

## **Executive Summary**

**First Survey on the Prevalence of  
Sexual Violence against women  
in the context  
of the Colombian  
armed conflict  
2001-2009**



**VIOLACIONES  
Y OTRAS VIOLENCIAS  
SAQUEN MI CUERPO DE LA GUERRA**

**Campaign**  
**rape and other violence:**  
**leave my body out of the war**



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Casa de la Mujer Research Team: Olga Amparo Sanchez-Jose Nicolas Lopez Vivas-Diana Rubriche Cardenas- Maria del Pilar Rengifo Cano



Development Cooperation  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs



**Campaign**  
rape and other violence:  
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Campaign Rape and other Violence: Leave my Body Out of War.  
Sexual Violence against Women in the context of the Colombian armed conflict 2001-2009  
First Survey of Prevalence-Executive Summary

Research Team  
Olga Amparo Sanchez  
Jose Nicolas Lopez Vivas  
Diana Rubriche Cardenas  
Maria del Pilar Rengifo Cano

Asociación Mujeres y Madres Abriendo Caminos  
Asociación Santa Rita para la Educación y Promoción-FUNSAREP  
Casa de la Mujer  
Centro Promoción y Cultura-CPC  
Colectivo de Abogados José Alvear Restrepo  
Corporación Vamos Mujer  
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The rate of sexual violence, for the period 2001-2009, in 407 municipalities with an active presence of the armed forces, paramilitaries, guerrillas, and other armed actors in Colombia was estimated at 17.58%; this means that during these nine years 489,687 women were victims of sexual violence. Between 2001 and 2009 every hour 6 women were victims of some type of sexual violence in the municipalities with the presence of these armed groups.

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82.15% of the 489,678 women victims of some type of sexual violence, meaning 402,264 women, didn't report the abuses. 73.93% of the victims consider that the presence of armed actors in the municipalities is an obstacle to reporting sexual violence.

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These statistics represent women's reality in the municipalities of the country where the armed conflict has been active for more than six decades.

## Presentation

**F**or more than six decades Colombia has endured one of the longest armed conflicts in the world. Land concentration and usurpation, severe social inequalities, and the geostrategic control of territories for drug smuggling, among others, continue to be the main reasons for the initiation and continuation of the conflict. The armed confrontation between different actors: the armed forces, paramilitaries, and guerrillas, and the impacts on civil society have produced grave human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law, including sexual violence against women.

The different types of violence against women in Colombia continue and are exacerbated in the context of the armed conflict. Therefore, to know the magnitude of the different types of violence against women and their links to the armed conflict becomes an unavoidable challenge in seeking alternatives for its eradication. The present research therefore seeks to establish solid statistics, bring public attention to the plight of women victims of violence, and urge the Colombian government and the international community to take concrete and effective measures to prevent and eliminate this type of violence and overcome the high levels of impunity for this crime.

The results of this research, carried out between 2001-2009, show the high rate of sexual violence: 17.58% for the 407 municipalities that have an active presence of the armed forces, guerrillas and paramilitaries. This means that during the nine years in which the study was carried out, 489,687 women were victims of sexual violence. This is an average of 54,410 women per year, 149 per day, or 6 women every hour suffering sexual violence. Based on these numbers it can be inferred that sexual violence constitutes a habitual and frequent practice in the context of the armed conflict and therefore can be described as being "generalized" according to international humanitarian law.<sup>1</sup>

According to the results of the survey, before being asked about the different types of sexual violence 4 of every 10 victims didn't recognize themselves as victims of sexual violence. This indicates a prioritization within the different types of sexual violence in which certain types are "normalized and naturalized" (**regulation of the social life, forced domestic labor, sexual harassment and forced sterilization**), **while others are openly recognized as sexual violence (rape and forced prostitution)**. This naturalization contributes to the repetition of this criminal conduct, and the failure to find among the authorities and civil population attitudes of repudiation, prohibition and prosecution of these abuses; therefore these abuses are present in women's lives on several occasions.

The results of this research allowed us to make the link between the presence of armed actors and the increase in sexual violence, and the reasons behind why the victims do not report the abuses. 64.26% of women consider that the presence of armed actors in the municipalities increases sexual violence in public places, while 49.28% consider that the presence of armed actors increases sexual violence in private environments. In addition, 73.93% of women consider that the presence of armed actors constitutes an obstacle to reporting acts of sexual violence. Therefore, the continuing sexual violence against women is reflected in its occurrence in public places by "public" actors, including armed actors; and in private places by "private" actors, including their partners and other family members.

