



GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND THE VOICES OF GIRLS

Latin America and the Caribbean

INTRODUCTION

- May 21, 2020

The following document seeks to complement data on violence against girls and women in Latin America and the Caribbean with the voices of girls. If you would like more details on their full stories, photos, or additional information, please contact the ROA Hub team.

We invite you to read our press release on this link:

<https://plan-international.org/latin-america/COVID-19-disastrous-surge-in-violence-against-girls>



GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Countries' situations and
the voices of girls

COVID-19: VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS AND WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Latin America already has the highest rates of gender-based violence in the world.

Colombia

Reports of **domestic violence during lockdown have increased by 175%** compared to the same period last year.

Honduras

During the pandemic, a woman is murdered every 23 hours, with 23.181 reports of domestic and intra-family violence recorded in the first quarter of 2020. **This represents 254 cases per day; in other words, one report every 6 minutes.**



Source: <https://mlr.vicpresidencia.gov.co/Paginas/prensa/2020/Apoyo-por-violencia-intrafamiliar-a-4385-mujeres-durante-cuarentena.aspx>
<https://proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/la-cuarentena-por-coronavirus-pone-en-peligro-la-vida-de-mujeres-en-honduras.html>

THE VOICES OF GIRLS

Nicaragua



“With COVID-19 the levels of inequality will increase because we are the most vulnerable social sector. This is frustrating and troubling for families, and all of this turns into violence. Now that we are not going to school, we spend more time at home, and girls and women are always asked to do the house chores, and if we don't, we might get punished: they don't give us permission for something, like not using the phone, or they give us even worse punishments.”

Lixiana (17 years old)



“Domestic violence and sexual abuse by family members are rising since the victims are in lockdown 24/7 with their aggressors, and since we're all concerned about health and economic issues, we're kind of leaving this worrying part out.”

Mareling (23 years old)

THE VOICES OF GIRLS

Haiti 



“My classmates and I are still trying to keep in touch via our WhatsApp group despite the difficulties. I also tried to study at home, but I could not continue to study because it is difficult to stay focused with everything going on in the country, the pandemic and socio-political problems. These situations are really overwhelming, it’s like, your life is missing something, and you are missing something. Even if you have a plan or goals, you can’t really reach them, it’s like you are no longer sure of yourself, what you have planned, what you want to become.”

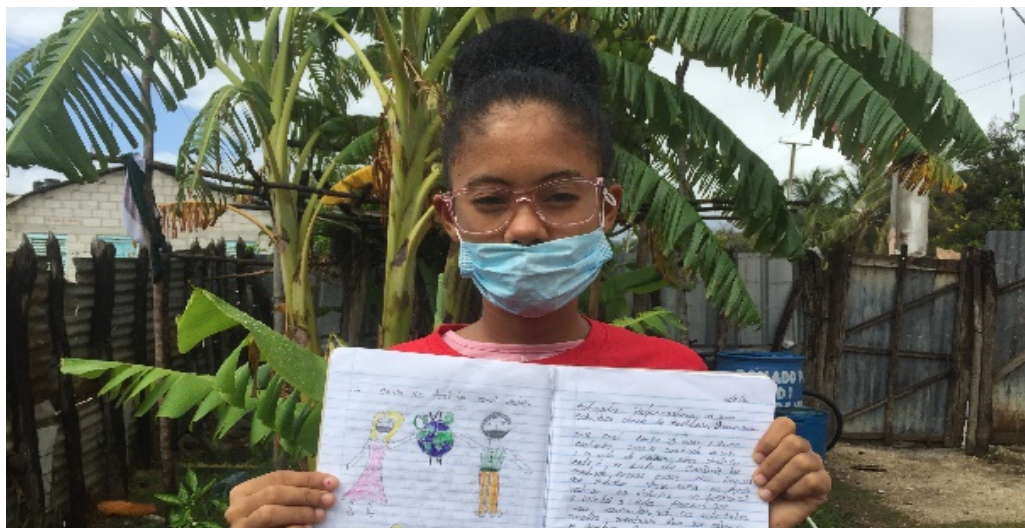
Barbara (22 years old)

Dominican Republic

DURING LOCKDOWN

During the first 25 days of quarantine, the violence hotline of the Ministry of Women's Affairs received 619 calls.

