



CAWN

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## EDITORIAL

Over the last three months, CAWN has been focusing on the never-ending injustice experienced by those working on the farms and factories that feed and clothe Europe. The highlight was an intense ten day tour of England, Scotland and Austria with Reyna Tejada, from the Collective of Honduran Women (CODEMUH), and Patricia Dyata from Sikhula Sonke. These women are the respective leaders of feminist and women-led trade unions in Honduras and South Africa.

Reyna spoke to parliamentarians, government officers, journalists, students and campaigners about the mostly women workers who staff the *maquilas*, or textile factories and their below minimum-wage salaries. CODEMUH works tirelessly to bring to an end work patterns that cause women serious disabilities and illnesses. Patricia highlighted the system in South Africa which leaves farm workers in poverty and forces children out of school, denying people a dignified life.

Sikhula Sonke and CODEMUH, based in regions far from each other and from Europe, shared lessons about feminist practice when organizing workers. They are aware of the importance of taking an approach that is women-led, holistic and addresses social, in and labour issues. Like CAWN, these trade unions make intersectionality central to their practice and show how addressing violence against women and decent housing are key to tackling labour rights violations.

In the UK and Europe the public is being told that austerity, trade liberalisation and labour market flexibilisation are the answer to the economic crisis, our experienced friends from Honduras and South Africa tell us that their experiences of these policies have been disastrous. CAWN is now more determined than ever to continue the fight for trade agreements that put people before profit, unlike the recently ratified Association Agreement between the European Union and Central America (EU-CA AA). CAWN is also demanding that corporations selling to the UK public guarantee fair working conditions for their staff. In partnership with Central American organizations CAWN will be monitoring the impact that the EU-CA AA has on women's and workers' rights. To do this, we need your support. [You can become an activist or fundraise for CAWN: join us today!](#)



*Meeting in Vienna with members of the Women in Development Europe network*



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## OUR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Updates, shout-outs, past and upcoming activities and more

### Recent events and publications

**Briefing paper update:** [The Impact on Women of the Association Agreement between the European Union and Central America: assessing CAWN's advocacy efforts](#)

CAWN has spent the last few years warning workers, policy makers and corporations about the potential negative impact of the Association Agreement between the European Union and Central America. This Agreement is now in the final stages of its ratification. CAWN has evaluated the final text of the trade agreement to assess the extent to which our recommendations were taken on board.

CAWN welcomes the [European Parliament's Resolution](#) on 11th December 2012 call for a specific mechanism to guarantee respect and compliance with the human rights clause in the agreement and its proposal that the Commission carry out an annual report to monitor its impact on democracy and human rights. Aware of the importance of grassroots' and women's voices CAWN demands that monitoring exercises are conducted in consultation with civil society.

**Speaker tour:** Women resist austerity and exploitation: global struggles and stories // 26<sup>th</sup> November – 5<sup>th</sup> December 2012

As global recession looms, Europe is facing



interlocking crises. Social rights, including workers' rights are being dismantled and it is clearer than ever that international solidarity cannot simply mean the global North extending support to those in the global South. We must strategise across borders to stand up to reckless trade and labour liberalisation, corporocracy and the prioritisation of profits before people. CAWN and partners War on Want and Frauensolidaritaet invited leaders of feminist and female-led Honduran and South African organisations that defend and promote the rights of women to tour England, Scotland and Austria. Their experiences are part of the global struggle against injustice and we want to learn with them.



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### **Reyna Quintanilla, campaigner at 'Honduran Collective of Women' ([CODEMUH](#))**

Ex-maquila worker and CODEMUH's organiser & member of staff, Reyna, campaigns on behalf of women's workers in Honduran EPZ (Export Processing Zones) which have a 75% female workforce.

Violence in the workplace, health and safety issues and precarious work conditions are some of the challenges workers face in the maquilas. Reyna helps them to peak out against these abuses. She is lobbying for a reform of Honduras' outdated labour codes, which would significantly improve sweatshop working conditions.

### **Patricia Dyata, Secretary General at [Sikhula Sonke](#)**

A former farm worker and dweller Patricia is now

the Secretary General of a women-led trade union for farmers in South Africa. She campaigns for their labour and housing rights, including a living wage, decent healthcare provision and maternity and paternity leaves. Sikhula Sonke also supports unionized workers who face harassment from their employers and police.



## Upcoming events

**Free advocacy and campaigning training:** Influence policies and practice that impact women's lives // 9th March 2013

Would you like to influence policies and practices that impact women's lives in the UK and abroad? The session, with a strong practical component, will focus on the issue of

## Urgent Action List

We'd like to remind you about our network of 'clicktivists'. We have set up an Urgent Action list that allows activists to take action on issues by signing urgent petitions, sending letters and distributing our partners' calls for action online. Periodically, CAWN receives calls for support for

exploitation of women to put in practice the campaigning and lobbying skills learnt. It will include group exercises on different types of power and empowerment, the advocacy cycle and campaigning strategies and planning. Get in touch with us to find out more and to register at [campaigns@cawn.org](mailto:campaigns@cawn.org)

women in Central America, from human rights defenders who are threatened to petitions to challenge a ban on contraceptive pills. Please let us know if you'd like to subscribe by emailing 'Urgent Action list' to [campaigns@cawn.org](mailto:campaigns@cawn.org). We are looking forward to working with you!



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## CALLS FOR SOLIDARITY AND ACTION

### Calls for international feminist solidarity from feminists translated by CAWN



#### Honduras: Stand with the Garifuna People as They Recover Ancestral Lands

The Garifuna people – an Afro-descendant community– have faced generations of abuse and now face even more abuse at the hands of the Honduran government. Ever since the 2009 political coup, 65 small farmers have been killed in the Bajo Aguan region as they have attempted to reclaim illegal landholdings from giant palm oil plantations growing bio-fuel for export.