In conclusion, the prevalence of sexual violence in the Colombian municipalities with a presence of armed actors, the lack of knowledge on the victim's part of the different types of sexual violence, the continual occurrence, both in public and private places, by civil and armed perpetrators of sexual violence, and the obstacle that the presence of armed actors presents for women when reporting acts of sexual violence, contribute to this crime remaining invisible and unpunished in Colombia.

## Introduction:

**F**or Colombian women the armed conflict is an everyday reality. It is not an isolated event or incident, it has been part of their life for more than six decades. Violence against women in this context continues, it is redefined and acquires different characteristics. Facing these old and new realities is an unavoidable challenge in uncovering the magnitude of violence against women and finding alternatives that would allow its eradication; thus the need for and importance of this research in obtaining information on the prevalence of sexual violence against women in the context of the Colombian armed conflict.

The research seeks to answer questions such as: How frequent is sexual violence against women in the context of the Colombian armed conflict? What is the percentage of women that have been victims of sexual violence in the municipalities where there is presence of the armed forces, paramilitary, and guerrillas? What are the different types of sexual violence suffered by women? Who are the perpetrators? What are the ages, ethnicity, level of education, and economic conditions of the women victims of sexual violence? Do women consider sexual violence as a crime and a human rights violation? Do women denounce acts of sexual violence? If they do, to whom do they denounce the crimes? And if they don't, what are the reasons for not denouncing the crimes? Do women consider that the presence of the armed forces, paramilitaries and guerrilla members has increased sexual violence in the public and private spheres of their lives?

The research is able to establish a statistical base and bring to public attention the identities of women that have been victims of different types of violence; who from their diverse and multiple ethnicities, geographic locations, and socio-economic background, have had the courage, generosity and trust to open the doors of their homes and share their suffering. The surveyed women narrated horrid and painful experiences of violations committed against them. Once finalized the research, their experiences and knowledge are the driving force to continue demanding, proposing and denouncing sexual violence.

This research was carried out within the framework of the Campaign "Rape and other Violations: Leave my Body out of the War", supported by Oxfam in Colombia with: Asociación Mujeres y Madres Abriendo Caminos, Asociación Santa Rita para la Educación y Promoción-FUNSAREP, Casa de la Mujer, Centro Promoción y Cultura-CPC, Colectivo de Abogados José Alvear Restrepo, Corporación Vamos Mujer, Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres and

Sisma Mujer. The responsibility for the design and implementation of the research is that of Women's House organization. Throughout the entire process, Oxfam's team and the other participating organizations gave their feedback, including on the results.



## Methodology:

In Colombia there are no clear statistics on cases of sexual violence and its possible link to the armed conflict. In order to respond to this reality this research seeks to establish the prevalence of sexual violence<sup>2</sup> in the municipalities with a presence of the armed forces, paramilitaries and guerrillas; the research linked the information obtained regarding the age, ethnicity, economic background and geographic location of the surveyed women victims of sexual violence in the context of the Colombian armed conflict with the types of violence, places in which the violations occurred, perpetrators and frequency.

The research's scope constitutes women between the ages of 15 and 44<sup>3</sup> living in the 407 municipalities that the Early Warning System from the Colombian Ombudsman Office indicated as having an active armed conflict<sup>4</sup> for the period 2001-2009. A sample was selected from this population of women and the research was carried out in 15 municipalities<sup>5</sup> of 11 departments. Three socio-economic strata were also established, taking into account the size of the individual municipalities.<sup>6</sup>

