



**central america women's network**  
promoting women's rights and gender equality  
[www.cawn.org](http://www.cawn.org)

February 2009  
**ELECTRONIC BULLETIN**



## CONTENTS:

---

1. CAWN News
2. CAWN Campaigns
3. CAWN Publications
4. CAWN Events
5. Central America News Updates
6. Other Publications
7. Upcoming Events and Conferences

## 1. CAWN NEWS

---

### • Research Report

CAWN's latest research entitled *The Response of International Aid Agencies to Violence against Women in Central America – the case of Honduras* has been greeted with an excellent response across the globe. The report was intended to be used as a tool in highlighting the importance of considering VAW programmes as a contributory factor in poverty relief efforts, and for the creation of more sustainable international funding to tackle VAW. The research has reached out to the Government of Honduras, policy and decision makers, various international aid donors and national & international women's rights organisations with very positive feedback, highlighting the need to produce literature to raise awareness of these issues.

Copies of the research are still available from the CAWN website, alternatively please email [info@cawn.org](mailto:info@cawn.org) for further copies.

### • Speaker Tour

From the 4<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> March 2009 CAWN are delighted to be hosting this year's Speaker Tour in conjunction with our partner organisation CEM-H (Centro de Estudios de la Mujer – Honduras). Representatives from CAWN and CEM-H will be meeting with CAWN supporters, NGOs and other women's organisations to raise awareness of their campaigns and work with grassroots women. Please check the CAWN website or CAWN EVENTS below for full details.

### • Seminar on Femicide in Central America

CAWN will be holding a seminar during May 2009 focusing upon the phenomenon of Femicide. Women's activists from Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras will be speaking in London and Geneva to raise awareness of these issues to policy and decision makers at international level. Please check the CAWN website later in the year for further details.

## 2. CAWN CAMPAIGNS

---

### • Nicaragua Update

In October 2008 CAWN took action, following the accusations and actions of the Nicaraguan Government against civil society organisations and in particular women's organisations.

In a direct response to letters sent to the UK government, a strategic meeting was conducted during December 2008, between the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) Group of British Overseas NGOs for Development (BOND) (including CAWN) and officials of the FCO and DFID.

The meeting was a forum for discussion to express concerns regarding the lack of protection of civil and political rights, the consistent human rights abuses and a loss of political space for programmes and advocacy in the region. Of particular concern was the threat to the autonomy of local NGOs and INGOs by the proposed *marco regulatorio* (the new NGO manual).

In a recent development, on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, Prosecutor Douglas Vargas announced that the investigations against 17 NGOs, would be dropped because the evidence did not support bringing them to trial. Although the dropping of charges has been considered a victory, there are many concerns regarding the potential far-reaching implications of the *marco regulatorio*, particularly due to the current lack public consultation. As such it is feared that the first public access to the document will be on its publication later this year.

Following the letters of solidarity sent by CAWN to local women's organisation in Nicaragua, expressions of appreciation of the work carried out in the UK have been received, reflecting the importance of solidarity networks across the globe.

A follow-up meeting is due to take place March 2009.

## 3. CAWN PUBLICATIONS

---

CAWN publications are available to download from our website. For a hard copy, please email [info@cawn.org](mailto:info@cawn.org) with your full contact details. Please feel free to distribute our research amongst your contacts, networks, and beneficiaries.

### • CAWN Newsletter Spring 2009

Available from March 2009, the theme of this edition of the CAWN Newsletter will be Femicide. It will feature articles relating to each of the Central American countries and the impact of the worsening situation throughout the region.

## 4. CAWN EVENTS

---

All CAWN events are free and open to all members of the public. For further information or to register your attendance, please contact CAWN on [info@cawn.org](mailto:info@cawn.org) or 0207 8334174. Please feel free to forward event invitations to those who may be interested.

### • MOVIMIENTOS: Música Mestiza. Documentary films. Latin Culture.

**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2009, 7pm**

Salmon and Compass, 58 Penton Street (Corner of Chapel Market), London N1 9PZ

7pm: Film: "Promises and bullets" and CAWN's Honduran Speaker Tour Q&A

9pm: Music: Latin American music, DJs, live percussion & guest musician

### • Speaker Tour University Visits

**Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2009, 6-8pm**

Oxford Brookes University: 'Viva Leon' meeting. Speakers, films, Latin American music and food, providing a 'taste of Central America'.

**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2009, 4-6pm**

University of Manchester: Meeting with the Human Rights Society, NUS facilities

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2009, 10am-12noon**

Institute for the Study of the Americas: 'The impact of globalisation on women in Central America'. Old library room, second floor – main building.

