

The Hidden Challenge to Development: Gender Based Violence in Guatemala

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“In no society are women safe or treated as equal to men. Personal insecurity pursues them from the cradle to the grave. From childhood to adulthood they are abused due to their gender.” (UNDP)¹

This article examines past and current violence against women in Guatemala from a socio-economic and political context. The authors consider patterns of inequality, poverty and exclusion and describe the principal inhibiting factors, actors and perpetrators involved in violence against women. They then outline the conceptual framework and chart how this debate has evolved in Latin America, exploring the impact of gender based violence on development and democracy in Guatemala in particular. The article finally summarises the multi-faceted responses required to halt such violence and draws a number of overall conclusions.

1. Introduction

In recent decades Guatemala attracted considerable international attention due to its 36 year-long internal armed conflict. Once again, international attention is turning to Guatemala due to the new forms of social and political violence in the country. Today

Guatemala is plagued by extreme human insecurity and violence, in part inherited from the long, drawn out conflict during which social norms, values and relations were damaged and there was widespread use of violence. The reality of violence today is also inextricably linked to the extensive tolerance of human rights abuses as well as other social and economic stresses, driven by poverty and inequality.

In the past five years over 2,000 women have been killed in Guatemala. This unprecedented level of murders of women in the country is the most extreme expression of gender based violence (GBV) as well as the supreme violation of human rights, explicitly linked to widespread poverty rooted in historical patterns of inequality, exclusion and discrimination. GBV and murder of women is destabilising development initiatives in Guatemala, by impeding the capacity of women, their families and communities to participate in the social, cultural, economic and political life of the country. Nevertheless, while placing it on the global human rights agenda, national and international organisations do not identify this violence strongly as a development issue.

Bringing together international, as well as Latin American, research on GBV, this article examines past and current violence against women, within the Guatemalan socio-economic and political context as well as from the perspective of a gender based conceptual framework. It also draws out some of the impacts on development and recommends a number of actions.

Section 2 examines current patterns of inequality, poverty and exclusion and describes the past and present scenario of GBV including the principal inhibiting factors, actors and perpetrators involved. Section 3 outlines the conceptual framework and charts how this debate has evolved in Latin America. Section 4 explores the impact of GBV on development and democracy in Guatemala and section 5 offers a summary of the multi-faceted responses required to halt it. Finally section 6 draws some overall conclusions on the issue.

2. The Guatemalan context

Present day poverty, inequality and socio-economic trends

Guatemala is one of the poorest and most unequal countries in Latin America, and despite macro-economic growth in recent

years, inequality has not been reduced, reflected in the fact that the wealthiest 20% of the population earn 60% of the total income, while the poorest 20% earn just 3.7%. In 2005, Guatemala was ranked as one of the lowest countries in the western hemisphere on the human development index² with poverty affecting 57% of the population, of whom 21% live in extreme poverty. Poverty and extreme poverty manifest themselves in high levels of illiteracy, infant mortality, chronic malnourishment, maternal mortality and an ever-expanding informal sector, rendering it near impossible that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will be met by 2015. Poverty and inequality are accentuated even further between the sexes,³ with the female population excluded from socio-economic resources and political spheres. Among the indigenous population statistics relating to poverty and inequality rise significantly. Historically, the country's racist political structure oppressed the Mayan people and excluded them from its resources.⁴ This is reflected in poverty levels among the indigenous population where 78% are classified as poor.⁵

According to UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), since the signing of the Peace Accords in 1996,⁶ the tourist industry and free trade zones⁷ have replaced traditional exports such as coffee, sugar and bananas as the main generators of national revenue. Nevertheless, since the year 2000, remittances from Guatemalan emigrants have replaced exports as the principal source of national income, corresponding to 11.3% of GNP.⁸ Changes in economic activity, driven by neo-liberal prescriptions and globalisation, have been accompanied by worsening labour conditions and denial of labour rights, forced internal and external migration, sexual exploitation, human trafficking and child labour. Women are the main victims of neo-liberal policies, indicated by the fact that in 2002 42% of women in the economically active population group participated in the labour force as opposed to 80% of men in the same group,⁹ thus limiting women's options to work in the informal sector or migrating.

