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DISAPPEARANCES OF GIRLS AND WOMEN IN VENEZUELA:

A form of gender-based violence

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Disappearances of girls and women in Venezuela: A form of gender-based violence

by: **Aimée Sabrina Zambrano Ortiz[1] and Reina Alejandra Baiz Villafranca[2]**



Girls and women disappear in Venezuela because of their gender, in a country that does not have a National Register of Missing or Lost Persons, which generates opacity in official data allowing the invisibility of this form of violence. Therefore, General Recommendation No 2 of the Committee of Experts of the Monitoring Mechanism of the Convention of Belém Do Pará is welcomed (MESECVI) (2018), where it is recognized that in some countries of the region there are high numbers of women and girls reported missing, despite pointing out that the data is unreliable and there appears to be under-reporting of cases, which does not imply that in the aforementioned recommendation they cease to consider disappearance as a form of violence against women, largely outlining the obligations of States to prevent, investigate, punish and eradicate such a cruel reality.

The recommendation makes disappearances visible as a form of gender-based violence against girls, adolescents and women, despite the fact that it was not provided for in the Convention of Belém Do Pará. Disappearances are connected to other forms of gender-based violence, for example, a woman may disappear to be subjected to sexual slavery or to femicide, thereby demonstrating the need to constantly update the data and to include the different forms of violence that arise, as well as the legal instruments that enable it to be addressed.

Thus, the general objective of this research is to analyze the disappearance of girls, adolescents and women in Venezuela as a form of gender-based violence, within the framework of General Recommendation No 2 (2018) of the MESECVI Committee.

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I) Disappearance of persons in the Venezuelan legal framework

Before analyzing the characterization of enforced disappearances in the Venezuelan legal system, it is important to highlight the existing international basis in this area.

The Universal System of Human Rights Protection adopted the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance[3], in which it states that "Any act of enforced disappearance constitutes an outrage against human dignity (...) removes the victim from the protection of the law and causes him or her serious suffering, as well as his or her family" as well as the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance[4], which is a binding international legal instrument that recognizes the right of victims and their families to justice, truth and reparation. The latter expressly prohibits any person from being subjected to enforced disappearance, confirming that its widespread or systematic practice constitutes a crime against humanity. Another important aspect is that it includes a broad concept of victim, covering relatives of missing persons, allowing the use of universal jurisdiction to investigate, prosecute and punish those responsible, was also created "the Committee on Enforced Disappearances" as the independent expert body responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Convention.

In this sense, the United Nations Committee on Enforced Disappearance established guiding principles for the search for disappeared persons (July, 2019), namely:

1. The search for a disappeared person should be conducted under the presumption that he or she is alive.
2. The search should respect human dignity.
3. The search should be governed by a public policy.
4. The search should follow a differential approach, as well as in the attention of families, the procedures of identification and delivery of the persons found, must be carried out with a gender and intersectional perspective.
5. The search should respect the right to participation (relatives, their legal representatives, and any association or organization with a legitimate interest have the right to take part in the search).
6. The search should begin without delay.
7. The search is a continuing obligation, The search for a disappeared person should continue until his or her fate and/or whereabouts have been determined with certainty.
8. The search should be conducted on the basis of a comprehensive strategy.
9. The search should take into account the particular vulnerability of migrants. In this sense, the Committee address that States that send and receive migrants and refugees should adopt specific search mechanisms that take account of the difficulties associated with migration situations.
10. The search should be organized efficiently.
11. The search should use information in an appropriate manner.
12. The search should be coordinated.
13. The search and the criminal investigation should be interrelated.
14. The search should be carried out safely.
15. The search should be independent and impartial.
16. The search should be governed by public protocols, essential for its effectiveness and transparency.

3 Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 47/133 of 18 December 1992. Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/sp/professionalinterest/pages/conventionced.aspx.

4 The United Nations General Assembly adopted the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance on 20 December 2006. Signed with reservation by Venezuela in 2008. Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/sp/professionalinterest/pages/conventionced.aspx.

