15, 2022). Relatives demand justice for the case of Anubis Contreras.

<http://meridanoticia.com/familiares-exigen-justicia-por-el-caso-de-anubis-contreras>.

32 Andean Human Rights Bulletin No. 139. (March 25-31, 2022).

<https://www.uladdhh.org.ve/index.php/2022/04/01/boletin-andino-de-derechos-humanos-no-139/>

33 [@palpitartrujillano] (April 13, 2022 Campaign! As part of the anniversary of the LOPNNA, traffic lights were taken in Sucre.

The protest is an activity of vital importance, because it makes visible problems and the main concerns of the society affected by the violation of their rights. It is the duty of the Venezuelan State to attend to the requests that are made.

5. Women's empowerment and women's rights in the Mucuy Alta sector, Santos Marquina municipality, Mérida state.

"It has been a very nice and enriching experience, we learned a lot about bamboo. We hope to do something in the future with this beautiful material that nature provides us.

...we had some bamboo in our house that we were thinking of cutting, but now we hope to use it".

"I didn't know anything about bamboo, I learned a lot, I have a very good experience and I hope to put into practice everything I learned.

I hope to put into practice everything we have learned.

(Testimonials from women participating in the empowerment program)

During the months of February and March 2022, the empowerment program to overcome poverty and inequality designed by the ULA Women's Commission and the ODH-ULA was developed, aimed at 18 women from the population of Mucuy Alta, Santos Marquina municipality, Merida state, within the framework of the activities of empowerment of women in the communities, in order to provide them with the tools to develop in practice skills that allow them to generate for their benefit and that of the community to which they belong, the necessary changes.

During the workshop, participants received information on women's rights, female poverty and inequality. They were offered information on the activities of the ULA Women's Commission and the ODH-ULA, so that they could learn about the free advice and support they can count on if necessary.

Likewise, according to Professor Francisca Ely, the participants received information on self-sustainable alternatives such as bamboo management as a means to overcome

economic difficulties, as a sustainable and low-cost renewable natural resource, as well as a multipurpose raw material with great potential in the processes of climate change, the countryside and agriculture. In addition, a practice was carried out in a productive farm in the Mucuy Alta sector and information was provided on the support that can be provided by the Botanical Garden of Merida³⁴.

Professor Zuleima Molina, president of the Merida Botanical Garden Foundation, explained that during the activities the participants also learned about the use of bamboo in handicrafts, reproduction for the creation of nurseries, construction of corrals, river protection, landscaping, live and dead fences and their propagation. They were also donated material to do so, leaving the door of the foundation open to provide them with advice and support³⁵.

On the last day of the activity, 12 of the participants were given a survey to characterize the population and learn about their knowledge of sexual and reproductive rights, menstrual health and gender violence/access to justice.

Regarding the general characteristics of the women surveyed: The ages ranged from 24 to 73 years, with the average age of the respondents being 53 years; 83% identified their sexual orientation as heterosexual and 17% did not respond. Regarding marital status, 50 % live with a partner, 34 % are single, 8 % are widowed and 8 % are divorced, while 83 % have children and 17 % stated that they do not have children. Seventy percent of the mothers indicated having 1 child, 20% had 2 children and 10% had 3 children. 17% had 3 children, 8.33% had 1 child and the rest said they had no children.

On the question asked about the number of women in the household, 67 % answered being the only woman, 25 %, 2 women and 8 %, 3 women. Regarding the type of housing, 92% live in a house and 8% live in an apartment, 67% of them own their own house, 25% another, and 8% did not answer anything about it.

With regard to educational level, 42% of the women said they had a university degree, 42% had a high school diploma, 8% had a university technical degree, and 8% said they only had basic education.

Regarding the employment sector in which they work, only 8% said that they work in the public sector, 17% in the private sector, 33% in a private job and another 33% work in the home. The low percentage of female workers in the public sector and even in the private sector can be explained by the low salaries and the possibility of obtaining a higher income if they work privately.

34 Interview conducted on 12.03.2022.

35 Interview conducted on 12.03.2022.

Regarding the employment sector in which they work, 27% of the women surveyed are housewives, 27% work in the informal sector, 18% in the private sector, 18% said they do not work and 10% work in the public sector.

Fifty-five percent of the women surveyed spent between 4 and 7 hours at home, followed by 18% between 8 and 11 hours a day, 18% spent less than 3 hours a day, and 9% more than 12 hours a day.

It should be noted that 75% of the women surveyed said that they do not receive remittances or help from family and/or friends abroad, 17% did not respond to the survey and 8% said that they did receive remittances of Bs 50 (US\$11.13)³⁶ once every three months.