Past and present context of gender based violence

Political, racist and GBV in Guatemala dates back to the Spanish conquest which involved extreme brutality, especially against indigenous women. Widespread rape and massacres took place to destroy indigenous culture and identity and to demoralise the enemy, as women were considered the property of men. The Spanish Conquest had profound consequences for gender

relations and the use of violence against women in Guatemala.¹⁰

In more recent times, Guatemala suffered one of the longest and most violent conflicts in Latin America. In 1996, the government and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union (URNG) signed peace accords to end the 36 year-long conflict, in which approximately 200,000 died and between 500,000 and 1.5 million were displaced, internally and externally.¹¹ According to the Truth Commission, one in every four victims were women; young girls were also disproportionately affected with two girls killed for every boy. The majority of women were killed as part of massacres and large-scale arbitrary executions and some were specifically targeted for their part in social movements or organisations. Sexual violence was a systematic practice of the war, to which indigenous women were even more vulnerable due to racism and the geographical location of the conflict.¹² In guerrilla strongholds the military strategy was to eliminate the Mayan people,¹³ targeting women in particular.

Extreme violence against women is, therefore, deep-rooted in Guatemalan society and many features of a state at war persist. Behavioural patterns during the conflict were never fully addressed and official and clandestine structures that aided and abetted such violence were not held to account. Today Guatemala is affected by new forms of violence dominated by drug-traffickers, gangs and organised crime. Working in collusion with paramilitary groups, these groups are a legacy of the internal conflict and pose a serious threat to the state through their capacity to infiltrate and undermine state institutions. The government has proved unable to control organised crime and as a result violence and corruption have further undermined the state. Furthermore, the government has failed to design policies to correct failings within the legal and judicial system, including corruption. Despite the creation of new institutions, such as the Ombudsman's office, this has not led to any substantial change in the capacity of the legal system to investigate crimes effectively. Political violence is on the increase and observers note the return of patterns of human rights violations which characterised the armed conflict.

It is in this context of violence, with a weakened state and weak rule of law, that GBV is taking place with impunity, driven by state omission and at times compliance.¹⁴ This is translated into lack of responsibility by police, security forces and judicial authorities with poor data collection and unsatisfactory investigative standards, all of which permit violence to continue unchecked and render it difficult to address.

Human rights observers acknowledge there are a number of institutional initiatives¹⁵ but they have limited capacity due to lack of resources and poor coordination. While the creation of a special unit to deal with murders of women is seen as a positive step, it has not so far been able to overcome problems of institutional incompetence and duplication.¹⁶ Data on violence against women show that the state has failed to protect women and girls adequately from violence and murder and to investigate and apprehend the perpetrators. This sends a signal to those who commit such acts that they can continue to do so with impunity. This is apparent in the state's failure to reform discriminatory legislation, in particular articles 176, 177 and 200. Articles 176 and 177 imply that sexual relations with a minor will be only considered a crime if the female is considered a "decent woman" and article 200 pardons a rapist who agrees to marry his victim if she is over the age of 12. More often than not the police do not respond to emergency or disappearance calls, they pursue investigations incompetently or obstruct them and do not provide witness protection.¹⁷ Crime investigation and data collection procedures are weak and arbitrary so that the state does not have reliable figures on the number of women killed, or how and why they were murdered. Such cases are therefore treated as standard homicides. Murders are described as lovers' tiffs, acts of jealousy or crimes committed by a psychopath, but there is little analysis of the real motives or the manner in which women are killed. The media and police commonly link brutal killings to gang violence and drug-trafficking, suggesting the majority of murders are linked to organised crime when in reality only a small percentage of murders can be attributed to these two groups.¹⁸