In late August in Vallecito, Honduras, 200 Garifuna families from a dozen different communities mobilized to reclaim 2,500 hectares of their ancestral land earmarked for development by large agribusinesses. The families set up camp, hoping to reclaim their legally owned land

[More](#)

#### Honduras: Death threat against human rights defender.

*Translated by CAWN*

Juana Dolores Valenzuela, a journalist specialising in environmental issues, received a death threat via email on 27 November. The subject line read: "barbara lengona", and the caption read "because of your tongue we will kill you one of these days, when will you learn to have respect [...] old woman,

you have never learnt, [...] you have got old, daughter of a bitch, with that tongue you're not going to fit in the coffin".

That morning Dolores Valenzuela had appeared, along with the chairman of the mining committee of the Honduran Congress, in a state-broadcast television programme on metal extraction in open pit mines. Then she went to the Catholic Radio studios, where she participated in a programme on environmental issues. During the program she named several people who, according to her, were responsible for the environmental destruction of Honduras.

We ask you to write a letter to the Honduran embassy asking the Honduran authorities to order an independent and impartial investigation into the death threat against Juana Dolores Valenzuela, to publish the results and bring those responsible to justice. Challenge them to take immediate action to provide adequate protection to Juana Dolores Valenzuela and remind them that human rights' defenders should be entitled to carry out their activities without unfair restrictions and without fear of reprisal, as established in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

[More](#)

#### Costa Rica: Call to action to help Aurora

Aurora is a 32-year old Costa Rican woman. At her 8th week of pregnancy, the doctors informed her that her foetus had multiple severe malformations that would not allow it to survive outside the uterus. She has had many more exams since, which have all confirmed the original diagnosis of a nonviable pregnancy.

A little after her first appointment, Aurora started experiencing strong abdominal and back pain that prevent her from working. The circumstances of the pregnancy are seriously affecting her physical and emotional health. She has indicated that "in addition to the physical pain, the stress and suffering resulting from the news have provoked con-



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stant sadness, depression, severe stress, insomnia, nightmares, constant tears...”

On multiple occasions, Aurora has requested that they end her suffering.

However, the medical professionals and medical authorities in Costa Rica have repeatedly denied her right to a therapeutic abortion. This is despite the fact that the medical recommendation points toward pregnancy termination and that some of the professionals who are treating Aurora have indicated that the pregnancy would be terminated in European countries. Aurora is being forced to carry the pregnancy to term, despite the serious physical and emotional damage that this is causing her.

Therapeutic abortion is legal according to Costa Rican law. Article 121 of the Costa Rican Criminal Code signals that abortion is not criminalized when practiced with the consent of the woman, a doctor, or an authorized obstetrician, when it is practiced to avoid danger to the life or health of the woman and cannot be avoided by other means.

Aurora is now more than 25 weeks pregnant. We demand that she be given immediate access to a therapeutic abortion or induction of labour.

[Take action](#)

### **Alliance For Global Justice Solidarity recruit Election Monitors to guard against electoral fraud in November 2013.**

Since the coup in Honduras in 2009 over 80 members of farm cooperatives have been murdered, along with 70 reporters, over 20 LGBT activists and four anti-coup politicians. Teachers, unionists, students, and organizers in the non-violent National Front for Popular Resistance (FNRP) have been killed, wounded and threatened for daring to support democracy in Honduras. Not a single murderer has been prosecuted.

In November presidential elections will take place in Honduras. CAWN is helping to recruit 200-300 election monitors to guard against electoral fraud against the FNRP's new political party LIBRE. If fair elections were held today, LIBRE's presidential candidate Xiomara Castro would win hands down according to polls.

If you are interested in being an election monitor next November, send an email to [chuck@AFGJ.org](mailto:chuck@AFGJ.org)

### **Guatemala: Human rights defender Ms Claudia Samayoa experiences threats and defamation**

During the week of 12 November 2012, human rights defender Ms Claudia Virginia Samayoa received warnings that an attack was being prepared against her. This was the latest incident in an ongoing series of threats and defamatory statements targeting her and several other human rights defenders. Claudia Samayoa is the coordinator of the *Unidad de Protección de Defensoras y Defensores de Derechos Humanos Guatemala* (Human Rights Defenders Protection Unit in Guatemala). She supports the work of human rights defenders in preventing and responding to security risks through monitoring, verification and advocacy work.

On 5 November 2012, she filed a complaint with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights denouncing a statement, in which she and several others were threatened and accused of involvement in terrorist activities and fuelling anti-business hostility. The last part of the statement is a direct call on state authorities and the armed forces alike to ensure that all those it deems complicit in “political trials” against the military be held responsible and forced to pay for having attempted to change history. During the week of 12 November 2012, both Claudia Samayoa and a member of the Human Rights office of the Archbishop of Guatemala received warnings that an attack was being prepared on their lives.

Please take action on behalf of the Guatemala human rights defender Claudia Samayoa by sending the text you will find on the Front Liners site to the address they provide.

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## NEWS AND ANALYSIS

News from external sources and analysis by CAWN supporters and members

### Trafficking and violence against women

#### Political commitment to properly investigate femicide is essential to bring perpetrators to justice

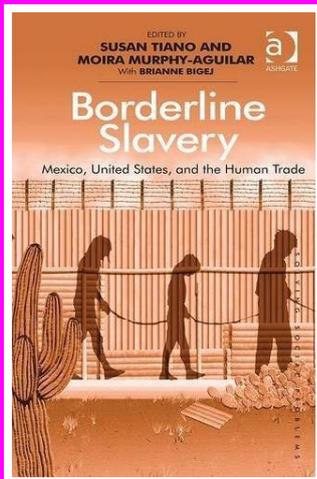
Grounded in a context of mafias, militarization and impunity sanctioned by some States in Latin America, femicides are increasing in number and brutality. As we commemorate the annual Sixteen Days of Activism Against Gender Violence

campaign from November 25<sup>th</sup> to December 10<sup>th</sup>. AWID interviewed Ana Carcedo from *Centro Feminista de Información y Acción* (Cefemina) in Costa Rica asking what pushed her to investigate the deaths of these women and what her views on the problem are.

