

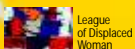
Agenda for Gender Justice

An comprehensive strategy of accompaniment, formation and empowerment of women victims of forced displacement and other war crimes

For the
restitution
of right
to justice



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Agenda for Gender Justice

Within the work strategies of the League of Displaced Women, LDW, a line of intervention titled Agenda for Gender Justice has been implemented, which comprises a legal strategy to denunciate the crime of forced displacement, and other war crimes committed against the women of the League.

The strategy also includes a research area that systematically compiles the testimonies and life stories of the League's women; this are also research on historical, academic, and press documents that corroborate the facts narrated by women.

Also, we have interposed legal action and challenges to the constitutionality of the norms and process of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reinsertion (DDR) implemented by the Colombia government, which violate the human rights of the women of the League and women forcibly displaced in general.

Besides, citizens' monitoring actions have been carried out, through petition rights and appeals for constitutional protection, consultations and other mechanisms of citizen's participation, in order to monitor and assess the effectiveness of the public policies adopted to protect the rights of the

internal displaced population and ensure the restitution of their rights as defined by the Colombian Constitutional Court. In addition, qualitative research tools have been designed for this purpose, in such a way that the information is compiled through a community-based participatory approach, in which the displaced women are the main actors and driven forces.

The women of the organization are trained in a leadership school that offers formative workshops on Human Rights, International Humanitarian Law (IHL), and gender issues. We bring experts on each of the topics as a permanent strategy of education.



Our main Goal

The main goal of the project is to strengthen the Agenda for Gender Justice of the LDW, so that a group of strategies are designed to ensure that the displaced women, who live in the Province of Bolívar, are informed and obtain legal skills to give visibility for the situation of vulnerability of women's human rights, as well as to establish elements of proof that will allow them to access and claim their right to the truth, justice and reparation.



The City of Women: A Space of the Possible

The City of Women is the result of a LDW project called "Dream of a Dignified Life"; which comprised the resettlement of more than 500 people and the restitution of their right of housing. The City of Women is the most emblematic¹ project of the organization. Located in the Municipality of Turbaco, Province of Bolívar, it is a comprehensive initiative of socio-economic development, democratic participation and gender justice around the construction of dignified homes for forcibly displaced women and their families.

The City of Women has been attacked several times by

paramilitary groups; the women of the League have been victims of assassinations, forced disappearances, robbery of humanitarian aid, and threats against the leaders by armed masked paramilitary groups. The City of Women's Community Center, known as the "Heart of Women", was burned down, apparently in an arson attack from paramilitary groups.²

The City of Women is more than a housing project; it is more than a physical territory. The City of Women is a symbolic space of organized peaceful social resistance of the women victims of forced displacement and atrocious crimes. It is an experience that has become an example of social

struggle for other social movements. It has been recognized at national and international levels by different institutions, such as the Colombian National Peace Prize (2005), the King of Spain Human Rights Prize (2006), the "Latin America Generates Gender Knowledge Prize" (2007) and the Global Fund for Women (2008).

The City of Women is the space that has made possible that today a group of 144 women victims of forced displacement and atrocious crimes raise their voices, give their testimony and decide to denounce and demand their right to the truth, justice and reparation.

1. The City of women is the result of the Project "Dream of a dignified life" supported in its moment by the USAID for the construction of housing, The Ford Foundation for Gender Justice, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for organizational strengthening; The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) for the population resettlement and the Women of the LDW with its voluntary and/or remunerated work. Currently with the support of the Management Sciences for Development (MSD), the Observatory for Gender Democracy and Human Rights (OGDHR) that develop a project of Public Policy and another project for the young of the LDW supported by Florida International University (FIU).

2. For more information on projects visit our website www.ligademujeres.org



Our Strategy...

Against Impunity: The Denunciation!