Violence against women occurs across all socio-economic classes but women living in poverty are more likely to experience it. According to the MDG task group, men in difficult economic circumstances, for example, who are unemployed, have poor job autonomy, low socio-economic status and low educational levels may resort to violence out of frustration and a sense of hopelessness. At the same time, poor women are likely to have fewer resources to escape violence in the home. The evidence suggests that women with lower education are generally more likely to experience violence than those with higher levels.¹⁹

While in the past GBV was "justified" by conflict, today it is being normalised and socialised as inevitable, as an issue beyond the remit of the state and something that women more than likely deserve. The nature and extent of violence against women

in Guatemala are highlighted by the following data:²⁰

- Since 2001, 2,200 women have been killed.
- Between 2002 and 2004 1,227 violent female deaths were reported, of whom 43% were aged between 13 and 22.
- Between January and June 2006, more than 400 women were murdered.
- Killings are accompanied by extreme brutality including torture, rape, genital mutilation, decapitation, dismemberment, disfigurement, sometimes inflicted on the bodies after death.
- Bodies are commonly dumped on waste ground, car parks and public spaces or left in plastic bags or rubbish dumps. The selection of dumping sites reflects the desire of the perpetrators to make a public statement and to terrorise the rest of the population, in particular women.
- The most common forms of weapons and/or methods used are: guns, knives, strangulation and asphyxia.
- Housewives are the group most affected followed by students, street sellers/traders, domestic servants and free trade zone workers.
- Despite inadequate data relating to politically motivated killings, there is evidence of such as in some cases, political messages have been left on or close to the body.
- Although the majority of women are Guatemalan, some victims have no documents and this leads Amnesty International and other human rights groups to believe that some are migrant workers or migrants in transit. A proportion of murder victims are sex workers, many from surrounding countries and are undocumented.
- Victims are often intimidated prior to the murder by the perpetrators. Families of victims are also often threatened after the murder especially if they seek justice. This leads to increased terror and maintains silence among the female population, as well as the victims' families and their communities.
- Since 2002, less than 8 murder cases have ended in prosecution of the perpetrators.

- Since 2001, 97% of killings have not led to a prosecution and 70% of these have not even been investigated.

The above data highlight the level of brutality against women in GBV which differentiates it from “ordinary” murders. It also underlines the complete disregard for the lives of women and the helplessness of victims and their families.

3. Gender based violence

A framework

This framework examines GBV that, in its very nature, is determined by gender perceptions rooted in established societal norms. It focuses on acts of violence where gender plays a major role in the motivation, context and method used, as well as the response, or lack of it, on the part of the authorities.²¹

GBV is regarded as rooted in gender inequality, discrimination against women and violation of human rights, above all the right to life. The mobilisation of women’s social movements in Latin America and worldwide led to the elaboration of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in 1993, which was followed by the the Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Sanction and Eradicate Violence against Women a year later. These were the first mechanisms to address violence against women directly at inter-American and international level, although many of the key elements, such as the right to life, the right to live free from discrimination and violence and the right to equality, had already been endorsed, although not exclusively, by existing instruments under international human rights law.

The Inter-American Convention, the only binding international instrument in relation to violence against women, defined GBV as:

All forms of violence with a specific gender orientation, which results or could result in death, physical, sexual or psychological damage or suffering to women; as well as the threat of such acts; coercion or arbitrary denial of freedom, both in the public and private sphere.²²

The recognition of violence against women as occurring not only in the private but also the public sphere was essential to reduce

the invisibility that had, until then, surrounded and increased GBV. While there are multiple facets and dimensions to such violence, the Inter-American Convention and the UN Declaration outline three distinct forms:

- Violence in the family unit, domestic sphere or within any interpersonal relationship, where the aggressor shares or has shared the same living space and where it manifests itself, for example, in rape, mistreatment or sexual abuse;
- Violence in the community perpetrated by any individual, taking the form, among others, of rape, sexual abuse, human trafficking, torture, forced prostitution, kidnapping and sexual harassment in the workplace, education, health care facilities or any other place;
- Physical, sexual or psychological violence, wherever it may occur, committed or tolerated by the state or its agents.²³