### • Celebration of International Women's Day & Seminar on gender-based violence in Honduras

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2009, 2-5pm**

Living Space, 1 Coral Street, Waterloo, London SE1 7BE

A joint event held by CAWN/CEMH and LAWRS (Latin America Women's Rights Service) to celebrate International Women's Day 2009. An opportunity for Latin American women living in the UK to share their own experiences with the guest speakers CEM-H and take part in informal workshops. Celebrations will be accompanied by free food and music.

### • **AGM & Open Meeting**

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2009, 6.30-8.30pm**

CAWN Office, OWA, Bradley Close, White Lion Street, London N1 9PF

This years AGM open meeting is entitled 'Challenging violence against women in Honduras, identifying the links between poverty reduction and promoting women's rights'. Representatives from CEM-H will present and share their experiences, their work in tackling violence against women and their initiatives to influence policy and decision-makers for better and more sustainable services, policies and institutions. CAWN friends and supporters are invited to join CAWN and CEM-H to discuss the situation of women's rights in Honduras and the Central American region; the struggle to promote and defend women's rights, and the successes and challenges of CEM-H's work.

RSVP to [info@cawn.org](mailto:info@cawn.org).

## **5. CENTRAL AMERICA NEWS UPDATES**

---

### • **First Femicide Trial in Guatemala**

Source: COHA (2<sup>nd</sup> February 2009)

Ten months after the Guatemalan Parliament approved the Law against Femicide and Other Forms of Violence against Women, Calixto Simon Cun, accused of physical aggression against his wife, is the first Guatemalan citizen to be tried under the legislation. On 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2008, the accused was arrested on the street as he beat his wife. The trial lays the foundation in the fight against escalating violence against women, with powers to impose prison terms of 25-50-year for Femicide charges and 5-12 years in jail for sexual, physical or psychological violence. Last year alone, 722 women were murdered and, according to the investigations, many of the murders were preceded by physical violence at home. Fundacion Sobrevivientes (Foundation Survivors) Director Norma Cruz told Prensa Latina that about ten cases might be tried this year, a small amount compared to the number of women who have been killed as a result of gender violence, in a county with one of the world's highest rates of violence against women. For full article, see:

<http://www.plenglish.com/article.asp?ID=%7B26507F87-2D57-491B-8521-081778B64A80%7D}&language=EN>

### • **Costa Rica Prostitutes to Teach Aids Prevention**

Source: Costa Rica Pages (26<sup>th</sup> January 2009)

La Sala Association for the Improvement of Sex Workers' Quality of Life, with the help of a \$50,000 donation from the World Bank, is introducing a new programme in the red light district of San Jose. The initiative, designed to empower and educate female sex workers, will focus on Aids prevention as well as the rights of the prostitutes. It is hoped that each of the 22 women who receive the official training will in turn form her own workshop or pass the information on to co-workers through casual conversation, reaching a total of 220 sex workers. By using prostitutes or ex-prostitutes to transmit the message of prevention, it will help them to have a bigger impact on the others because they have an insider understanding of how things work in the brothels and interaction with clients. The project also aims to educate some 1,100 male clients and make an impact on their sexual practices as well. Owners and business managers of locales that offer sexual services will also receive training to show them the advantages of having an HIV-free facility and how the use of preventative practices can be used as a marketing tactic to attract clients.

For full article, see:

<http://www.costaricapages.com/blog/costa-rica-news/aids-prevention/1814>

### • **Mexico: two years on: the law to protect women has had no impact at state level**

Sources: Amnesty International (29<sup>th</sup> January 2009) & Prensa Latina (28<sup>th</sup> December 2008)

As Amnesty International finalises reports detailing the failures of the General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free From Violence, the Mexican Senate's Commission for Legislative Studies is preparing an initiative to declare 2009 as the Violence Against Women Year.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the legislation, AI has said that the law has had no impact in the majority of Mexico's 32 states. In a preliminary report, AI assessed the level of fulfilment of some of the most important points of the law and found that of the 30 states that have passed the law, few have implemented some of its main requirements, and in two states, Guanajuato and Oaxaca, the legislation had still not even been approved.

"There is a clear and deplorable lack of state-level commitment to implement the [legislation]," said Kerrie Howard, Amnesty International's Deputy Director for the Americas Programme.

"In practice, this lack of commitment means that the safety and lives of thousands of women are put in jeopardy."

A table outlining the implementation of the General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free From Violence in each state will be available from 29<sup>th</sup> February 2009 from [Amnesty International](http://www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/mexico-two-years-law-protect-women-has-had-no-impact-state-level-2009012).

For more information, see:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/mexico-two-years-law-protect-women-has-had-no-impact-state-level-2009012>

and

<http://www.plenglish.com/article.asp?ID={8BC4E7DF-0F79-486A-AA8E-1E10305C8863}&language=EN>

## 6. OTHER PUBLICATIONS

---

- **Women's Resource Centre: why women? report**

*March 2009*

The WRC, in conjunction with the Equality and Human Rights Commission, are to launch their third report in the why women? series. This report entitled, *Not Just Bread but Roses Too: Funding to the Women's Voluntary and Community Sector in England*, will be available from Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2009 on the [WRC website](http://www.wrc.org.uk).