The LDW with the implementation of its Agenda for Gender Justice intends to confront the impunity of the crimes committed against women in Colombia, particularly those associated to the LDW and their families. It intends to find the truth of the facts that gave origin to the forced displacement, to know who are responsible and why the Colombian government could not prevent it from happening, or if there was connivance of the government with the illegal armed groups

such as the paramilitary groups, in order to produce criminal acts generating of more violence, land deprivation, and loss of property, among others.

The Agenda for Gender Justice is developed through the implementation of strategies comprised in three dimensions. The first is related to the political-organizational dimension, the second is a legal-political dimension, and finally the third community-organizational dimension.



The Political-Organizational Dimension: This is where the actions developed in its political and organizational agenda by the LDW are grouped, promoting and articulating with civil society organizations, the United Nations, and international cooperation agencies.

Legal-Political Dimension: Here litigation activities are carried out: high impact litigation and negotiation before Colombian institutions like the Constitutional Court, the Attorney General Office, the Colombian State Council, Comptroller General's Office, and

other protection and rights demanding actions before the Ministry of Interior and Justice.

Community-Organizational Dimension: Here permanent training in gender, Human Rights (HR), International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and social research are carried out. Besides, the formation of a technical team of women's grassroots organizations has been promoted to give support to the development of the Agenda for Gender Justice in documenting (taking eyewitness accounts) and in the psycho-social accompaniment.

Achievements

With this work the LDW, advised by the Observatory on Gender, Democracy and Human Rights and under the leadership of Patricia Guerrero, has presented 144 cases of forced displacements and other related crimes committed against displaced women and their families.

The displaced women -particularly those of the LDW- are determined to demand that justice and reparation be made, and that these conducts be not repeated against them or their families, or anybody else.

In addition, the LDW and the Observatory pretend and have made efforts to accomplish that other women and/or social organizations join together, allowing the application of a Legal Baseline that compiles their testimonies, in such a way that a road to the truth, justice and reparation is opened so the victims can apply to ordinary jurisdiction and /or the peace and justice law.

In this way, the LDW with the accompaniment of the Observatory, was able to coordinate the legal strategy in such a way that the Colombian Attorney General Office recognized the cases as emblematic, and ordered one procedural unit to proceed with the cases. The organization, assigned a team of attorneys the investigation, which has allowed the victims begin to exercise their right to the truth, justice and reparation.

Among the most important successes it must be mentioned:

1. That the Attorney General consider the case of the LDW as an emblematic case, that it is being managed directly by the National Direction of Attorneys and the Human Rights National Unit and the IHL.

2. The constitution of a highest level committee that meets every one and a half months constituted by the General Direction of Attorneys, the National Unit director of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, one attorney specialized in Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, leader and coordinator, The director of the National Unit for Human Trafficking of the Local Judicial Police (DJIN), a representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), committee that follows up the advancement of the trials of the LDW, and establishes policies for the strengthening of the investigations, for example, search for technical studies, forensics as well as the assignment of new Attorneys.

3. The identification of crimes not contained in the Colombian Penal Code perpetrated against women of the organization, extensive to other Colombian women victims of the conflict.

4. That all the cases of the women of the organization victims of atrocious crimes, be instructed under the coordination of one Attorney leader of the Human Rights Unit and International Humanitarian

Law (IHL).

5. The assignment of two specialized functionaries from the Judicial Police (DJIN) to the cases of the LDW.

6. The transfer of the Attorney General office number 15 specialized in Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law to the offices of the LDW in the city of Cartagena, while the reception of testimonies of the women of the LDW.

7. The systematic revision by Ms. Guerrero, of each one of the testimonies of every woman before they are incorporated to the processes, revising that the testimonies be registered clearly and technically.

8. The psychological accompaniment of the victims while they narrate their testimony, by the LDW psychologist and the women integrated as psychosocial support.

9. That the psychosocial valuation of the victim be made by the LDW psychologist. Recognition of the expertise of the LDW psychologist.