At the level of the American States, the Inter-American Convention on Forced Disappearance of Persons was signed[5] defining it as:

> ***"the act of depriving a person or persons of his or their freedom, in whatever way, perpetrated by agents of the state or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support, or acquiescence of the state, followed by an absence of information or a refusal to acknowledge that deprivation of freedom or to give information on the whereabouts of that person, thereby impeding his or her recourse to the applicable legal remedies and procedural guarantees".***

Declaration and Conventions on the basis of which article 45 of the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is expressly prohibited "the public authority, whether civilian or military, even in a state of emergency, exception or restriction of guarantees, to practice, permit or tolerate the enforced disappearance of persons", Thus, the third Transitional Provision establishes the need for the reform of the Penal Code to include the offence, being characterized as "forced disappearance of persons" in article 180.A of the Venezuelan Penal Code, establishing as active subjects to "The public authority, whether civilian or military, any person in the service of the State (...) members or members of groups or associations for terrorist, insurgent or subversive purposes", in the same article it is stated that it is a crime "continuous until the destination or location of the victim is established", the criminal action is imprescriptible because it is a Human Rights violation, responsible persons cannot enjoy benefits such as pardon or amnesty.

Despite the characterization of the offence, there is still no National Register of Disappeared or Missing Persons in Venezuela, although each institution has its databases, with opacity, lack of transparency and inaccessibility to official statistics.



5 Adopted in Belém do Pará, Brazil on June 9, 1994, at the twenty-fourth regular session of the General Assembly, signed by Venezuela on June 10/06/1994, ratified, accepted and acceded on July 6/07/1998, with deposit on June 19/01/1999. Available at: https://www.oas.org/juridico/english/treaties/a-60.htm.

II) General Recommendation of the MESECVI Committee of Experts (No. 2) Missing Women and Girls in the Hemisphere, according to the articles 7b and 8 of the Belém do Pará Convention

Since the Committee of Experts of the MESECVI is the technical body responsible for the analysis and evaluation of the process of implementation of the Convention of Belém do Pará by the States Parties, it has focused its attention on the situation of women and girls who have disappeared in the Americas. For this reason, General Recommendation No 2 (2018) represents a step forward in the fight for Human Rights, by making the disappearance of girls and women visible as a form of gender-based violence, in itself, and in connection with other forms of violence such as trafficking in persons, femicide, sexual violence, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, thus establishing a series of obligations that the State must fulfil, and feminist organizations must demand. Also, when identifying patterns in which the disappearance of women has specific characteristics that distinguish it from the disappearances of men, therefore its causes must be analyzed from the intersectionality.

The MESECVI Committee (2018) understands that in general, disappearances of women occur when the whereabouts or location of a woman or girl, or a group of women and/or girls, is unknown to their relatives or acquaintances, and that, by their gender, they are presumed to be related to acts of violence against them, since they prevent them from exercising their right to live a life free from violence, among other fundamental rights contained in the Convention and other relevant international instruments which protect them.

The Recommendation therefore lays down a number of obligations, which are set out below:

- **General prevention:** The Committee has established that prevention of disappearance must be comprehensive, preventing risk factors and strengthening State institutions to respond adequately, with States having to redouble their efforts when there is widespread violence, such as the disappearance of girls and women in the Americas.

- **Special prevention:** Access to justice and the duty to apply a gender perspective in the search and investigation: This Committee, in alignment with the jurisprudence of the COIDH, has stated that there exists an obligation for special prevention when the State is aware of a specific risk to a girl, a woman or a group of women, when they have been reported as missing or when there is a high risk they could go missing, ratifies a duty of strict due diligence in the face of allegations of their disappearances. Therefore, in the search for and lines of research, they must take into account the fact that they are women, so that a gender perspective is imperative in each and every action of State agents. It is important to take into account the participation and opinions of family members and/or acquaintances during the investigation and search. In the context of human mobility, the Committee emphasizes the duty to investigate in a collaborative and extensive manner not only in the country of origin, but also in cases of trafficking, trafficking and disappearances on the migratory route and/or transit.

- **Obligations associated with the discovery of remains of women and girls reported as missing/Obligations associated with the discovery of a woman reported as missing and found alive:** In this sense, due diligence must include the duty to routinely order

tests and medical experts to determine if the motive for the death was sexual or if any sexual violence occurred. When a woman has been reported as missing and found alive, her family member must be notified with her prior informed consent. In addition, specialized personnel must be guaranteed to care for them, ensure that protection measures are issued and enforced in all cases of violence against women, and adopt and implement protocols for the attention of women victims of violence in the police, entities receiving complaints, prosecutor's offices, among others. Highlighting the obligation to have free specialized services, accessible to women victims, including shelters, free legal sponsorship, comprehensive health services, psychological counseling, among others.