Conceptual framework in Latin America

In Latin America, women's movements and academics have sought to impress upon the public agenda the particular nature of GBV that has been inflicted on women and girls since the Spanish conquest and continued during periods of both conflict and peace. From the early 1990s and based on the disappearance and murder of more than 300 women in Ciudad Juarez in Mexico over 12 years, Marcela Lagarde²⁴ and other female Mexican academics began to use the term *feminicide*, for this savage and persistent violence against women throughout Latin America.

Feminicide evolved from *femicide*, a phrase Diana Russell coined in 1976 to refer to hate killings of women or extreme forms of violence that lead to death. The term essentially distinguishes between homicide which is gender neutral, and murder of women explicitly for being female which is not. While *femicide* takes into account the continuum of violence that precedes murder, violence is only identified as *femicide* when it terminates in death.

In contrast, the concept of *feminicide* broadens the debate by exploring the nature of violence, the role of the state and the power system in which it occurs. It specifically draws attention to the condition of systematic violence in itself, which may lead to death but does not necessarily do so,²⁵ and to the notion that "women are usable, disposable and replaceable".²⁶ Importantly, *feminicide* criminalises and politicises this phenomenon,

underlining impunity as a constant and emphasising the state as an accomplice. In this way it provides a broader analytical framework wherein causes and impacts of GBV as a public issue can and must be debated, as well as implying the protective role of the state. In addition, it recognises that GBV occurs more frequently in fragile socio-economic contexts with political and judicial exclusion and where human rights violations are tolerated. In essence, it contributes significantly to GBV theory as it strongly underlines institutional weaknesses and impunity in maintaining levels of violence against women while challenging the state on this.

While *femicide* or *feminicide* have not been recognised as a crime against women under Guatemalan law, nor in fact under any legislation in the region, Guatemala is bound by various international mechanisms which it has signed and ratified, as well as the Guatemalan Constitution and national legislation to guarantee the right of women to live free from violence and discrimination.²⁷ However, this national legislation relates specifically to domestic violence which, while pertinent, does not encapsulate the grave entirety of GBV occurring both within and outside the private sphere.

The conceptual debate around GBV is nascent in Central America and as yet there is no consensus on the primacy of *femicide* or *feminicide*. Regardless of which term is used, both refer to the patriarchal system as the structure feeding gender inequality which uses power in the form of violence to control and subordinate women. In this sense, both schools recognise the gender explicit motive driving the violence and the social, economic, political and cultural context in which it is taking place.

4. Impact of gender based violence on development and democracy

While the concepts of *femicide* and *feminicide* allow for a clear understanding of the causes and nature of GBV in Guatemala as well as the structural and institutional weaknesses that facilitate it, the debate falls short in terms of providing insight into the impacts of GBV on poverty reduction, development and governance. Nevertheless, it offers a framework in which such impacts can and ought to be analysed. While little concrete data is available on the impact of GBV on the economy, development and democracy, recent studies of economic impacts of general

violence in Guatemala can serve as an indicator of its possible effects. The consequences of GBV at family and community level, as outlined below, also point to possible knock-on effects at national level.

At individual level, physical, psychological and sexual violence against women has serious mental health and behavioural implications. Violence causes post-traumatic stress syndrome, depression, anxiety and low self-esteem, which can lead to alcohol and drug abuse, sexual risk behaviour and victimisation. These features are nothing new to Guatemala considering that women who suffered during the internal armed conflict are still enduring similar symptoms. Thus, the current context of extreme violence serves to exacerbate already existing problems related to post-conflict trauma. In relation to physical and sexual reproductive health, GBV is directly linked to increased vulnerability to sexually transmitted infections and HIV. In a country that has one of the highest prevalence rates of HIV/AIDS in Latin America after Belize and Honduras, GBV, as a key driver of the epidemic, ought to be recognised.

