Opinion

Our Fight Against Femicide in Latin America

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April 8 marked one month since the femicide of 41 Guatemalan girls whom the state of Guatemala raped and burned alive. And also, on April 8 appeared the body of Micaela Garcia, an Argentine girl member of the Evita Movement, who had disappeared a few days ago. Twenty one years old Micaela, was a student of Physical Education, and was very concerned about the outcasts, the black ones, those that classism detests. She was raped and murdered by a serial rapist who was released by a judge because, according to him, all he sufferred was “natural perversity.”

In the same country, just a few months ago, in October 2016, Lucia Perez, 16, was drugged and murdered. The forensics discovered that she had been raped by the vagina and by the anus, not only with the penis, but also with a stick introduced in her sexual organs, stick that bore her body. She died of unbearable pain. The death of Lucia angered the Argentine people, who called for a march, the #NiUnaMenos, to which the whole continent joined.

In Mexico, in the last six years, 900 women and girls have been killed as a result of femicides. In Chile, 2016, Nabila’s name came to the public knowledge when she was found in the street by a teenager, when she was taken to the hospital they found that her eyes had been gouged out, that her skull and jaw had been fractured. The official account states that she went to a party with his partner, the father of two of her four children, and that he was “drunk”, and “out of control”, and that upon returning to the mechanical workshop, where they lived, he beat her to death. He was accused of frustrated femicide and mutilation.

In Colombia in 2016, Yuliana, a 7 year old indigenous girl, was raped and strangled to death in Bogotá. The culprit, a man of the upper class, who “under the effects of drugs” committed the crime. We already know the rest.

In Zacapa, Guatemala, Yohana, 8 years old, was raped by three men and hanged in 2016. His parents had left the village in order to collect money from a social program, and left their 3 children at home, the men, taking advantage of the absence of the parents, intruded inside the house. I cite only a few cases, because they are thousands.

A few days ago a judge in Mexico acquitted a rapist, because he felt that sticking his fingers inside the victim’s vagina was not a rape. Something that was backed by a well-known Mexican intellectual in a UNAM’s radio show, and besides that he said that women like to be raped.

In Latin America, 98% of all cases of femicide remain unpunished. And the few that are verified, and taken to court for prosecution, have a sad end, the culprit is declared innocent. For patriarchal reasons: the victim is faulted for dressing in such a way, to go out late at night, to go through such a place, for not wanting to sleep with him. The rationale for rape and femicide is only one: gender.

Judges, men and women, with a patriarchal mind make patriarchal decisions, and acquit the culprit or take the cases without seriousness, because it is about women who have been abused. It is necessary that everyone, everywhere, learn about patriarchy, from the patriarchal language through the so-called compliments, which are nothing more than harassment, to the justice system, and the media and how they provide the news.

No woman is guilty and provokes to be raped, beaten and murdered. No woman asks to be raped, or to be told how pretty she is in the street, to touch her buttocks or boobs on the bus. If a woman says no is not, even if he's her partner. Women are not anyone's objects and this should be understood by judges, and the system. We need a system of justice with a gender perspective, with qualified people with the knowledge about patriarchy, to prosecute the cases and rule with the full weight of the law.

An example of the ineptitude of a patriarchal justice system is the case of the 41 murdered girls, who were burned alive in Guatemala; the culprits are being treated with privileges of class and power. The president had to be dismissed immediately the same day that the girls were burned, even more so if they had already reported that they were being raped by the refuge's staff members.

But changing the system is not easy, for that to happen all of us have to be involved, in all spheres of society, when are we going to start? The fight against femicide, gender violence and patriarchy has to be everyone's, who will join in?

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