- **Obligation to compile statistical information on missing women:** One of the recommendations of the MESECVI Committee to States is to collect statistical information on women reported disappeared, missing or absent, and to institutionalize such collection within State systems, maintaining that statistical information will enable States to identify patterns, modus operandi of trafficking in women and girls, sexual violence and femicide, and thus address the problem from an evidence-based approach to women's rights.

The Recommendation emphasizes the need to create or strengthen institutions and personnel for the prevention, comprehensive care, investigation and prosecution of the disappearance of girls, adolescents and women as a form of gender-based violence, whether carried out by agents of the State or by private individuals, guaranteeing access to justice from a human rights, gender and intersectional perspective.



III) Disappearance of girls and women: a form of gender-based violence (GBV)

In order to understand how the disappearance of girls and women constitutes a form of GBV, it is essential to specify what is meant by gender-based violence. In this sense, Article 1 of the Convention of Belém do Pará[6], is define as *"any act or conduct, based on gender, which causes death or physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, whether in the public or the private sphere"*, the action is carried out on the basis of the gender of the person, in this case, by the fact of belonging to the female gender, by being a woman, by the conception of what it means to be a woman in a given time and place.

GBV against girls and women originates in the patriarchal system, understood as the hierarchical system socio-cultural, economic, political that establishes the predominance of the masculine over the feminine, generating inequality, leading to discrimination against the person on the basis of his or her gender. Based on misogyny, understood by Holland, J. (2010) as the oldest prejudice in the world, which includes hatred of women, being widespread, persistent, pernicious and changing, highlighting the adaptability of misogyny to a given time and culture. Therefore, all women are potentially vulnerable to situations of GBV, as expressed in the Explanatory Statement of the Organic Law on the Rights of Women to a Life Free of Violence (2014), all are exposed, some are more vulnerable than others, on the basis of age, sexual orientation, political ideology, social class, socioeconomic condition, among other conditions that intersect with the gender category, understanding that violence is used as a tool to subdue, subjugate, dominate and control women.

GBV is a human rights violation, a public health problem, which generates serious consequences at the individual, family level, in the community, posing as an obstacle to the Sustainable Development of Nations. In this regard, the MESECVI Committee (2018) maintains that the disappearances of girls and women, whether forced or not, violate rights recognized in the Convention of Belém do Pará, such as the right to life, the right to a life free from violence, physical, psychological and moral integrity, liberty and personal security, dignity, affirming that the disappearance of women is in violation of the Convention because of its relation with forms of violence prohibited by the Convention, but is also in itself a form of violence against women.

With regard to persons who carry out disappearances, the MESECVI Committee recognizes that the active commission of enforced disappearance by the State differs from its commission by omission, affirming that the active participation of the State in the disappearance of a woman is not the same, to disappearances carried out by individuals, which also have their own legal consequences for the State, by failing to conduct an objective, impartial, independent investigation leading to the establishment of responsibilities and the pursuit of justice.

The MESECVI Committee (2018) states that the disappearance of women and girls does not necessarily respond to a dynamic of armed conflict or dictatorship, which characterize the legal development of enforced disappearance in the Inter-American Human Rights System, maintaining that this is due to the dynamics rooted in the historically unequal power relations between men and women, which are cause and consequence of gender-based violence against them. In this regard, the Committee has identified a number of patterns of violence against women, not linked to situations of armed conflict or dictatorship, which include disappearance as a component of such violence, particularly in trafficking in persons, femicide and sexual violence.

As a multifactorial phenomenon, another cause of the disappearance of girls and women in Latin America is the development and implementation of a neoliberal globalizing economic model, generating dynamics associated with a reorganization of the forms of violence, exploiting the female labor force, but also using their bodies as merchandise that is exchanged in an illegal market that grows rapidly:

6 Adoptada en Belém do Pará, Brasil el 9 de junio de 1994, en el vigésimo cuarto período ordinario de sesiones de la Asamblea General de la Organización de Estados Americanos siendo firmada por Venezuela el 09/06/1994, aceptada, ratificada y adherida el 16/01/1995, con depósito del 03/02/1995. Recuperado en: https://www.oas.org/juridico/spanish/firmas/a-60.html.