The average number of calls was 20 for each day of quarantine (between 19 March and 12 April).



"When this is over, I feel that my life will not be the same because there will still be a lot of fear of getting infected. I wish everything would go back to normal so that I could return to school, and my life would be as it was before. I see that many girls have to work at home more than boys." **Coral**



"I've felt a lot of anxiety during these days of lockdown because I am a very funny girl who loves to joke around with my friends, hugging them and making jokes."
Abigali (14 years old)

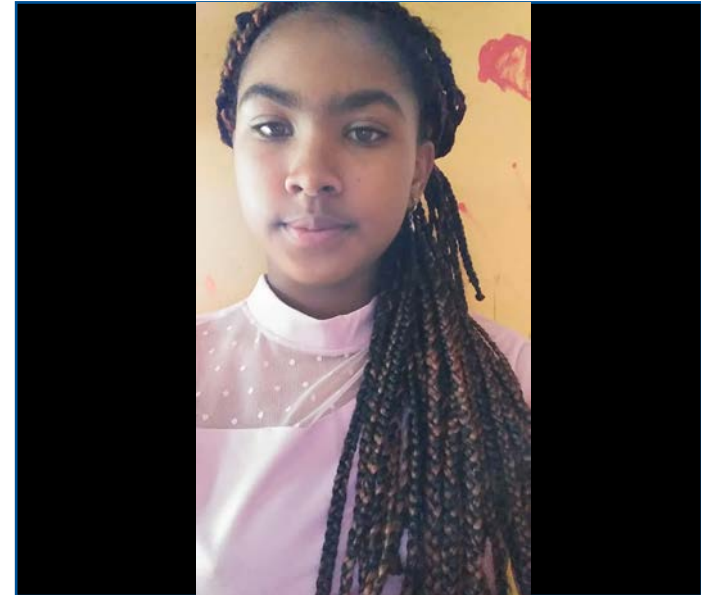
Source: <https://acento.com.do/2020/actualidad/8806437-en-25-dias-se-registraron-243-llamadas-de-auxilio-a-linea-mujer-por-violencia-fisica/>

Dominican Republic



“I miss my friends a lot, and I want to be close to them, and not seeing them is very stressful for me. I need their company a lot.”

Maireny (15 years old)



“...I feel very worried because many people are dying around the world and in the country. I’m also concerned that in my community there are also cases of coronavirus...”

Ana (16 years old)



DURING LOCKDOWN

1.035 cases of violence against women have been handled, following 9.812 calls to hotlines; this means 23 daily cases of violence against women.

More than 2.300 calls came from children who have denounced attacks against their mothers or beatings against their siblings; that adds to 51 daily calls by children.



“There are many girls who are being physically and psychologically abused. And this information is not coming out, they only talk about COVID, but they don’t talk about the cases of violence.”

Betsabé (15 years old)



“Excellent ideas have been implemented, such as raising white flags outside the houses of families that are struggling economically and no longer have anything to eat. [But] hospitals are collapsing, and getting medicine is complicated, apart from the fact that they are expensive, and food and groceries have also gone up in price.”

Maroly (16 years old)

Source: <https://larepublica.pe/sociedad/2020/04/12/feminicidio-ministra-de-la-mujer-confirma-4-asesinatos-y-87-violaciones-durante-cuarentena-por-coronavirus/>

Guatemala

DURING LOCKDOWN

347 medical examinations have been carried out for sexual offenses in children aged 0 to 14.