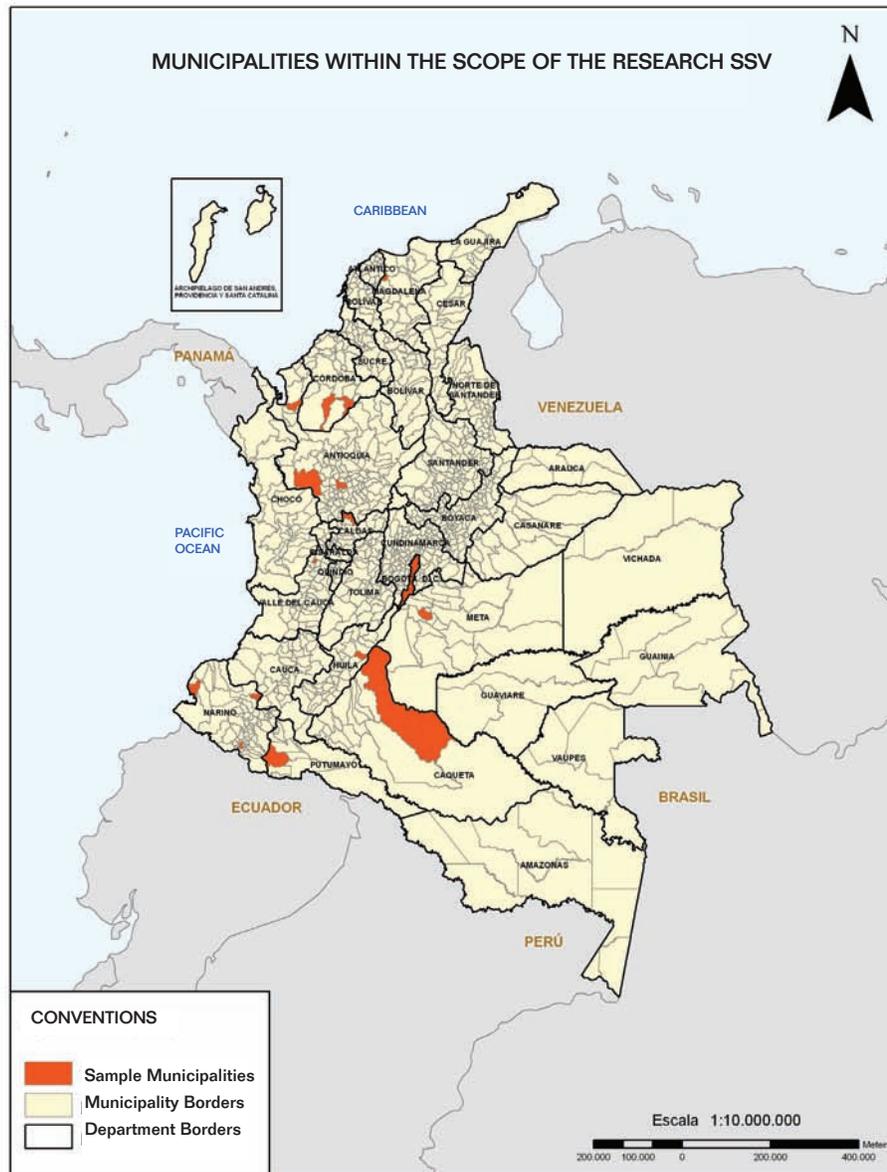
**TABLE 1- DEPARTMENTS AND MUNICIPALITIES IN WHICH THE SURVEY ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE (SSV) WAS CARRIED OUT**

Department	Municipality	Department	Municipality
Antioquia	Medellín	Putumayo	Orito
	Urrao	Huila	Rivera
	Apartadó	Caquetá	San Vicente del
Nariño	Francisco Pizarro		Caguán
	Leiva	Córdoba	Montelibano
	Pupiales	Magdalena	Salamina
Caldas	Aguadas	Meta	Castillo
Valle	Argelia	Cundinamarca	Bogotá D.C

Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009

The construction of the research tools included the preparation of a survey questionnaire<sup>7</sup> and a field manual. The questionnaire was divided in four parts so that it would, in a progressive manner, approach the subject of sexual violence: 1) General aspects of basic identification. 2) Perceptions and knowledge of acts of violence against women in the studied municipalities 3) Cases in which the surveyed women have knowledge of acts of sexual violence, and 4) Acknowledgment of the surveyed women as victims of sexual violence.

The survey was conducted between June 1st and July 12th 2010, to a total of 2,693 women. According to the estimates produced by the prevalence survey, the total population of women between the ages of 15-44 in the 407 municipalities of the study is of 2,785,009. The conclusions of this study are statistically valid for this total population as it is highlighted in this report. The data obtained reflects the gravity and the high rate of sexual violence against women in the context of the armed conflict.



Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009

The people responsible for conducting the survey were women that have participated in human rights formation workshops oriented towards demanding their rights to justice, truth, and reparation, and that have the eyesight, listening ability and willingness to pay attention and support the women whom participated in this research.