> ***"In addition, the accumulation of neoliberal capital is based on various forms of violence against women, including the exploitation of their labour force, the appropriation of their domestic work, their sexual exploitation and the acquisition of added value through the control of their death. All these systematic forms of violence are the breeding ground for the disappearances of women and femicides" (Velasco-Domínguez & Castañeda-Xochitl, 2020: 100).***

Thus, the tasks that women have historically performed for their partners or families such as unpaid care and domestic work, or sexual services, are now exploited collectively by neo-liberal economies through legal or illegal enterprises (organized crime networks) or by the states themselves through the use of their free labor, all under a category called by researchers Velasco-Domínguez & Castañeda-Xochitl (2020) the "conjugal complex".

Through these disappearances of women, girls and adolescents, these independent armed corporations, these organized criminal gangs that have been called by Rita Segato (2018) "Second State" or Gore Capitalism by Sayak Valencia (2010) send a message to the other male peers and to the same State - Nation, about their level of control, power and territorial domain that is expressed by appropriating female and feminized bodies turning them into a kind of currency that is exchanged for drugs, weapons, money: "As I have said, the feminine or feminized body adapts more effectively to this enunciative function because it is and always has been imbued with territorial meaning" (Segato, 2018:84). In this sense, MacKinnon, C. (1996/97:48) argues that *"the power of men over women lies in how they view them defining what they can be".*

But this expression of the violence of disappearances also occurs previously as part of the sum of the daily violence suffered by women and girls perpetrated by known persons and as part of behaviors associated with misogyny, ending in sexual abuse or femicide:

> ***"With regard to the disappearance of women, there are two central mechanisms that operate for the violent dispossession of their bodies and their concealment from the public eye: covert femicide and trafficking in women for various purposes; both mechanisms producing disappearances result from a continuum of previous violence against women"*** *(Velasco-Domínguez & Castañeda-Xochitl, 2020: 107).*

IV) Until we find them: Disappearances in Venezuela

The disappearance of people is a cruel reality that affects many Venezuelan families, who are in the perennial search for their loved ones, being a psychological torture not knowing where they are or how they are.

Faced with adversity and the lack of timely responses from the Venezuelan State, families organize themselves. A sample of this is the National Committee of Families Victims of Disappearances and Trafficking on the Coasts of Venezuela "MAYDAY" CONFAVIDT, which together with PROVEA, have the following record (2019-2020) 119 missing persons, including 1 girl, 15 children, 39 women and 64 men, who were on board five boats in the states of Sucre, Falcón and Nueva Esparta, which are part of the maritime border of Venezuela.

Given the opacity of official disaggregated statistics, a monitoring of missing persons was carried out, from January 1, 2020 to March 15, 2021, reviewing one by one publications reflected on social networks (Twitter and Facebook) as well as 71 national and regional digital media, with the following results:

DISAPPEARANCES OF PERSONS IN VENEZUELA From 01/01/2020 to 15/03/2021	
2020 (01/01/2020 – 31/12/2020)	**2021** (01/01/2021 – 15/03/2021)
268 persons	**51 51 persons**

In 2020, 268 people disappeared, while so far in 2021, 51 people have disappeared throughout the national territory. The greatest number of disappearances occurred just in the month of March 2020, when quarantine and isolation by COVID 19 began with 46 people, followed by December 2020 with 43 people. During the year 2020 the disappearances were concentrated mainly in the states of Bolívar, Falcón, Táchira, Distrito Capital and Zulia, in the year 2021 the majority occurs in the states of Bolívar, Lara, Miranda, Zulia and Distrito Capital. 213 people have disappeared in the border states (sea and land) in the year 2020, and so far in the first quarter of the year 2021, 32 people have disappeared.