[More](#)

### *Borderline Slavery: A New Book on Human Trafficking in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands*

By: Susan Tiano, Moira Murphy-Aguilar, and Brianne Bigej



As editors of the new book *Borderline Slavery: Mexico, United States, and the Human Trade* (Ashgate Press: 2012), we are delighted to introduce the anthology to CAWN readers and members worldwide. Providing an important contribution to the literature on human trafficking, the book's diverse chapters share accounts on human trafficking in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands from a range of viewpoints presented by scholars and researchers, journalists, public officials, law enforcement personnel, and NGO representatives. For more information, please email: [stiano@unm.edu](mailto:stiano@unm.edu), read a sample chapter at: <http://bit.ly/QWHzGu> or visit us on facebook: <http://on.fb.me/SYhBmu> and twitter: [@Border\\_Slavery](https://twitter.com/Border_Slavery)

During the past decade, human trafficking has morphed from an obscure practice to a raging social problem, initiating a flurry of academic and practical publications intended to shed light on the process and mobilize attempts to combat it. Typical of any new field of research, there is a lag in human trafficking scholarship between what policy makers and their constituents need to know to address the problem, and what they understand about its nature and causes. Even though Mexico occupies a unique status among the world's nations as a key "portal" to the world's richest economy for goods and people from Mexico, Central America, and other parts of Latin America, to date we know little about how trends in Mexico and Central America are influencing and being shaped by the illicit trade in human beings. The new anthology, *Borderline Slavery: Mexico, United States, and the Human Trade*, responds to the need for scholarship on human trafficking in the Americas, which has been the focus of much less research than analogous patterns in Europe and Asia. *Borderline Slavery* contextualizes its distinctive regional focus by showing how global dynamics are contributing to specific patterns of human trafficking on the U.S.-Mexico border, and the challenges they pose for law enforcement, NGOs, and others who aim to combat sex and labor trafficking in the Americas. Rather than focusing exclusively on either sex or labor trafficking as do many works on the human trade, *Borderline Slavery* considers both sexual and labor exploitation as two possible outcomes of human trafficking and enslavement, which some victims endure simultaneously or sequentially.

The impetus for *Borderline Slavery* was a 2009 conference, "Modern-Day Slavery in the Americas: A Regional Approach to a Global Epidemic," held by the Latin American and Iberian Institute of the



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University of New Mexico. Its aim was to bring together global and regional leaders, scholars, practitioners and activists to share their insights and experiences with each other and with the assembled audience. Their contributions and the resulting volume of essays provide a window on the way the human trade is being addressed within the international and national policy making communities. The diverse cross-section of contributions to the volume are united by their common themes and their shared commitment to understanding and combating human trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border.

*Borderline Slavery's* theoretical contributions lie in its synthesis of macro-theories of international political economy with more micro-level theories of crime and deviance, law and politics, gender, and work, to produce a more holistic perspective on the multifaceted dynamics that contribute to the human trade. Each of the chapters builds upon this platform in its own way, whether by contributing insights into causal dynamics, or by describing or proposing strategies for combating the problem, detecting and apprehending the perpetrators, or assisting the victims. Accounts by journalists shed light on the challenges of policing the borders, while those by policy makers and law enforcement officials describe their experiences in confronting these obstacles, and those by NGO leaders emphasize that in the rush to apprehend perpetrators, law enforcement and border control officials must not neglect the rights and wellbeing of trafficking victims.

*Borderline Slavery* explores human trafficking in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands as a regional expression of a pressing global problem that reflects—and in turn transforms—historical and contemporary dynamics within Mexico and the United States, and whose solution will require both nations to work together to reform the conditions that motivate the human trade within and across their borders. Its goals are to increase understanding of human trafficking, globally and regionally, by illuminating its contexts and causes, and to offer policy recommendations for addressing it that do justice to U.S.-Mexican border communities' complex circumstances. *Borderline Slavery* helps to shed light on what is currently a poorly-understood, clandestine activity whose existence is barely beginning to be recognized and reported on, and which is easily confused with more common practices such as immigrant smuggling, prostitution, and the illicit trade in drugs and other goods.

A key theme of the volume is that modern-day slavery is intimately connected to globalization, which augments both the supply of and demand for sex and labor trafficking victims. Its regional expression in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands is compounding the contradictions of globalization, which has stimulated immigration without increasing the U.S. government's willingness to allow entry to the bulk of those who seek admission. U.S. immigration and crime-reduction policies designed to "control" the border are having the paradoxical effect of promoting human trafficking by replacing mom-and-pop smuggling operations with the highly organized crime networks that have the resources to operate under the radar of—or in collusion with—the law enforcement personnel tasked with apprehending them. People who are desperate to cross borders for economic reasons or to reunite with family members are particularly vulnerable to human traffickers posing as smugglers, and with the improvement of economic conditions in Mexico the people most apt to be in such circumstances are increasingly Central Americans. Immigration reform is essential, not just to resolve issues of undocumented migration but to confront human trafficking, and it takes center stage in the volume along with other short- and long-term policy options for apprehending perpetrators, rescuing and serving victims, and eliminating structural conditions such as gender inequality that allow human trafficking to flourish regionally and globally.

To achieve these goals, *Borderline Slavery* provides an empirically grounded, theoretically informed, and policy-relevant baseline to stimulate further scholarship on sex and labor trafficking in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. It sheds interdisciplinary light on human trafficking by examining it through the eyes of scholars and researchers from various fields, as well as journalists, public officials, law enforcement personnel, and NGO representatives, many of whom have extensive life and work experience on the border. The contributors to this volume have offered their insights and recommendations in the hopes that someday all of the world's inhabitants will be free from the scourge of the human trade.



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*Borderline Slavery: Mexico, United States, and the Human Trade.* S. Tiano, M. Murphy Aguilar with B. Bigej (Eds.). Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2012. 275 pp.

**Susan Tiano** is the Director of the Latin American and Iberian Institute and a Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of New Mexico. Her areas of specialization include women and labor within Latin America and along the U.S.-Mexico border, the *maquiladora* industry, and the effects of economic crises on women and household and she has published numerous book chapters, journal articles and books including *Women on the United States-Mexico Border: Responses to Change* (with Vickie Ruiz) and *Patriarchy on the Line: Gender, Labor, and Ideology in the Mexican Maquila Industry*.