At the same time, violence against women within the family unit greatly hinders family cohesion; children growing up with no mother or in a violent environment will more than likely reproduce violent patterns and have behavioural problems.²⁸ In terms of coping capacity at family level, GBV undermines livelihood strategies and economic alternatives and thus impoverishes the family. This has been evidenced in studies elsewhere, such as Nicaragua, where violence limits women's ability to maintain a job.²⁹

GBV at community level can be regarded as a new form of subjugating the population and limiting freedom of movement through the use of terror, in particular in relation to women, and as such impedes progress in participation and peacebuilding. A lasting consequence of the internal armed conflict has been the dissolution of social capital and community networks, as these have been replaced by mistrust, pervasive at local and national level. In this regard, affected women and their families become isolated as violence hinders their participation in their community's social, political and economic life.³⁰ Violence against women, like general insecurity, is also an important factor in emigration.

Overall violence directed at both males and females already exerts considerable economic impacts according to recent UNDP research and therefore it can be assumed that GBV also takes its toll on the state. In 2005, according to conservative estimates,

violence cost the state the equivalent of 7.32% of GNP based on costs incurred in the health sector and the justice system as well as lost investment and material loss.³¹ Taking into account the death toll of 5,338 in 2005, UNDP estimated a loss of potential production of \$342 million for Guatemala which represents significant economic costs.³²

It is indisputable that violence against women is felt in all sectors. Firstly, it burdens the health and security systems, diverting funds from the national budget allocated to primary health and education. Secondly, in terms of macro-level economic production, violence against women erodes human capital and accounts for a loss of productivity from both paid and unpaid work as well as the foregone value of a lifetime's earning on the part of women who have died.³³ Thirdly, GBV undermines and destabilises democracy building, good governance and the promotion and defence of human rights. At institutional level, it destabilises the state, reducing citizens' confidence in government authorities and institutions. Fundamentally, it renders it more difficult for the government to build a truly democratic and legitimate state and accomplish one of its main duties, that of protecting the life and development of its citizens.

In essence GBV is a public health, security and human rights problem directly impeding long-term development efforts. Development is clearly under threat when women are excluded from participating in, contributing to and benefiting from development initiatives and from political decision making at micro and macro levels, since their participation is crucial to promote lasting change. Lastly, when violence is accompanied by discriminatory legislation, women are obstructed even further from exercising and enjoying their human rights and from participating in development initiatives.

5. Which responses are required?

Existing recommendations, well documented by Amnesty International and other civil society groups, as summarised below in sections 5.1 and 5.2, concerning actions to be taken at government and non-government level. Sections 5.3 and 5.4 outline further recommendations on areas where the international community, bilateral and multilateral donors can collaborate, advocate and support Guatemala in ending the long trajectory of GBV.

5.1 Guatemalan government

- Affirm zero-tolerance by the state in relation to GBV through implementation of ratified international and inter-American conventions and mechanisms; reform and strengthen judiciary, police and security forces as well as the health sector to deal with GBV; reform of discriminatory domestic law;
- Take action to eliminate impunity within the state apparatus and police forces;
- Implement effective awareness-raising campaigns targeting general population;
- Increase coordination among state institutions and with civil society to increase efficacy of response;
- Address underlying factors of socio-economic and political exclusion of women through development programmes in order to end their long-term vulnerability to violence;

5.2 Guatemalan civil society

- Carry out research and advocacy with the government to demand genuine political commitment to prevention, eradication and sanction of violence against women;
- Implement awareness-raising and prevention campaigns with the general population on GBV in order to galvanise the national social and political conscience and provide direct services to victims of domestic violence;
- Increase coordination within civil society and with the government to strengthen effectiveness and avoid data discrepancy and duplicity;

5.3 International community

- Explicitly denounce GBV, government inaction and impunity in Guatemala and highlight the importance of this issue at international level;
- Provide technical and financial aid for research by the Guatemalan government into the health and socio-economic impacts of GBV on development;