AGE OF DISAPPEARED PERSONS		
Año 2020		**Año 2021**
Age	**Disappeared persons**	**Disappeared persons**
0-5	12	3
6-10	6	2
11-15	20	9
16-20	22	12
21-25	13	2
26-30	14	2
31-35	6	2
36-40	7	3
41-45	8	3
46-50	12	0
51-55	13	0
56-60	5	0
61-65	3	2
66-70	3	0
71-75	1	0
76-85	3	1
85-100	0	0
Undetermined	120	10
TOTAL	**268 persons**	**51 persons**

The main ages of disappeared persons are the same in the years 2020 and 2021, raging from 11 to 20 years of age, showing high incidence in children, teenagers and young adults.



Causes of disappearances		
Año 2020		**Año 2021**
Type of case	**Disappeared persons**	**Disappeared persons**
Revenge	8	0
GBV	58	11
Kidnapping	11	1
Family related	3	0
Stealing	12	2
Gangs' violence	15	3
Trafficking in persons and human smuggling	41	4
Debts	3	0
Illness	6	2
Accident	4	0
Migration	32	3
Running away from home	5	1
Undetermined	74	24
TOTAL	**268 persons**	**51 persons**

In the cases of disappearances of persons in Venezuela, there is a high incidence in the GBV with 58 persons disappeared in 2020, 11 in 2021, followed by human smuggling and trafficking in persons with 41 people in 2020, 4 in 2021, the third cause, is migration with 32 persons disappeared in 2020 and 3 people in 2021.

V) Until we find them: Disappearances of girls and women in Venezuela

The UNFPA report (2020) in Bolivar State describes disappearances in connection with trafficking in girls and women, by networks operating in Bolivar State, with Guyana being the country of destination. The family loses contact with the women, mostly very young, but they eventually receive some monetary income that they presume is sent by them, and according to testimonies it is possible that these women are captured by people who offer them to do some kind of business, paying them the passage, but of which they do not return to know directly or eventually through some message, without any certainty that such messages are actually from them, as for example the following statement:

> ***"I have a relative, three girls met with a person who came from Guyana, who was going to do a business where they were going to sell food, they were going to sell bread, and things like that, he was going to pay for the bus tickets to her, even took two more boys, were 5 who left, of those 5 the two boys returned, but the girls did not, he took them and gave them money to buy the bread here, they bought their bread, he paid for their passage, in some part he was going to pick them up another boat, until there was what we knew of them, they are already 3 years and we do not know anything about them. An aunt recommended them not to leave because it was already something else, but they just left. They have communicated, but not by WhatsApp, they simply send this message and when they are going to send something, in a December is the maximum that has sent, but nothing is known about them, neither by photo, nor by WhatsApp, nothing, they send messages from different phones and when the family tries to call those numbers, they don't answer the call, It is three years that they are there and it is not known if they are well, if they are kidnapped, because they are kidnapped, they do not speak anything, they only send a text message, we are well, and nothing more, I sent them this amount and nothing more*** *(Focal group with women in mobility linked to the mining context)."*

Testimony shows the disappearance of young women in connection with trafficking in persons, it is not a kidnapping, because there is no exchange of young women for property or material objects, at no time are families requested to pay, on the contrary, there is a deprivation of liberty, detention for the purpose of exploitation.

In the same vein, in a focal group of adult women (UNFPA, 2020) in Táchira State, they reported the disappearance of a young woman from the area presumed to have been taken to Trinidad and Tobago, a country that is often the destination of trafficking networks for girls, adolescents and women, in this regard it is noted that:

> ***"...the case of the girl who disappeared, a very pretty young woman, about twenty-two years that with the friend were lost and the mother began to roll the information that the young woman had gone to Trinidad and Tobago because they were offered work and they went in a boat that exploded by Porlamar I do not know where and maybe she was the dead but not had official news reports or anything. Anyway, that was happening and at this point you don't know where that girl is, if she's really in white trade, they took her or left of her own will. She is missing, I was told that the mother sent a brother to look for her and they told her to leave if you don't want nothing happens to her*** *(Focus group of adult women)* ***..."***

A female survivor interviewed for the UNFPA study (2020) in Táchira State, shared her experience:

> ***"... the kidnapping that I had with my friend that was horrible if the police had not arrived or a lady who opened the door of her house, practically we were, who knows what would have happened to me. That was in Medellín, in Pasto. The one who kidnapped us was a mountaineer that we met in the Botero Park that is mainly where prostitution is practiced in Medellín. (...); that night we met that sir and the sir offered us a job where we would earn more money, where we would gain more because the service was more expensive, then we went for the intention of the money and when we got there, he was alone, it was like a farm, he was alone with another armed man, they beat us, they passed us out, when we woke up we were in a locked room and with our clothes off, we didn't know if we were raped or not because we were unconscious and the moment that man leaves the supposedly man's stepmother arrives and opens the door to us and says, run away from here and go over that mountain over there because they're going to kill you, he already has murdered and more than anything Venezuelans...*** *(Interview with surviving woman)."*

The story is understood to be about the disappearance of women in connection with sexual slavery, highlighting that they had already murdered Venezuelans.