- **The Concluding Observations of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women - Guatemala**

*February 2009*

The Committee considered how the country implements the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), concluding that Guatemala had undertaken positive initiatives and progress was being made, despite the many problems the country was encountering. The Committee hoped that more would be done to address the issues Guatemala was facing as a developing country. The status of indigenous women was of importance and greater efforts needed to be made to help them. Further, it was important to improve the awareness of women and to inform them of their reproductive rights and to offer them the means to exercise their rights. Violence against women was extremely dangerous and required full attention.

To view the report, see:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/co/CEDAW-C-GUA-CO7.pdf>

For more information, see:

<http://www.guatemala-times.com/news/guatemala/787-un-committee-on-elimination-of-discrimination-against-women-considers-report-of-guatemala.html>

- **CISPES, NACLA, and Upside Down World: The 2009 El Salvador Elections: Between Crisis and Change**

*January 2009*

This new in-depth report reflects on El Salvador's current situation as well as the possibilities and challenges ahead at this pivotal moment for the nation's future. The leftist FMLN party currently holds a double-digit lead in the presidential election to be held on March 15. An FMLN victory would end 20 years of one-party rule by the main right-wing party. El Salvador could soon be joining the broadening coalition of left-leaning governments in Latin America.

To view the report, see:

<http://nacla.org/files/images/elsalvador2009.pdf>

- **Frühling, Pierre: Violence, Impunity and Fragile Democracies: Reflections on the current situation in Central America**

*October 2008*

In Spanish, Frühling is a development expert with extensive diplomatic and consulting experience in Central America. As we reach a decade since the peace accords in Central America, a good number of the Central American countries once again face a crisis in the form of violence, organized crime, and judicial decay that affect the citizenry. At the same time, the situation shows the lack of real progress in the creation of a functional democratic system.

As a case study in this phenomenon, Frühling focuses on Guatemala, one of the most affected countries.

It is currently available through [F&G Editores](http://www.fgeditores.com).

## 7. UPCOMING EVENTS & CONFERENCES

---

- **Million Women Rise National March**

*Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2009, 12pm onwards*

In celebration of International Women's Day, the second national march against male violence against women will assemble at 12pm at Portman Square, London, W1H and march along Oxford St and Regent St to rally in Waterloo Place from 2.30pm. Women are asked to wear something red in solidarity. CAWN will be

attending the march, along with two representatives from CEM-H. Please email us at [campaigns@cawn.org](mailto:campaigns@cawn.org) should you wish to arrange to join CAWN on the march.

For more information, see:

[www.millionwomenrise.com](http://www.millionwomenrise.com)

• **Improving Futures: Working Together to End Domestic Violence – New Solutions for a New World**

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2009, 9am – 7pm**

Light House, The Chubb Buildings, Fryer Street, Wolverhampton WV1 1HT

This innovative international conference, hosted by The Haven Wolverhampton, aims to aid the sharing of best practice, publicise new ways of working to prevent Domestic Violence and bring to light the latest research on rebuilding the lives of those affected by this form of abuse both in the UK and other parts of the world.

To book or for more information, please contact Grace Lee on 01902 572173 or see [www.havenrefuge.org.uk/Events/International%20Conference.html](http://www.havenrefuge.org.uk/Events/International%20Conference.html)

• **TUC International Women's Day Evening Reception, Working Women's Rights**

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2009, 6.30 – 8.30pm**

Marble Hall, Congress Centre, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS

Mindful of many anniversaries pertinent to working women, this year's TUC International Women's Day Reception celebrates progress made and what further work needs to be done.

For more information, see:

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/international/index.cfm>

• **Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, AGM & Spring Seminar**

**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2009, 10.15am – 4.15pm**

Human Rights Action Centre, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3EA

UK WILPF will be holding their Annual General Meeting followed by their spring seminar entitled, 'What price for peace? Gender budgeting for gender equality' with keynote speaker Marion Böker and a choice of workshops to attend.

To book or for more information, please contact [office@ukwilpf.org.uk](mailto:office@ukwilpf.org.uk) or 0207 250 1968.

• **Seizing the opportunities of CEDAW: Developing a women's sector strategy for 2011**

**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2009, 9.30am – 4pm**

Human Rights Action Centre, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3EA

The Women's Resource Centre (WRC) and the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) present a full day capacity-building and strategy conference on the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Registration is free but RSVPs are essential. To book or for more information, please contact [admin@wrc.org.uk](mailto:admin@wrc.org.uk) or 0207 324 3030.