**Moira Murphy-Aguilar** works at the Center for Inter-American and Border Studies at the University of Texas at El Paso and teaches in the Latin American and Border Studies program. Her areas of specialization include border studies, gender studies, development in Latin America and internationalization of education and her publications include the books *Ciudad Juárez: Entre la Frontera y el Mundo* and *Educación e Investigación: Retos y Oportunidades*.

**Brianne Bigej** recently graduated with her Juris Doctor degree along with her Masters in Latin American Studies from the University of New Mexico. She has worked on issues of human trafficking on the U.S.-Mexico border, human rights, gender and development, and labor in the Americas.

For more information, you can also read CAWN's recent briefing paper on [Trafficking of women in Central America and Mexico](#).



### Mexico: Festival for Life and Non-Violence towards women.

Translated by CAWN

In Oaxaca, on November 23, the "Festival for Life and Non-violence against women" took place, as part of a campaign for citizen participation called "For our rights, let's move NOW!". It was organized by members of social organizations in Oaxaca

#### Civil Space.

The aim of the festival was to draw attention to the violence perpetrated against women and spread awareness of the need to demand respect for women's rights.

In the six year period in which Ulises Ruiz was governor of Oaxaca (2004-2010), 283 women were killed. During the current administration of Gabino Cué, 169 women have been murdered so far. In recent months, the number of femicide crimes has

grown alarmingly. The Deputy of Crimes Against Women For Reasons of Gender, indicates that from January to October 2012, 62 crimes against women were committed. According to data from civil organizations, during that period a total of 69 women were murdered. Most perpetrators remain free. Impunity must end.

The purpose of the festival was a celebration of life and non-violence and to highlight actions aimed at the construction of justice, peace and freedom. Using artistic and cultural expression, participants discussed what actions could be taken to mobilize citizens and to raise women's voices.

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### Human Rights Abuses In Honduras Pose An Ongoing Threat To Women's Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs)

Since the coup d'état in June 2009 in Honduras, impunity, an excessive use of force against civil dissent and threats and attacks against human rights defenders have been a serious problem.



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'Mega Projects' led by the government, like the expansion of mining and other extractive industries and the creation of resort tourism projects such as "Los Micos Beach and Golf Resort", located in a National Park in Tela bay and marketed as "The undiscovered Caribbean coast", are unwanted by local communities, who argue those are not the type of development projects they agree with.

Peasant and indigenous communities who speak up and oppose mega projects and have been confronted daily with the arbitrary use of State security forces in evictions, threats, defamation and assassinations.

Numerous cases of sexual violence have been documented during forced evictions, which are rarely reported for fear of retaliation and because of the rampant impunity in situations of violence against women throughout the country. The violence is more serious against women's human rights defenders who also face public accusations that they are going against the traditional role assigned to women. These defenders are threatened with death and sexual violence and are criminalized.

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### New anti-trafficking law and the press in Costa Rica



*Helen White recently graduated with a degree in Spanish and Italian. During her studies she lived in Costa Rica where she worked with the Rahab Foundation, an organisation that rehabilitates women who have been involved in commercial sexual exploitation. She now works for Local Government in London.*

In CAWN's [Autumn newsletter](#) we heard that the Nicaraguan police force has recently increased efforts to combat human trafficking, as the country joined the International Day Against Human Trafficking in coordination with other nations worldwide. Fortunately it's not just Nicaragua that's taking steps to confront this covert enemy to human rights everywhere, but also its neighbour, Costa Rica.

The U.S. Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report 2012 identified Costa Rica as "a source, transit and destination country for men, women and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labour"<sup>1</sup>. The country is a fertile ground for both international and domestic trafficking as certain centres, most notably its capital San Jose, are well-known sex tourism hotspots attracting clients from Europe and North America. In May 2010 Laura Chinchilla, the first woman president of Costa Rica, was sworn into office. While one might have expected that addressing trafficking would have been high on the to-do list of a female candidate, President Chinchilla had rather a lot on her plate regarding the issue of drugs-related crime, now the only black market industry worth more than human trafficking worldwide. Finally, though, on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2012, the Legislative Assembly unanimously voted in [a new law against human trafficking](#), which tightens up definitions and, according to representative Carmen Muñoz Quesada, should make the fight against human trafficking in Costa Rica more comprehensive.

The issue of definition was highlighted in several reports in the Central American press following the introduction of the new law. In their article on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2012, [Noticias en Tiempo Real](#) (NTR) quoted Marcela Chacón, Vice Minister for Interior and Police, who commented that the law allowed a fuller understanding of the crime. In order to address the problem fully, it is important to be aware of every aspect of trafficking, which, Chacón pointed out, includes trafficking for purposes other than commercial sexual exploitation, such as trafficking for human organs.

On 8<sup>th</sup> October 2012 [Notimex](#), a Mexican news agency, recorded Muñoz's concerns that until this point there had been confusion between trafficking and illegal immigration. While a person may be transported against their will and illegally enter the country, trafficking can also apply to internal situations in which



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the person being trafficked has not crossed international borders. [El País](#) also referred to the confusion between illegal immigration and trafficking, drawing attention to the fact that trafficking is more than an immigration issue.

Some sources presented human trafficking as a crime issue which needs to be confronted from a legal standpoint and the new law passed in autumn 2012 is hoped to be a significant step in the right direction. NTR highlighted that the new law will promote the trafficking-specific training of judges and other figures of authority to ensure that the crime is recognised and the perpetrators prosecuted. Notimex also noted that the penalty for trafficking minors was increased from four to sixteen years in prison.

In their article on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2012, [La Nación](#) quoted Sandra Chaves, Secretary for Human Trafficking in the Department of Migration, who highlighted that the new law is not just about attention for victims, but also preventative measures, as well as awareness, in particular about the risks that lead people to fall into trafficking networks. Chaves commented that this requires "a constant investment in education, both formal and informal".

While various Central American publications have reported on the new law, the story has generally been presented through facts, such as details of the proceedings and direct quotations from representatives. The press' reluctance to add commentary, to offer analysis or opinion, to stories on trafficking may reflect the lack of understanding and haziness surrounding the definition and nature of the issue, causing people not to feel confident enough to engage in the debate surrounding the causes of trafficking and avenues that should be taken to tackle it. The law seems to have addressed these obstacles to media and public engagement through a new focus on early intervention and training for police and judges. This is only the start, however, and how successful the law proves to be in providing a platform for this vital investment in education, and therefore prevention, is yet to be seen.