As can be seen from the testimonies, in Venezuela the disappearances of girls and women are a reality, which is not defined as a form and crime of GBV in the Organic Law on the Right of Women to a Life Free from Violence, and that is one of the many forms of violence made invisible by the State, as a result there are no disaggregated official statistics, so it was necessary to monitor the disappearances of girls and women in Venezuela, selecting and collecting news registered in Venezuelan and regional digital media.

GENDER OR DISAPPEARED PERSONS		
Gender	**2020** (01/01/2020 – 31/12/2020	**2021** (01/03/2021 – 15/03/2021)
Feminine	**126**	**30**
Masculine	91	21
Not specify	51	0
TOTAL	**268 persons**	**51 persons**

In the table above, it is evident that in 2020,126 (47.01%) girls, adolescents and women disappeared, compared to 91 (33.95%) boys, adolescents and men, plus 51 (19.02%) people who in the news did not specify the gender, in contrast, 30 (58.82%) girls and women have disappeared so far in 2021, 21 (41.17%) boys and men, the data are decisive and indicate how this form of GBV occurs mainly to women and girls in our country.

Among the causes of disappearances, during the year 2020 we can note that the main cause was GBV in 58 cases, taking the percentage based on the number of women the total is 46.03%. So far in 2021 there were 11 missing persons, giving a total of 39.28%. In 2020, of these 58 cases, 43 ended in femicide and the disappearances occurred to hide the bodies of the murdered women. And in 2021, of these 30 cases, 8 ended in femicides.

During 2020, the states with the highest number of cases of disappearance of women and girls were Bolivar with 17 cases, Táchira with 15 cases, Capital District and Miranda with 12 cases respectively and Mérida with 10 cases. So far in 2021 most of the cases occurred in Distrito Capital, Lara and Miranda with 5, Portuguesa 4 and Zulia 3.

AGE OF DISAPPEARED WOMEN AND GIRLS		
Año 2020		Año 2021
Age	**Disappeared women and girls**	**Disappeared women and girls**
0-5	9	1
6-10	1	2
11-15	17	5
16-20	13	11
21-25	8	1
26-30	9	2
31-35	2	0
36-40	3	2
41-45	4	2
46-50	4	0
51-55	6	0
56-60	5	0
61-65	2	0
66-70	1	0
71-75	1	0
76-85	3	0
85-100	0	0
Undetermined	35	5
TOTAL	**126 women and girls**	**30 women and girls**

The main ages of missing women, girls and adolescents are the same in the years 2020 and 2021, ranging from 11 to 20 years of age. During the year 2020, in 24 cases of missing women, those responsible were their partners or former partners. In 17 cases, those responsible were known persons, in 8 cases they are responsible family members and in 77 cases the responsibility is undetermined. In 2021, in 5 cases of missing women, those responsible were their partners or former partners; in 2 family cases, in 2 known cases and in 21 cases, responsibility was undetermined.

With regard to the disappearances of women and girls in the context of mobility, a total of 19 cases occurred during the year 2020 and a total of 2 cases as of 15 March 2021. The majority occurred in the states of Táchira (8), Bolívar (5), Mérida, Falcón and Apure with 2 cases each.

Also, in 2020, 43 of the cases of disappearance of women, girls or adolescents ended up revealing that they were victims of femicide, in 28 cases the disappeared women, girls or adolescents appeared alive, 35 were rescued by State bodies, 10 are still missing and in 10 cases there is no information. During 2021, in 8 of the cases the disappeared were victims of femicide, in 9 cases the women, girls or adolescents disappeared appeared alive, 7 were rescued by State bodies, 5 are still missing and in 1 case there is no information.