Respondents were asked questions about sexual and reproductive health, menstrual health, access to water, access to health care, knowledge about gender-based violence and the respective law, and the results were as follows:

-Sexual and reproductive rights, on the question regarding education on sexual and reproductive health received, 83 % indicated having received it, while 17 % did not. Of those who have received information on sexual and reproductive rights, 42 % indicated that they received the information from an educational institution, 25 % by other means, 8 % from a state institution, 8 % through social networks, 8 % from friends, and the remaining 9 % did not answer the question.

- Knowledge of contraceptive methods and how they are used, 83 % indicated knowing them, 17 % that they did not. Most of them expressed knowledge of at least one contraceptive method, of those indicated in the survey³⁷, with knowledge of the contraceptive pill prevailing in 58% of the cases.

Fifty-eight percent of the respondents indicated that they were sexually active; however, it is noteworthy that the same percentage of respondents who said they knew about contraceptive methods said that they did not use any.

-Knowledge about sexually transmitted diseases: 100% of the women said they knew about methods for preventing sexually transmitted diseases and 92% said they had never had any sexually transmitted diseases. Of the 100%, 83% said they knew about HIV and human papillomavirus (HPV), 67% of the entire population surveyed knew about gonorrhea and syphilis, and 25% said they did not know about any of them. This last response is striking given that 100% of them expressed knowledge of prevention methods. It can be inferred that, despite the fact that these are adult women, there is still a lack of knowledge about

36 Calculated at the official rate of the Venezuelan Central Bank on 05.02.2022, Bs/USD 4.49.

37 Birth control pills, intrauterine device, male and female condoms, sterilization.

what a sexually transmitted disease is, and even that this could be a taboo subject, considering the age of some of the respondents.

- Menstrual health: 17% have not received education on menstrual health, while 58% received information from an educational institution.

On the question of access to menstrual hygiene products, the use of menstrual pads is prevalent in 50% of them, the rest did not give an answer. Seventy-five percent indicated that the purchase of menstrual hygiene products is considered a priority in the household. In 42% of the cases (9 who responded to the question), the woman is the one who buys such products and in 17% of the cases the partner, relatives or friends. Regarding the latter, it should be noted that, among the group of women surveyed, at least 6 do not have menstruation.

It should be noted that 17% stated that they do not have access to products related to menstruation, analgesics or contraceptives.

- Access to drinking water: 8% said that they do not have access to drinking water on a frequent basis.

-Access to health care: 67% of the women surveyed said that they do not have insurance of any kind, and only 8% have private insurance, 17% said they have social security, and the rest did not respond. This is a cause for concern if we take into account the serious public health situation that currently exists in Venezuela, and therefore in the Andean region, which places this population in a situation of vulnerability due to the fact that basically those who have private health insurance have their health guaranteed.

Forty-two percent said they had had a gynecological consultation more than a year ago, 25% more than 6 months ago and the other 25% more than a year ago. This means that more than 67% of the population studied did not have the recommended annual check-up for the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and other diseases such as cancer. It should also be noted that out of 10 women who answered the question about the type of consultation they have, 40% said that they go for consultation in the public health sector.

Access to justice: of the 11 women who responded to the question on whether they knew what gender-based violence is, all of them answered affirmatively. However, 25% of them stated that they did not know the law on the subject and 36% did not know where to turn to in the event of a situation of violence of this type. Forty-five.5% said that they had suffered or knew women who had suffered gender-based violence, while in 80% of the cases they said that the victim did not report it, that is, in a significant number of cases the population does not report it.

This is a matter of concern. Recently, Venus Faddoul, director of the 100% Estrogen Organization, stated that the situation for women victims of sexual harassment has not

improved and that the lack of attention to gender violence is worse in the most distant cases in the interior of the country³⁸.

In view of the above, it is of particular concern that although the women surveyed said they knew what gender-based violence was, almost 40% of them did not know where they should go in the event of a situation of this type, but also that most of them, as is usually the case, did not report it.

Also, because the women surveyed mentioned knowing about physical and psychological abuse, domestic violence, rape and robbery. This means that although they mentioned knowing about gender violence, they are unaware of the law on the subject, which is a fundamental tool for them to be in a position to warn of behaviors that would be unacceptable in their environment.

It is essential that the State attends to women's rights, but also, with the urgency and seriousness that the case deserves, develops education and/or training programs on the subject not only for women and their family environment, but also for justice operators so that they become real channels for the enforcement of existing regulations, otherwise, no progress will be made.

38 [@EfectoCocuyo] (Apr. 30, 2022). @venusfaddoul, director of the organization @100estrogeno, affirmed that in the interior of Venezuela the situation for victims of sexual abuse or harassment has not improved. She pointed out that the greater the distance from the capital, the less attention is given to gender violence. Tweet. <https://twitter.com/EfectoCocuyo/status/1520417978713620486>



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