10. That the functionaries of the Judicial Police reception the further testimonies in the offices of the LDW.

11. Accomplish a permanent communication and articulation among the victims and the functionaries of the Attorney General office and the Judicial Police.

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12. Motivate the functionaries of the Regional Attorney Office of the province of Bolívar, so that they respect and accompany this activity that is handled from Bogotá by The Attorney General Office

13. Accomplish the accompaniment by the Ombudsman of the province of Bolívar and the General Procurator Office.

14. Presentation before the civil society of the advances in the trials of the Gender Based Violence (GBV) crimes.

15. Collecting systematized information and advances of the investi-

gations in the Attorney General Office.

16. Submitting the systematized information of 144 testimonies of women victims of forced displacement and other atrocious crimes.

17. Submitting information on 16 testimonies on GBV to the Attorney General Office.

18. Submitting information to the Colombian Constitutional Court with which almost 100 women are beneficiaries of specific protective measures as of the publication of the sentence 092³.

19. Formulate recommendations on the GBV topic and displacement to the Senate of the Republic of Colombia in two public audiences.

20. The support of the United Nations Agencies.

21. The direct intervention of the Colombian Constitutional Court to obtain protective measures (Sentence 200⁴) for women victims of forced displacement crime, and the redesign of all the protection policies to leaders of forced displacement, among them the women of the LDW.

3. SENTENCE N° 092 of 2008. FROM: SECOND HALL OF REVISION OF COLOMBIAN CONSTITUCIONAL COURT. Issued for the protection of the fundamental rights of women victims of forced displacement due to the Colombian armed conflict in the framework of the bettering the state of unconstitutional things stated in the sentence T-025 of 2004.

4. SENTENCE N° 200 of 2007. FROM: SECOND HALL OF REVISION OF COLOMBIAN CONSTITUCIONAL COURT. Issued for Revision of Sentence T-025 of 2004 for Protection of the right to life and the personal safety of the leaders of the displaced persons at risk situations. Adoption of protection measures of the right to life and the personal safety of some leaders of the displaced population at risk situations. One of them the LDW.

Women Network for Justice WNJ: Open Cause

In order to strengthen their capacity and accompany the victims of war crimes, the LDW, in close collaboration with the observatory and other women's social organizations and non-organized victims, has created the Women Network for Justice (WNJ): Open Cause.

The idea of this network is to articulate the organizations of displaced women who will legally demand their cases jointly with other organizations, such as women's social movements, human rights organizations, the UN and government institutions, so that they become enti-

ties of support to the women victims who would be especially protected by the network. At the end WNJ: Open Cause will become a strategy of protection of the victims.



Women Network for Justice WNJ: Open Cause

The LDW believes that this work is justified because it strengthens the social movement of women and it can confront the Colombian society with the non-postponable need of not allowing the repetition of these atrocious crimes against its women.

This Project has permitted the women to hear themselves out and be moved emotionally by their silenced voices; with the community approach strategy from victim to victim it has become an invisible common tie that has turned into a road so that relationships among these women are more humane and stronger among themselves. The

testimony empowers women as narrators and as witnesses, to make them maintain their stories are to work for a live, active and transforming memory.

The LDW women are aware of the need of the recuperation of the collective memory to recover the humanity after the barbaric acts committed. If the knowledge is denied and the conscience of the injustice and the tragedy that the Colombian society has had to bear up with, the truth will not be reached, and for this it is necessary to reconstruct the memory of all voices, but specially the silenced voices of women. This strategy gives us the pos-

sibility to involve every citizen in an ethical level and transform our world without repeating the errors of the past.

The truth is essential and it can be constructed in the basis of trust. First of all, this is needed to establish the truth at all levels of the society and secondly, for the social and institutional reconstruction for the founding of a new society based on social justice without discrimination against women.

All this is the challenge the League of Displaced Women has taken on.

"If we don't recuperate the memory of women, the enormous historic wealth about the place that they have occupied as victims of the armed conflict, as well as builders of peace and development will be lost."

Patricia Guerrero