VI) Methodology

The research used the nonexperimental design, documentary, to have as a development strategy the analysis of documents. For the purpose of the researchers, it is basic or fundamental and for the level of knowledge to be obtained is descriptive, because it specifically describes the characteristics of the disappearance of girls, and women in Venezuela as a form of gender-based violence, is critical, propositional from the human rights, gender and intersectional approach.

It was therefore necessary to monitor the disappearances of girls and women in Venezuela, through the selection, compilation and study of cases published on social networks such as Twitter and Facebook, as well as the news registered by seventy-one (71) Web portals of Venezuelan national and regional digital media, from January 1, 2020 to March 15, 2021.

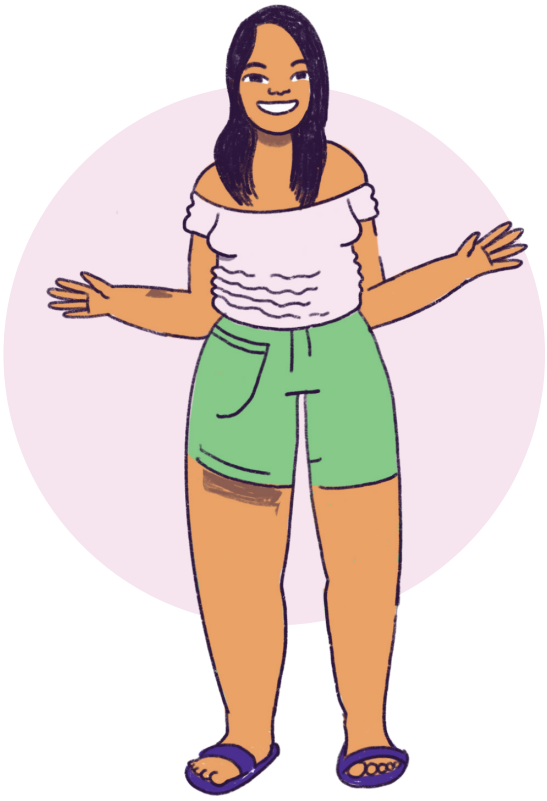
All this under-registration has been organized, tabulated and standardized into a series of categories that will make it possible to generate a database representative of the cases that have occurred in the country and to provide a scenario for the issue of the disappearance of girls and women, from a human rights, gender-based and intersectional approach, highlighting months, states, type of fact (disappearances, abduction, kidnapping, escape from home), ages of victims, gender of victims, resolution of cases, causes of disappearance (revenge, macho violence, human trafficking and smuggling, kidnapping, robbery, family, gang violence, debts, mental illness, accident, migration, escape from home, indeterminate), status of cases (femicide, appeared alive, continues missing, murdered but without body, released, rescued, undetermined).

Conclusions

The General Recommendation of the Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Convention of Belém Do Pará (MESECVI) is of great relevance when considering the disappearance of girls and women, forced or executed by individuals, as a form of gender-based violence, creating obligations for the State, also because of the importance attached to the participation of relatives and/or acquaintances of disappeared girls or women, as well as civil society in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of legislation, as well as public policies in the field.

Representing a step forward in the area of international human rights law for women by highlighting a form of gender-based violence such as the disappearance of girls and women, in itself, and in connection with other forms of violence such as trafficking in persons, femicide, sexual violence, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, establishing a series of obligations that the State must fulfil, and feminist non-governmental organizations, human rights defenders, must demand.

In this sense, it is the responsibility of all individuals, Civil Society Organizations in Latin America to demand that our States comply with General Recommendation No 2 (2018) of the Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism of the Convention of Belém Do Pará (MESECVI), calling for the criminalization in legislation of the disappearance of girls, adolescents and women as a form and crime of gender-based violence, which can be executed by agents of the State as well as individuals, creating or strengthening the necessary institutions, prevention programs and ensuring access to justice for families, demanding the necessary budgets, whereas it is a violation of the human rights of women, posing as an obstacle to the development of nations.



Recommendations

To the Venezuelan parliament

- Reform of the Organic Law on the Right of Women to a Life Free from Violence, specifically classifying the crime of DISAPPEARANCES OF GIRLS, ADOLESCENTS AND WOMEN as a form and crime of gender-based violence.