This is a descriptive study that did not seek to identify the motivations behind sexual violence against women. The research's importance is that it allows an estimation of the magnitude and distribution of sexual violence against women over time in the context of the armed conflict, its frequency, the places in which it occurs, the perpetrators and its different forms.

From a theoretical perspective the research worked within the framework of feminist theory,<sup>8</sup> and therefore understood violence against women as an ongoing problem in their lives and not as unconnected expressions of anger and loss of control by men.<sup>9</sup> Thus, sexual violence was considered in its various manifestations, and not only as rape or sexual harassment. This is why the spectrum of violations was broadened for the survey, in order to include violations that are established as crimes by the Colombian Penal Code and others that are not, such as the regulation of social life.

## **1. Estimates of sexual violence against women in the context of the Colombian armed conflict**

Women's acknowledgment of sexual violence as a crime and a violation of their rights is a key element in the prevention and elimination of this form of violence and the overcoming of the high impunity levels for these crimes. In addition the level of intimidation and insecurity felt by women regarding their sexuality and the increase of sexual violence due to the presence of armed actors should be considered. For this reason the survey asked the women participants about sexual violence, human rights and security:

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### **Women's Opinions about sexual violence, human rights and security**

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- ☛ From the total of 2,785,009 women between the ages of 15-44, 97.74% believe that violence against women constitutes a human rights violation.
- ☛ 99.55% of women believe that violence against them constitutes a crime.
- ☛ 6.74% of women have felt sexually intimidated by the presence of the armed forces, 10.47% by the presence of illegally armed groups.
- ☛ 49.28% of women consider that the presence of armed actors in the municipalities increases sexual violence within private places, while 64.26% of women consider that the presence of armed actors increases sexual violence in public places.

### **1.1. Victims, perpetrators, places and frequency of the different types of sexual violence against women in the context of the armed conflict**

One of the purposes of the research was to estimate the total number of women between the ages of 15 and 44 that have been victims of sexual violence in the period 2001-2009 that reside in the municipalities where there is a presence of armed actors.<sup>10</sup> These statistics indicate how women have been subjected to sexual violence in the context of the Colombian armed conflict.

The rate of sexual violence for the studied period (2001-2009) in the 407 municipalities with a presence of the armed forces, guerrillas, paramilitaries, and other armed actors, was estimated at 17.58%.<sup>11</sup> This means that during the period studied 489,687 women were victims of sexual violence. It also means that on average 54,410 women were victims of sexual violence per year, 149 per day, or 6 every hour.<sup>12</sup>

**TABLE 2- TYPE OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE BY NUMBER OF WOMEN VICTIMS, PERCENTAGE BY VICTIMS AND PERCENTAGE BY TOTAL NUMBER OF WOMEN**

Type of Sexual Violence	Estimated Number	% of total number of Victims	% of Total number of women
Rape	94,565	19.31	3.40
Forced Prostitution	7,754	1.58	0.28
Forced Pregnancy	26,353	5.38	0.95
Forced Abortion	27,058	5.53	0.97
Forced Sterilization	19,422	3.97	0.70
Sexual Harassment	175,873	35.92	6.31
Forced Domestic Labor	48,554	9.92	1.74
Regulation of Social Life	326,891	66.76	11.74
<b>Total</b>	<b>489,687</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>17.58</b>

Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009, Research's Calculations.

It is estimated that during the nine years in which the investigation was carried 94,565 women were victims of rape, 19.31% of the total.

Although all women victims of rape and forced prostitution recognize themselves as victims of sexual violence, the same does not happen for other types of abuse included in the category of sexual violence.

From the estimated number of women victims of sexual violence, 489,678, only 181,452 acknowledge that they have been victims of sexual violence before being informed of the different types of sexual violence included in this research. This means that only 6.52% of women in these 407 municipalities consider themselves victims for the period 2001-2009 even though 17.58% have been victims of sexual violence.

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**Four of every ten women victims of sexual violence do not recognize themselves as victims of sexual violence.**

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According to the data, 18.84% of women that were victims of forced pregnancy do not recognize this act as sexual violence; 11.94% of women that were forced to have abortions do not recognize this practice as sexual violence, and 58.42% of women victims of forced sterilization do not consider this act as sexual violence. 44.24% of the victims of sexual harassment do not recognize it as sexual violence; and 46.28% of victims of forced domestic labor and 72.85% of victims of regulation of social life do not consider these acts as sexual violence.