- Support effective civil society interventions that address GBV and its underlying causes;
- Integrate GBV as a key issue in the democratic clause of the Association Agreement between the EU and Central America;³⁴
- Promote the creation of a specific GBV monitoring mechanism, through the UN system, by which Guatemala's performance or lack of it can be measured;³⁵
- Assign greater importance to GBV in EU policy;

5.4 Irish Aid

- The inter-agency Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence is welcome and it supports the use of this space to increase public awareness and mobilise support to eliminate violence against women in Guatemala and elsewhere;
- In line with the Irish government's increased prioritisation of HIV/AIDS in development policy, integrate GBV in all policy, programme, funding and diplomacy and highlight links between GBV, HIV/AIDS and poverty in all development strategies;
- To show its commitment to gender equality, as specified in the government's White Paper, through adequate allocation of funding and expertise and negotiations with governments in priority Irish Aid countries;
- Irish MEPs must promote debate within the European Commission on GBV in its totality and its impacts.

6. Conclusions

Unprecedented levels of GBV in Guatemala today are rooted in historical trajectories of war and conflict and influenced by economic and gender inequalities, poverty and exclusion as well as long-standing tolerance of human rights abuses. Furthermore, violence against women is abetted by state inaction, compliance and impunity, as well as public tolerance and apathy. The extent

and nature of violence against women in Guatemala pose many troubling questions for development and post-conflict peacebuilding work. The international community needs to ask itself why such human rights abuses are tolerated in a post-conflict country like Guatemala, as atrocities committed in peace time should not receive less attention than those committed during conflict.

While a history of conflict is not the only factor influencing the current situation, events in Guatemala indicate that during any post-conflict transition those responsible for human rights atrocities must be apprehended and as far as possible the enabling structures removed. In this context, the role of international human rights mechanisms and watchdogs such as the UNHCR and the inter-American system must be analysed in terms of their capacity to enforce sanctions and hold to account governments which continue to tolerate such abuses. Furthermore, the extent of GBV in Guatemala reflects a crisis wherein gender relations have severely deteriorated. This raises questions about the effectiveness and validity of gender intervention models in development work in Guatemala over the past decade. While Guatemala faces many challenges to overcome and eradicate GBV, it is fundamental to implement a multi-stakeholder and integrated response with the strong support and participation of the international community.

Footnotes

- ¹ UNDP, in Consejo Centroamericano de Procuradores de Derechos Humanos (2006), p.11
- ² Guatemala scored 0.631 in Latin America in terms of human development, ranking 117 out of 173 countries; see UNDP (2005), *Human Development Report Guatemala*
- ³ Guatemala ranks 98th in the women development index (0.365); see CALDH (2005).
- ⁴ Coletta and Cullen (2000)
- ⁵ Poverty is chronic among the indigenous population with 48% illiteracy, chronic malnutrition is 69.5%, maternal mortality is 211 per every 100,000 births and life expectancy at birth is 17 years lower than for non-indigenous people (67.3); UNDP (2005).
- ⁶ After 36 years of civil conflict the Accords for a Firm and Lasting Peace were signed in December 1996 between the Guatemalan government and the URNG (Union Revolucionaria Nacional de Guatemala). The signing marked the end of the most costly of all the Latin American civil wars of the 20th century in terms of lives lost. The scorched earth policy carried out by the Guatemalan state and its counterinsurgency forces in the 1980s resulted in the complete or partial extermination of hundreds of Mayan communities. Massacre victims remain buried in over 600 clandestine graves throughout the Guatemalan countryside. Although the signing of the Peace Accords secured

peace in Guatemala, setting out a broad reform agenda and providing an opportunity for dialogue and change in human rights and democracy, ten years on compliance with the accords remains poor. In effect, Guatemala has peace without justice. See UNDP (2005).