### Abortion Rights

#### **Mexico: Hundreds of women are denounced for having abortions**

*Translated by CAWN*

Just between 2009 and 2011, 679 women have been reported to Mexican authorities for having an abortion, according to a report presented to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) named "Access to information on sexual and reproductive health in Latin America". This report, produced by civil organizations in the region, shows that in 24 states of Mexico women were reported to authorities for terminating unwanted pregnancies.

On November 2, organizations from Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru, said their governmental institutions do not offer relevant, complete or current information on the topic of women health rights.

In Mexico, of these 679 women only 86 were

sentenced, either with a conviction or acquittal. Although the report does not specify further details, it notes that most of these women were aged between 18 and 25 years old. The civil organisations did not have access to data regarding the women's socioeconomic status, ethnicity, residence or whether they had an abortion or miscarriage. The Ministry of Health (MOH) provided data regarding the number of abortions in hospitals between 2009 and 2010, according to which cases increased from 1562 in 2009 to 8386 in 2010. The MOH said they did not have data on unsafe abortions.

Civic groups stated that the MOH does not have a specific programme to address legal abortions (it's legal when there is foetal malformation, risk of the life of the mother or pregnancy as a result of rape); the issue is included in the "Fair Start in Life" programme, which also addresses maternal mortality and morbidity.

Several organisations leading this research made



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proposals for change. They highlighted the need to develop public policies to promote women's access to information on sexual and reproductive health, promoted by governments, women and citizens groups.

They asked the Commission to encourage countries to develop and implement effective judicial procedures to review the decisions of officials who deny public access to information on these issues.

They also emphasized the need to implement the principle of maximum disclosure on sexual and reproductive rights and reminded governments that they have the obligation to provide data on sexual and reproductive health disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, race, and other risk factors. They also demanded the publication of reliable and up to date statistics.

[More](#)

### **Uruguay: Statement on the reaction of the Catholic Church to the approval of the Law of Voluntary Termination of Pregnancy**

*Translated by CAWN*

[“Statement for the intolerant ecclesiastical interference in the political life of Uruguay”](#), release on 20 September by the , by Civil Association 20 Of September, Free From Religion Collective Of Uruguay and the Uruguayan Association of Freethinkers

A message to the public on the intolerant interference by the Church in the political life of the Republic:

In Uruguay, the Law on Voluntary Termination of Pregnancy, which decriminalises abortion under certain conditions and provides a policy framework and healthcare to women who choose to terminate their pregnancy, has been passed.

Following this, the Catholic Church announced the automatic excommunication of the legislators, congressmen and senators who voted for this law, since this meant promoting practices against life. These legislators, who are the people's representatives and were elected in democratic process, voted for this law to be passed using their reason and freedom of thought.

This Law, even though it is still limited and

unsatisfactory in many respects, represents an attempt to create a legal framework and safe health conditions that allow women a minimum level of security when making the difficult decision to have an abortion.

Simultaneously, Catholic groups have advertised protests against this Law, including protests against sexual diversity.

Protests against the diversity of sexual orientation and identification of homosexuality as an immoral practice are against the fundamental right to freedom which is enshrined for every citizen by the Constitution. Positions like the one taken today by those who are against the Law passed by Parliament make them complicit in clandestine abortion practices and the death of women who have these abortions

This is the outdated reaction of those longing for witch hunts and burnings at the stake; those who say nothing about the indescribable multiple acts of paedophilia practiced by clergy members, who don't explain why they don't support the ordination of women; those who discriminate against homosexuals by not admitting the union of partners of the same sex and those who don't fight the growing manifestations of racism and xenophobia in many parts of the world.

The bigots do not support diversity, the multicoloured landscape of society, do not support a 'truth' different to theirs and do not admit any doubt that undermines their dogma. This is a way of thinking and conceiving life we do not share but still respect, as long as it does not mean, as is the situation today, a gross interference in the affairs of the Republican and secular state, creating pressures that affect democracy and the peaceful coexistence of society.

We reject acts of interference in the affairs of the Republic by those who trying to exercise spiritual power over society – which we respect but do not necessarily share. They are trying to exercise power in politics by following the directives of a foreign state (the so-called Vatican City State – which received its status from the hands of Dictator Mussolini).

*For now we say:*

*Yes to the values of citizenship, which are Freedom, freedom of thought, secularism and*



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*solidarity for the good of the whole of society.*

*Yes to the values of respect for human dignity and integration of diversity.*

*No the petty personal or group interests seeking regression of libertarian, republican and secular conquests in order to plunge society into the darkness of hatred, intolerance and lack of freedom.*

*No to ecclesiastical interference in the political life of the country, pressuring the Parliament of the Republic with undemocratic and unacceptable practices.*

**Briefing paper:** ['Maternal Health, Reproductive](#)

### **Women workers' rights**

#### **Nicaragua advances the rights of domestic workers**

Nicaragua was the first country in Central America, and fourth in the world, to ratify International Labour Organization Convention 189 concerning domestic workers. However, all involved recognize that there is much work to do to ensure domestic workers experience the same level of labour rights as other workers. Nicaragua celebrates December 10<sup>th</sup> as the Day of the Domestic Worker.

According to El Nuevo Diario, only 2% of domestic workers are enrolled in the social security system. Of the total labour force, 10% are domestic workers, a total of about 280,000 people, 86% of whom are women.

Speaking at the National Forum of Domestic Workers, Bertha Rosa Guerra Gallardo, the ILO representative in Nicaragua, praised Nicaragua

#### [Rights and the Criminalisation of Abortion in Central America'](#)

El Salvador and Nicaragua have the most stringent bans on abortion, which don't even make exceptions for cases of rape, incest, threat to the mother's health or severe foetus abnormality – not even to save a woman's life in immediate risk. Honduras and Guatemala share similar legislations although emergency abortion to save the mother's life is permitted.