To the Ministry of People's Power for Internal Relations, Justice and Peace

- Creation and automation of the National Registry of Missing or Lost Persons in Venezuela, by the National Service of Medicines and Forensic Sciences (SENAMECF).

- Adoption and Implementation of Protocols on the Immediate Search for Disappeared Women and Girls in Police Forces and Reporting Bodies.

- Sensitization and training of police officers on disappearances of girls, adolescents and women as a form of gender-based violence.

- Sensitization and training of police officers, and civil protection in the guiding principles for the search for disappeared persons, established by the United Nations Committee on Enforced Disappearances.

The Public Ministry and the Judiciary

- Sensitization and training of public officials/s/s on the disappearance of adolescent girls and women as a form of gender-based violence, as well as the need for a comprehensive approach to girls, adolescents and women, their families, from the human rights, gender and intersectional.

Feminist organizations and Civil Society Organizations

- Unite wills and demand that the Venezuelan State comply effectively with General Recommendation No 2 (2018) of the Committee of Experts of the Monitoring Mechanism of the Convention of Belém do Pará, assuming the obligations established therein.

To the media

- Sensitization and training of journalists in the communicational approach to disappearances of persons, from the human rights, gender and intersectional approach.

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Hemerographic references

The monitoring was carried out on social networks (Twitter / Facebook), on Venezuelan national and regional digital media, from January 1, 2020 to March 15, 2021, which are detailed below:

1. La Verdad.
2. La Iguana.com.
3. El Pitazo.
4. La Prensa de Lara.
5. El Informador.
6. El Diario.com.
7. Punto de Corte.
8. Cactus 24.
9. Tané Tanae.
10. Los Tubazos.
11. Noticias Barquisimeto.
12. Noticias Col.
13. Diario Última Hora Digital.
14. La Nación.
15. El Tiempo.
16. Crónica Uno.
17. El Carabobeño.
18. Versión Final.
19. Primicia.
20. Diario La Voz.
21. 800 Noticias.
22. El Periódico de Monagas.
23. El Aragueño.
24. El Universal.
25. Notifalcón.
26. Panorama.
27. El Tubazo Digital.
28. El Nacional.
29. El Siglo.
30. La Calle.
31. Reporte Confidencial.
32. Proiuris.
33. Frontera 7 días.
34. Vargas es Noticia.
35. Nuevo Día.
36. Soy Nueva Prensa Digital.
37. Las Noticias de Cojedes.
38. Revista CICPC.
39. Diario Avance.
40. Últimas Noticias.
41. El Carabobeño.
42. La Prensa de Táchira.
43. Noticia al Minuto.
44. Diario El Tigrense.
45. El Impulso.
46. Agencia Carabobeña de Noticias.
47. Mundo Oriental.
48. EP Mundo.
49. La Voz de Falcón.
50. Diario El Informante.
51. Noticias 24 Carabobo.
52. En Venezuela.
53. Diario El Tiempo.
54. Impacto Venezuela.
55. Sputnik.
56. En el Vigia.
57. Por la Visión.
58. Diario de los Andes.
59. Diario Contraste.
60. Clarin web.
61. TodosAhora.com.
62. TendenciaenVenezuela.com.
63. El Periodiquito.
64. Radio Fé y Alegría Noticias.
65. El Diario de Guayana.
66. Sures Noticia.
67. Diario El Vistazo.
68. Primera Edición Col.
69. pdctv.info.
70. Maduradas.
71. Notitarde

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Who to call?

In case of emergency, you can call the following numbers:

Colombia: 123 (Police)
155 (Gender Based Violence hotline)

Ecuador: 911 (Emergency hotline)

Perú: 105 (Police)
100 (Woman emergency center)

Brasil: 180 (Women's assistance hotline)
181 (report criminal information)
190 (Military police)

Chile: 133 (Police)
134 (Investigation police)

Argentina: 911 (Emergency hotline)
144 (Buenos Aires Gender Based Violence hotline)

Venezuela: 911 (Emergency hotline)

AVESA: (YEI) (+58) 0424-166.22.20 (text messages)

Dilo aquí: (+58) 0412-312.26.29

Mulier: (+58) 414-625.41.25

Voces de Género: (+58) 0424 217.19.28

Éxodo: (+58) 0412 885.42.81



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