**"We believe that home is a safe place, but it's actually an unsafe place for us girls."
Miriam (18 years old)**



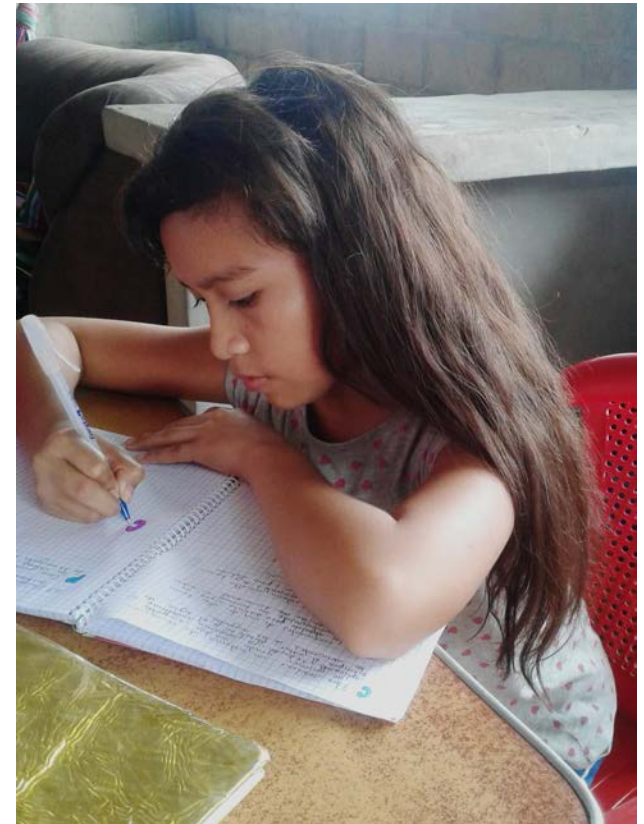
**"I hope that this will be over soon, so that I can return to my activities as a spokesperson."
Amalia (19 years old)**

Source: <https://www.prensalibre.com/guatemala/justicia/en-guatemala-13-ninos-y-ninas-sufren-de-algun-delito-sexual-cada-dia-ultima-hora/>

El Salvador

DURING LOCKDOWN

75% of children and women are subjected to violence in their homes. This 75 percent represents a total of 1.373.313 households, which is equivalent to 30.000 homes living in a situation of violence every day.



“The problem that concerns me the most is that a girl or a woman is suffering verbal, psychological, sexual, or physical violence.”

Vilma (13 years old)

Source: <https://diario.elmundo.sv/un-75-de-hogares-ejerce-violencia-contra-ninos-y-mujeres-en-cuarentena/>

Bolivia

DURING LOCKDOWN

According to the Specialized Prosecutor's Office for Crimes of Sexual Violence and Gender: between March 22 and May 3, **11 femicides, 1.370 cases of domestic violence, and 94 cases of child and adolescent rape** were reported.