The effects of this criminalisation are causing widespread human rights violations and reflect systemic discrimination against women in the region.

for ratifying Convention 186 and pointed out that there are great obligations for the government under the Convention. These obligations require changes in the country's laws such as reducing the domestic workers' workday from 12 to eight hours and the establishment of child care centres for workers' children. Both the ILO representative and Andrea Morales, Women's Secretary of the Sandinista Workers Central (CST) emphasized the need to train domestic workers (and their employers) about their rights as workers. Labour Minister Jeanette Chavez, said that approval of the ILO Convention fulfilled one of the Sandinista government's commitments to restore rights to the people after 17 years of neoliberal governments. She acknowledged and supported the need to change the legal code to protect the rights of domestic workers and to educate workers about their rights.



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### **Free Trade Agreements: wealth for the wealthy and exploitation for workers**

*Written by Reyna Tejada, translated by Laura Britton and edited by Virginia Lopez Calvo*



*Reyna works for the Collective of Honduran Women (CODEMUH) and she toured England, Scotland and Austria recently. This article presents some of the arguments Reyna made during the tour, including who are the real beneficiaries of trade agreements in Central America and how do they impact labour standards in the region, and in particular maquila workers.*

The globalization of capital and communications across the world has forced so-called 'Third World' countries such as Honduras to accept trade agreements between the US and Europe with Central America. The negotiations behind these agreements are unfair due to the discrepancy between respective economies, however negotiators act as if everyone is on the same economic and political footing.

Countries like Honduras offer the world's powerful economies cheap labour and flexible laws adaptable to the needs of economic and political power. These economies are provided with road, port and airport infrastructure, the best land for building port facilities or industrial estates, natural resources such as water, public services and remits on energy use etc. Another major attraction is an almost total exemption from paying any taxes, duties or levies.

Honduras currently has free trade agreements with the United States, Mexico, Colombia, Chile, the Dominican Republic, China and Taiwan, and has recently signed one with the European Union (EU). These agreements mean that Honduran products can be exported to 39 countries and 1,140 million consumers, 500 million of whom live in the European Union alone.

The European Investment Bank (EIB) granted a loan to the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI) to bolster the financing of a 100-kilometre-long highway across Honduras to connect the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, as well as the renovation of Puerto Cortés to become the largest sea port in Central America. Clearly, this investment aims to connect the 'maquila' (clothing) processing plants located in the Sula Valley in order to increase the flow of exports and imports between Europe and the rest of America. This project is part of the Puebla-Panama Plan, a regional action plan designed to improve infrastructure in Central America and Mexico by promoting transnational investment in the region.

This loan will facilitate the free movement of merchandise, goods and people from the Central American region now that Puerto Cortés has become the largest loading dock in Central America. The high-quality roads in the area mean that exportation can take place 24 hours a day. This makes it easier for industry to set up here and violate the human and labour rights of its workers when they are required to meet compulsory production targets or quotas. Through the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI), a loan of 180 million US dollars was granted to the National Port Authority for the expansion of Puerto Cortés. The authorities are clearly thinking of the economic benefits of this industry rather than its effects on the poor, especially on women who are affected the most. So, who should have free trade?

Transnational brands move their production facilities to Central America because they are attracted by the liberalisation of tariffs and because the authorities are receptive to their interests. Furthermore, Central America is conveniently located, facilitating the transport of goods to the United States, the largest importer from this region. In Honduras, the 'maquila' industry is located near Puerto Cortés, one of the world's biggest customs areas, so, although Asia has more competitive labour costs, Central America is still a draw for transnational brands.



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### Free Trade Agreements: who do they benefit?

The Free Trade Agreement between the United States, Central America and the Dominican Republic, known as CAFTA-DR was ratified by Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras in 2006 and by Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic in 2007. This agreement establishes the liberalization of duty payments in the US market. Governments and businesses promote the idea that these economic agreements encourage and increase employment opportunities.

However, after 7 years of CAFTA-DR, official figures from the National Statistics Institute show that unemployment has increased. A household survey in May 2011 showed that an estimated 175,000 people had fallen into poverty.

At the same time, the National Congress has implemented various decrees which contravene labour standards, changing the recruitment process and abolishing certain rights in the workplace. At the end of 2010, a package of social and labour laws were approved and passed which in practice, reforms most of the protections set down in the National Constitution and Labour Code, including: job security, full payment of the minimum wage, maternity rights, payment of bonuses, 14th month employment bonus and the right to social security. An example of such measures is the enforcement of the 'Temporary and Part-Time Employment Programme', originally to be in force for 36 months, but now lobbying is underway to enforce it permanently.

The 'Temporary and Part-Time Employment Programme' should have been used by the judiciary as well as executive and business directors to solve the problem of unemployment, however, it has on the contrary affected workers' job security, as businesses implement harmful strategies to replace permanent posts with temporary or part-time positions.

People hired under this system do not enjoy the rights and benefits enjoyed by permanent employees, such as: paid maternity leave, paid holiday and other entitlements. This situation aggravates poverty and puts the working population at greater risk of having an accident or endangering their health at work.

Differentials in minimum wage levels across the country are also part of these new labour policies. In some region, the 'maquila' industry has lowered the minimum wage below the national level by way of Executive Decree. According to Agreement No. STSS-001-2012 on the minimum wage, a worker in the 'maquila' industry should earn a minimum of 4,645.34 lempiras per month; that's 154.84 per day and 19.36 per hour. For regions where salaries have been lowered, the monthly wage stands at 3,463.89 lempiras whilst in other areas of production, the salary is 6,944.01 lempiras.

As was mentioned before, unemployment has risen and jobs have become less secure. Managers of the 'maquila' industry are constantly using the media to broadcast the idea that systematic mass redundancies are a result of the economic crisis and a drop in First World purchasing power. They also subtly threaten to relocate to Nicaragua due to high production costs in Honduras, in spite of the government incentives and tax exemptions they enjoy. However, Eduardo Facuse, President of the Honduran 'Maquila' Association (AHM) said in an interview that during the last few months of 2011, the 'maquila' industry had seen a 10% growth in production and explained that this spurt had been due to cost-cutting, without specifying which costs had been cut. What's clear is that the working population has suffered the most since production has increased whilst jobs on the production line have been lost. Production targets that were previously set for a team of 16 workers are now the targets set for a group of 12 according to a 2011 REDCAM study on the "Impact of the economic crisis on the lives of 'maquila' workers."