**TABLE 3- ESTIMATE OF VICTIMS, VICTIMS THAT DO NOT RECOGNIZE THEMSELVES AS VICTIMS, AND PERCENTAGE LACKING AWARENESS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

Type of Sexual Violence	Estimate of Victims of Sexual Violence	Estimate of Victims that did not recognize themselves as such	% Lacking awareness of sexual violence
Rape	94,565	0	0
Forced Prostitution	7,754	0	0
Forced Pregnancy	26,353	4,965	18.84
Forced Abortion	27,058	3,232	11.94
Forced Sterilization	19,422	11,366	58.52
Sexual Harassment	175,873	77,803	44.24
Forced Domestic Labor	48,554	22,471	46.28
Regulation of Social Life	326,891	238,130	72.85

Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009, Research's Calculations.

The estimates made based on the prevalence survey on sexual violence in conflict scenarios allows us to highlight some profiles of the characteristics of the different types of sexual violence, of the victims<sup>13</sup> and perpetrators, and the places where these types of violence occurred.

### 1.1.1 Rape:

By rape we understand the act of forcing a person to have sexual relations or sexual contact by using violence or the threat of it. It is therefore the nonconsensual or forced sexual contact that can include vaginal or anal penetration, oral sex, or penetration with objects.

According to the prevalence survey it is estimated that **94,565** women between the ages of **15** and **44** in **407** municipalities of the country with armed conflict, equivalent to **3.4%** of the estimated total female population, were victims of rape during the period **2001-2009**.

**TABLE 4- ESTIMATES OF RAPE VICTIMS BY AGE GROUP**

Age Group				
Years	15-24	25-34	35-44	Total
<b>Total</b>	30,928	30,507	33,130	94,565
<b>Percentage</b>	32.71	32.26	35.03	100

Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009, Research's Calculations

Of the total estimated victims of rape, **32.71%** (**30,928 women**) are between the ages of **15 to 24**; **32.26%** (**30,507 women**) are from the age group of **25 to 34**, and **35.03%** (**33,130 women**) are between the ages of **35 and 44**.

**TABLE 5- ESTIMATES OF RAPE VICTIMS BY ETHNIC GROUP**

Ethnic Group							
Ethnicity	Black	Indigenous	Mestizo	White	Other	None	Total
<b>Total</b>	11,507	7,140	20,914	32,399	2,732	19,973	94,565
<b>Percentage</b>	12.17	7.55	22.12	34.26	2.89	21.01	100

Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009, Research's Calculations

Based on the same total estimate, **12.17%** (**11,507**) of women identify themselves as **black**, **7.55%** (**7,140**) as **indigenous**, **22.12%** (**20,914**) as **mestizo**, and **34.26%** (**32,399**) as **white**. **2.89%** (**2,732**) identify themselves as belonging to other ethnic groups and **21.01%** (**19,873**) do not acknowledge being part of any ethnic group.

**TABLE 6- ESTIMATES OF RAPE VICTIMS BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRATA<sup>14</sup>**

Socio-economic Stratum					
Stratum	One	Two	Three	Four +	Total
<b>Total</b>	45,894	31,183	17,488	0	94,565
<b>Percentage</b>	48.53	32.98	18.49	0	100

Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009, Research's Calculations

According to the strata distribution of the total estimated number of women victims of rape, 48.53% (45,894) live in households of socio-economic stratum one; 32.98% (31,183) in stratum two, and 18.49% (17,488) in stratum three.

### Taking into account these estimates, with the level of education, we find that:

White or mestizo women between the ages of 15 and 34 with primary schooling or incomplete high school diploma, living in stratum one households are more prone to become victims of rape.

### Perpetrators of rape against women

- It is estimated that 43,226 women (45.71% of rape victims), were raped by a family member,<sup>15</sup> while 29,444 women (31.14%) were raped by an unknown person.
- 12,809 women (13.54%) were raped by illegally armed actors, and 1,970 (2.08%) were raped by members of the armed forces.<sup>16</sup> Finally, it is estimated that 6,944 women (7.34%) were raped by an unknown actor.<sup>17</sup>

### Places

It is estimated that 29,755 women (31.46% of rape victims) were raped in public places, while 67,817 women (71.72%) were raped in private places. It is also estimated that 3,007 women (3.18% of rape victims), were raped both in public and private places.