- 7 The number of *maquilas* or free trade zones in the Central American region soared in the 1990s at the same time as economic liberalisation, increased transnational industrialisation and globalisation of trade occurred. Transnational companies establish factories in countries like Guatemala to benefit from cheap labour, low production costs, lax labour legislation and other incentives. While the *maquilas* are important sources of GNP, these production plants are part of a transnational chain where all inputs are imported and there is little transfer of technological expertise due to the nature of the industries which are predominantly involved in textile production.
- 8 In 2006 remittances sent from Guatemalans in the USA accounted for \$3,609.8 million, which represented an increase of \$617 million from 2005: Alvarcz. L (2007).
- 9 CALDH (2005)
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 CEH (1999)
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Colletta and Cullen (2000)
- 14 According to S.Yagenova in Colectivo de Organizaciones Sociales (2006), the state in general promotes impunity for crimes committed against women, reflected by the weakness of the legislation intended to deal with such crimes. The Penal Code classifies crimes such as incest, sexual abuse and rape as private offences. The author also argues that the decriminalisation and increased efficiency of the judicial system has been at the cost of freeing those responsible for crimes against women.
- 15 A number of institutions exist to deal with women's issues, such as the Women's Public Prosecutor's Office, Presidential Secretary for Women, Indigenous Women's Office, Office of the National Police for Gender Equity and Victims Care as well as the recently created Women's Homicide Unit. These groups face numerous difficulties due to lack of resources and weak coordination which considerably reduce their capacity to investigate crimes against women. See OACDH (2006).
- 16 Amnesty International (2006a) and Amnesty International (2006b)
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Russell, D. and Redford, J. in Aguilar, A. L. (2005)
- 19 CIIDH, CONGOCOP y Descguat (2005), Situación de los DESC en Guatemala 2005
- 20 See Amnesty International (2006b), CALDH (2005) and Asociación Sobrevivientes (2006)
- 21 Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos (2005).
- 22 Centro de Derechos de Mujeres (2004)
- 23 Convención Interamericana para prevenir, sancionar y erradicar la violencia contra la mujer at www.oas.com
- 24 Marcela Lagarde in CALDH (2005)
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 CALDH (2005) p.11

- ²⁷ Women's rights are guaranteed under both national and international legislation as Guatemala has ratified 6 international conventions and has 4 national frameworks, including its own constitution and peace agreements, to protect them.
- ²⁸ According to Bott, S. et al. (2005), there is evidence in some countries of higher prevalence of diarrhoea and anaemia among children whose mothers have suffered violence, as well as an increase in education failure and/or desertion and getting involved in petty crime and delinquency. See also Aguilar, E. et al (2003), who according to research in Mexico, state that exposure to violence from an early age greatly influences cognitive, social and emotional capacities of children and that violent behaviour is often learned in childhood and replicated in adulthood.
- ²⁹ Morrison, A.R and Orlando, M.B in Heise et al. (1999), p.26, assert that women in Nicaragua who were subjected to violence earned 46% less than women who were not.
- ³⁰ Carrillo in Heise et al. (1999), p.25 has proved through research that in Mexico violence or the threat of it was one of the main factors hindering women's participation in development projects and as such lessened their social and economic contribution.
- ³¹ Research carried out by UNDP maintains all forms of violence in 2005 cost the Guatemalan state 17,900 million quetzals, an equivalent of 7.32% of GNP; Sas A. and Alvarez L. (2006).
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Bott, S. et al. (2005) state that women who have suffered from violence missed an average of 7.2 workdays in the US while the Colombian government spends \$73.7 million per year to prevent, deter and treat intimate partner violence. Domestic violence against women in Chile produces wage losses of 2% of GDP.
- ³⁴ El Acuerdo de Asociación entre la UE y Centroamérica, due to commence in 2007, is considered more than a trade agreement, having three main components: political dialogue, development aid and trade.
- ³⁵ The Millennium Development Goals task force recommend including an indicator that violence against women be reduced by 50% by 2015 as part of MDG indicators on gender; see WHO (2005a).

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