Now found across the world, the 'maquila' production model is characterised by import and export tariff benefits and the exploitation of under-skilled and under-paid labour. This industry started up in Latin America in the mid-1960s with Mexico being a particularly popular location for new businesses (Grijalva, 2004). Money has fuelled this industry's global expansion as it is a way for brand businesses to lower their production costs.



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The 'maquila' clothing industry is very important in Honduras. The main risks and demands associated with working conditions and the way in which work is organized include: repetitive movements, awkward positions, manually handling loads, psychological stress due to lengthy working hours, high production targets, strict monitoring, little or no independence, a Taylorist management model and badly designed workstations teamed with high temperatures, noise, chaff (dust), poor lighting and exposure to toxic substances.

Despite specific setbacks on women's human and labour rights amidst an environment of corruption, violence and impunity, worsened by the coup, this crisis is an opportunity for people and especially women to further develop their skills of critical analysis and social commitment.

The efforts of women workers in collaboration with CODEMUH have managed to push through 70 rulings for job relocation and 47 rulings recognizing the risks posed by occupational illnesses, 14 of which involved workers with social security (IHSS) pensions. Tacit reforms of the Social Security assessment framework have been agreed, together with the IHSS List of Musculoskeletal Occupational Illnesses as outlined in the Labour Code. We are building up relevant case law and have managed to pressure for rulings so that people can return to work after being dismissed unfairly due to illness.

CODEMUH has taken action for several years in order to help change the violent situation faced by women daily whether it be related to health and safety at work, hate crimes, violence at work or any type of violence, be it domestic, social, sexual or symbolic.

CODEMUH Honduran Women's Collective, Central American Network in Solidarity with Women Working in Maquilas (REDCAM).

### Women and the Media



#### **Dying to be on air: the risks, challenges (and satisfaction) of having women's voices heard in community radio in Honduras**

*Virginia López Calvo works as a Project Coordinator at CAWN. She holds a BA (Hons) in Social and Political Communication and a MSc in Development Studies. She is actively involved in building international feminist networks.*

'I never imagined I would host a radio programme' Reyna Tejada, organizer and coordinator at the Collective of Honduran Women (CODEMUH), said as our plane took off Heathrow airport to continue our speaker tour, now headed to Vienna. 'When I arrived in Choloma (the city where CODEMUH and most of the maquila industry in Honduras are based) to work in the *maquilas* I was a very shy girl from rural Honduras'.

In our [autumn newsletter](#), Amanda Hernandez wrote about the importance of community radio for women in Central America. Faced with state oppression, particularly since the coup d'état in 2009, and with patriarchal oppression that silences women's voices, feminist groups like CODEMUH, found community radio a tool for education, advocacy and women's empowerment. In Reyna's words, 'having a radio programme is a dream come true for CODEMUH: now we can reach larger audiences.'

It wasn't an easy journey though.

Three members of CODEMUH, *ex-maquila* workers, were trained as radio speakers and producers who, in turn, trained past and current *maquila* workers. Some of them though, particularly those working at



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*maquilas*, find it difficult to make the time to go the studio. Others have given up in the face of increasing insecurity in Choloma's streets. CODEMUH broadcasts in the evening and in a country with the world's highest homicide rate, it's unsafe to walk at night. However, some have persevered and Reyna is amongst them. When the cost of life became so expensive that paying for transport to and from the studio was a luxury, they decided to broadcast from CODEMUH's office, connecting with the radio station's studio by internet and phone.

Through community stations Radio Progreso, Radio Uno, La Voz Lenca, Radio Guarajambala and Radio Exclusiva, CODEMUH reaches to all 19 Honduran provinces with two weekly programmes: 'Voices of Women' and 'This is how women talk'. CODEMUH, Reyna explained, has gained much publicity and recognition for these programmes', particularly in a country where radio is still the main mass media, ahead of TV and newspapers. 'We offer analysis, always from a gender perspective and an alternative discourse to that of state-controlled radio stations that belong to monopolies run by the makers of the coup d'etat.' They also discuss women's issues, such as reproductive health and violence against women, announce CODEMUH's activities and give space to women artists, workers and victims to speak for themselves.

Obstacles to continue broadcasting arise not only from limited economic resources and a hyper-violent context. The government of Porfirio Lobo and the oligarchs, businessmen and land-owners he represents don't approve of the demands and challenges from communities. Community radio is not only crucial for the women's and feminist movements in Honduras, it is also vital for *campesinos*, indigenous peoples and dissident voices. That's why community radios have become the target of the national agency responsible for telecommunications, CONATEL.

Reporters without Borders have recently confronted this body and denounced its harassment for community radio stations affiliated to the Honduran Council of Popular and Indigenous Civic Organizations (COPINH). In 2012 CONATEL ordered Radio Guarajambala FM to switch to another frequency even though it has been broadcasting on the same frequency since its creation in 2002 and to reduce the strength of its signal. Failure to do so would cost Radio Guarajambala a €40,000 fine. In 2011 CONATEL had announced a draft resolution designed to suspend the granting of frequencies to low broadcast-strength radio stations. These decisions are in line with CONATEL's self-proclaimed mission to 'promote private investment and competition in the telecommunications sector'.

The COPINH radio stations believe that the threats, censorship attempts and direct attacks they often receive (including power supply cuts by state officials to force the radio off the air) are directly linked to their open criticism of issues such as the murders of *campesinos* in the Aguán region, the seizure of land from the indigenous Lenca and corruption in the Intibucá region.

General elections are scheduled in Honduras for November 2013 and dissident voices must be silenced. If journalists in alternative media will not surrender to administrative, legal and physical harassment they can expect the threat of death. Indeed, a total of 33 journalists have been killed since the coup d'etat.

It is in this context that CODEMUH continues to successfully fight for women's voices to be heard on the air. Radio Progreso, one of the community radio stations hosting CODEMUH's programmes, is so impressed with their work that they have asked Reyna to become a correspondent on gender issues for Choloma as part of the radio's main news programme. It





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might only be a 2 minutes slot but Reyna knows that thousands of people, from urban and rural areas, are now regularly listening to a gendered analysis of the news.