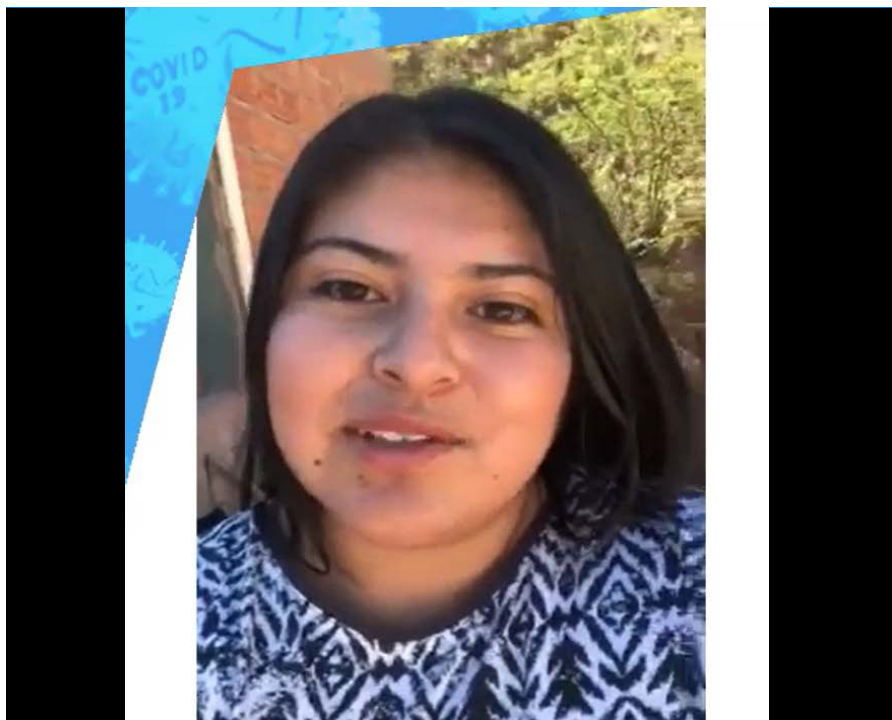


“...we are exposed to any kind of violence in which we, as girls or women, must not remain silent because our voice holds is the power to stop any kind of violence. Take care of yourself today, so that tomorrow we will all be together again.”

Virginia (19 years old)

Source: <https://urgente.bo/noticia/de-1743-denuncias-en-la-cuarentena-1370-corresponden-violencia-contra-la-mujer-y-niños>

Bolivia



“... of the many problems that really worry me, one of is the issue of the social inequalities that we can see on a daily basis and which have brought up the situation we are in... that the women, girls and people who are victims of violence in general, are now experiencing a double emergency, not only because of COVID-19, but also because they are living with their aggressors.”
(Mirtha, 19 years old)



“I am concerned about women who are living with their aggressors, [aggressors] who are mistreating them, who are beating them, who are killing them. Because in during the quarantine, women also get murdered. I am concerned about the vulnerability of girls in this situation [of lockdown].”

María Rene, (23 years old)

Paraguay



DURING LOCKDOWN

According to the latest data from the Public Prosecutor's Office, between March 11 and April 17, 214 cases of complaints of sexual abuse of children and adolescents were received. **This means that 7 children or adolescents were assaulted every day during this period of quarantine.**



"Right now, I feel uncertain because I cannot know all the consequences that will be left when this is over, nor what many girls are suffering in their homes, surrounded by abuse or violence."

Lucia (17 years old)

Paraguay



"I don't feel so good because I'm worried about the economic situation of my family and of my community."
Florencia (13 years old)



Ecuador



DURING LOCKDOWN

More than 7.954 complaints of gender violence have been reported, which is equivalent to:

- **176 complaints per day**
- **8 people suffering violence every hour since the quarantine began.**



“It is sad and painful to hear that there is so much violence against girls and women... It is a more painful disease than this virus. In remote communities, they don't pick up mobile phone signals and don't have phones or cell phones to seek help.”

Samya (21 years old)

Tatiana's family is currently supported by the few savings they have and the financial contribution of a close relative. Tatiana's father worked as a mechanic, and her mother as a seamstress; their earnings depended on the daily toil of their professions. Their activities, of course, are paralyzed due to confinement measures. “My husband gets stressed because there is no money for food; he goes out every morning to look for work and cannot find any”, Tatiana's mother says.



“Before [the isolation by COVID-19], my dad worked every day, and my mom had her daily seamstress work.”

Tatiana (13 years old)

Source: <https://www.elcomercio.com/actualidad/ecu911-alertas-violencia-mujer-confinamiento.html>



EVEN BEFORE LOCKDOWN

Every hour a girl younger than 18 becomes a victim of sexual violence. Every 4 hours, this happens to a girl younger than 13. There is a total estimated number of 500.000 cases per year; on average, only 10% is reported.



Girls are at home and do all the housework. All of them. Some friends tell me that they have to do everything on their own, and sometimes they can't even attend classes online."

Luiza (17 years old)



"The negative side of all this is the fact that everybody is at home, increasing domestic violence. People are being forced to spend more time together, and many incidents take place at home. Sadly, there are no ways to report this because these families are not willing to live with the consequences and end up taking the hardest decision: to remain silent and trying to live together." **Islany (17 years old)**

Source: <https://www.uol.com.br/universa/colunas/2020/03/25/estar-em-casa-significa-protecao-mas-e-crianca-que-vive-em-lar-violento.htm>

A woman with dark, curly hair is looking through white horizontal blinds. She is wearing a white face mask and a black and white patterned top. The word "THANKS" is written in white capital letters on a blue rectangular background at the bottom of the image.

THANKS