### Frequency

It is estimated that 50,542 women (53.45% of rape victims) were raped on one occasion; 12,736 women (13.47%) were raped on two occasions and 31,287 women (33.09%) were raped on three or more occasions.

#### 1.1.2 Forced Prostitution

Forced prostitution is considered to be the action or group of actions that involve imposed performance of sexual services through rape or other forms of sexual violence in exchange for which the victim or generally the person that controls the victims receives monetary remuneration.

According to the prevalence survey it is estimated that 7,754 women between the ages of 15 and 44 in 407 municipalities of the country with armed conflict, equivalent to 0.28% of the estimated total female population, were victims of forced prostitution during the period 2001-2009.

TABLE 7- ESTIMATES OF FORCED PROSTITUTION VICTIMS BY AGE

	Age Group			
Years	15-24	25-34	35-44	Total
Total	161	987	6,606	7,754
Percentage	2.08	12.72	85.19	100

Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009, Research's Calculations

Of the total estimated victims of forced prostitution, **2.08% (161) of women are between the ages of 15 to 24; 12.72% (987) of women are from the age group of 25 to 34, and 85.19% (6,606) of women are between the ages of 35 and 44.**

**TABLE 8- ESTIMATES OF FORCED PROSTITUTION VICTIMS BY ETHNIC GROUP**

Ethnic Group							
Ethnicity	Black	Indigenous	Mestizo	White	Other	None	Total
<b>Total</b>	0	0	2,209	5,384	5,384	161	7,754
<b>Percentage</b>	0	0	28.48	69.43	69.43	2.08	100

Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009, Research's Calculations

Based on the same total estimate, **28.49% (2,209) of women identify themselves as mestizo, 69.43% (5,384) as white, and 2.06% (161) do not identify themselves with any ethnic group.**

**TABLE 9- ESTIMATES OF FORCED PROSTITUTION VICTIMS BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRATA**

Socio-economic Stratum					
Stratum	One	Two	Three	Four +	Total
<b>Total</b>	2,135	5,383	236	0	7,754
<b>Percentage</b>	27.53	69.43	3.04	0	100

Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009, Research's Calculations

According to the strata distribution of the total estimated number of women victims of forced prostitution, **27.53% (2,135) live in households of socio-economic stratum one; 69.43% (5,383) in stratum two and 3.04% (236) in stratum three.**

**Taking into account these estimates, with the level of education, we find that:**

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**White women between the ages of 35 and 44 with a high school diploma living in stratum two households are more likely to become victims of forced prostitution.**

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### **Perpetrators of Forced Prostitution against women**

- ☛ It is estimated that **4,205 women (55.24% of forced prostitution victims)** were forced by a family member.
- ☛ **1,575 women (20.32% victims) of this crime were forced into prostitution by illegally armed groups, while 986 women (12.72% of victims)** were forced into prostitution by members of the armed forces.
- ☛ It is estimated that **986 (12.72%)** were victims of forced prostitution by an unknown actor.

### **Spaces**

It is estimated that **6,370 women (82.15% of victims) of forced prostitution were forced in public spaces, while 1,384 (17.85%)** were in private spaces.

## Frequency

It is estimated that that **3,549 women (45.76% of the forced prostitution victims) were forced once;** **3,808 women (49.11%) were forced twice,** and **397 women (5.13%) were forced three or more times.**

### 1.1.3 Forced Pregnancy

Forced pregnancy is understood to be the act of control over a pregnant woman, seeking to ensure the continuation of the pregnancy or the birth of the child against the will of the mother; forced pregnancy can on some occasions be the result of rape. In many instances this control includes confinement of the pregnant woman.

According to the survey it is estimated that **26,353 women** between the ages of **15** and **44** in **407** municipalities of the country with armed conflict, equivalent to **0.95%** of the estimated total female population, were victims of forced pregnancy during the period **2001-2009**.