## WOMEN'S STRUGGLES

### **Guatemala: For the first time ever a National Court takes pre-trial statements of survivors of sexual exploitation**

*Translated by CAWN*

This article summarises the interview with Maya Alvarado conducted as part of the judicial proceedings that took place between 24 and 28 September 2012. For the first time, a national court heard pre-trial testimony from fifteen Maya quek'chies women, victims of sexual exploitation, and four male survivors of torture. They were abused between 1982 and 1986 at the military base Sepuj Sarco during the armed conflict in Guatemala.

The complainants were the organisations: [Women Transforming the world](#), the [National Union of Guatemalan Women](#) and the [Community Studies and Psychosocial Action Team](#).

The case required the reconstruction of events using data and testimonies of those who witnessed abuses in the military base and in the community.

The complaint highlights the fact that the abuses occurred when there was no armed guerrilla in the region, so this cannot be used as a reason to justify the number of military bases. However, there was conflicts between peasants and landowners for control of land (the massacre of Panzós happened in this context), proving collusion between farmers and soldiers. An example of this is that the military bases, some of them for extermination purposes, were situated in farmland offered by these landowners.

In the military base Sepuj Sarco, which was used as a place for soldiers to rest, the women of the community were forced to do household work and were raped. Many were even forced to take contraceptive measures - injection or pill - to prevent pregnancy as a result of the continuous sexual assaults.

Witnesses identified members of the military

patrols or farmers as responsible for the abuses. The case covers a six years period and incriminates four different military groups.

This case is being heard at the Court of Conscience On Sexual Violence Against Women During the Armed Conflict in Guatemala. This court attempts to do justice to crimes of the past and to dismantle mechanisms that maintain impunity of criminals. Thanks to this court, the claim was possible and because some of the victims are very old or have terminal illnesses, they were able to give pre-trial statements. The legal expertise of the case was conducted by [Women's Link Worldwide](#).

Unfortunately, in the current context, funding for justice cases of the past has been greatly reduced, especially with the new government, and Women's Link Worldwide has had to seek the help of other organizations. Most of the media companies responded to their call and covered the case.

This case, which is situated in the context of genocide in Guatemala, reports the abuse that these women faced, but now it's time for the judicial system charged against those responsible for these crimes.

[More](#)

### **Hand-Sewn Crafts from the Nueva Esperanza Cooperative in El Salvador**

El Salvador Network is offering to bring hand embroidered goods from the women's sewing cooperative in Nueva Esperanza. You can see the catalogue here with photos, descriptions and prices and an order form if you would like to order anything. The profits go directly to the Cooperative. It's helpful for the women in the cooperative to get orders well in advance, so if you're interested, please send your order to [mogstim@hotmail.com](mailto:mogstim@hotmail.com) by the end of January. To pay, you'll need to post a cheque for the total amount, made out to:



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New Hope, postal address 169 Newcombe Road, Birmingham B21 8DB.

### Meso-American Initiative: Defend Our Defenders

On International Human Rights Day, the Meso-American Initiative of Women Human Rights Defenders honoured all women defending human rights. It created personalised files of courageous and inspiring women who have fought and defended human rights in Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras.

[More](#)

## defend our defenders

Hermelinda is from Costa Chica in Guerrero, from a Mixteca community of Tlacoachihahuaca. After several years confronting injustice and corruption, she decided to get involved in political life. However, her most important struggle has been the design and implementation of several community projects, like the women's center-hostel Casa de la Mujer Indígena in Ometepec. She has received death threats and other aggressions as a result of the complaints regarding corruption that she filed against former members of the Na Savi Regional Fund, as well as against representatives of the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples.



Name: Hermelinda Tiburcio Cayetano  
Organization: Na Savi Regional Fund, Fimal Antzetik.  
Place: Costa Chica, Guerrero, México.  
Activity: Defense of women's rights and indigenous peoples' rights.  
Aggressions faced:

**HARASSMENT**

**DEATH THREATS**



## CAWN'S PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

This section features partners and other organizations we work closely with

### Latin American Bureau (LAB)

The [Latin America Bureau](#) is an independent provider of news, analysis and information on Latin America, its people, politics and society. For over 30 years LAB has promoted greater understanding and awareness of the region through newsletters, social media, interviews, articles, videos and reports on the most critical issues facing the region. LAB also publishes books and works as a channel for NGOs and civil society in Latin America to tell the world about their work.

LAB has recently launched [an appeal to support them with a financial contribution](#) as they depended for many years on core funding from the major UK aid agencies such as OXFAM, Christian Aid and CAFOD. As these agencies' priorities change and they prioritise spending directly in the region and in the poorest countries, grants to LAB have been cut back.

A member of LAB's team says: 'In September [2012] we launched our new website which has been an instant hit. As well as news, we can now carry details of our Partners, blog discussions and more events and we are beginning to build an e-Library of resources on the region'.

CAWN and LAB are collaborating to release a

series of articles that take an in-depth look at femicides and violence against women in Central America.

### Ventana Latina



[Ventana Latina](#) (VL) is an online cultural magazine with a Latin American focus, aimed at the Spanish-speaking community in the UK and Europe. They are a quarterly non-profit publication from the Latin American House of London in search of sponsors to grow and be sustainable.

VL seeks to strengthen the Latin American identity of emigrants and to be the voice of Latin America in Europe and the UK. The magazine is a portal for Latin American artists and authors and offers a cultural guide of events related to Latin America. VL shares poetry, articles about photography,



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painting, exhibitions, cinema, theatre and other interesting topics.

In order to understand Latin-American culture beyond its borders and to be able to form a Latin-American identity abroad in a global world, the promotion and dissemination of art and culture outside of Latin America is essential. These art

forms are excellent opportunities for cultural interaction that help Latin-Americans strengthen our identity and understand our belonging in the Diaspora.

[The latest edition of 'Ventana Latina'](#) is dedicated to women, their art and their struggles, so CAWN is one of the features. Enjoy it.

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