**TABLE 10- ESTIMATES OF FORCED PREGNANCY VICTIMS BY AGE**

Age Group				
Years	15-24	25-34	35-44	Total
<b>Total</b>	10,318	7,230	8,805	26,353
<b>Percentage</b>	39.15	27.43	33.41	100

Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009, Research's Calculations

Of the total estimated victims of forced pregnancy **39.15% (10,318 women) are between the ages of 15 to 24;** **27.43% (7,230 women) are from the age group of 25 to 34,** and **33.41% (8,805 women) are between the ages of 35 and 44.**

**TABLE 11 ESTIMATES OF VICTIMS OF FORCED PREGNANCY BY ETHNIC GROUP**

Ethnic Group							
Ethnicity	Black	Indigenous	Mestizo	White	Other	None	Total
<b>Total</b>	2,813	2,840	6,578	10,298	0	3,824	26,353
<b>Percentage</b>	10.67	10.78	24.96	39.08	0	2.08	100

Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009, Research's Calculations

Based on this total estimate **10.67% (2,813 women) identify themselves as black;** **10.78% (2,840) as indigenous;** **24.96% (6,578) as mestizo;** **39.08% (10,298) as white,** and **14.51% (3,824 women) do not identify themselves with any ethnic group.**

**TABLE 12 ESTIMATES OF FORCED PREGNANCY BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRATA**

Socio-economic Stratum					
Stratum	One	Two	Three	Four +	Total
<b>Total</b>	2,135	5,383	236	0	7,754
<b>Percentage</b>	27.53	69.43	3.04	0	100

Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009, Research's Calculations

According to the strata distribution of the total estimated number of women victims of forced pregnancy, 30.64% (8,073) live in households of socio-economic stratum one; 43.68% (11,511) in stratum two, and 25.69% (6,769) in stratum three.

### Taking into account these estimates, with the level of education, we find that:

White women between the ages of 15 and 24 with an incomplete high school diploma living in stratum two households are more likely to experience forced pregnancies.

### Perpetrators of forced pregnancies against women

- ☞ It is estimated that 13,318 women (50.54% of forced pregnancy victims) were forced by a family member, while 9,486 women (36%) were forced by an unknown person.
- ☞ 4,415 women (16.75% of the victims) were forced by illegally armed actors, while 987 women (3.74%) were forced by the armed forces.
- ☞ It is estimated that 987 (3.74%) were forced by an unknown actor.

### Places

It is estimated that 11,089 women (42.74% of forced pregnancy victims) were forced in public places, while 17,928 women (68.03%) were forced in private places. This means that 2,830 women (10.77%) were forced both in private and public places.

### Frequency

It is estimated that 20,912 women (79.35% of victims of forced pregnancy) were forced once; 294 women (1.11%) were forced twice, and 5,147 (19.53%) were victims of forced pregnancy three or more times.

#### 1.1.4 Forced Abortion

Forced abortion is understood to be an action intended to interrupt a pregnancy against the pregnant women's will.

According to the prevalence survey it is estimated that 27,058 women between the ages of 15 and 44 in 407 municipalities of the country with armed conflict, equivalent to 0.97% of the estimated total female population, were victims of forced abortions during the period 2001-2009.

TABLE 13-ESTIMATES OF FORCED ABORTION VICTIMS BY AGE

Years	Age Group			Total
	15-24	25-34	35-44	
Total	2,612	3,741	20,705	27,058
Percentage	9.65	13.83	76.52	100

Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009, Research's Calculations

Of the total estimated victims of forced abortions, **9.65% (2,612 women) are between the ages of 15 and 24 years; 13.83% (3,741 women) are from the age group of 25 to 34, and 76.52% (20,705) are between the ages of 35 and 44.**

**TABLE 14- ESTIMATES OF FORCED ABORTION VICTIMS BY ETHNIC GROUP**

Ethnic Group							
Ethnicity	Black	Indigenous	Mestizo	White	Other	None	Total
<b>Total</b>	702	0	14,423	10,015	0	1,918	27,058
<b>Percentage</b>	2.59	0	53.31	37.01	0	7.09	100

Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009, Research's Calculations

Based on this total estimate **2.59% (702 women) identify themselves as black; 53.31% (14,423) as mestizo; 37.01% (10,015) as white, and 7.09% (1,918 women) do not identify themselves with any ethnic group.**

**TABLE 15- ESTIMATES OF FORCED ABORTION VICTIMS BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRATA**

Socio-economic Stratum					
Stratum	One	Two	Three	Four +	Total
<b>Total</b>	18,996	5,956	2,106	0	27,058
<b>Percentage</b>	70.21	22.01	7.78	0	100

Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009, Research's Calculations

According to the strata distribution of the total estimated number of victims of forced abortions, **70.21% (18,996) live in households of socio-economic stratum one; 22.01% (956) in stratum two, and 7.78% (2,106) in stratum three.**

**Taking into account these estimates, with the level of education, we find that:**

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**Mestizo women between the ages of 35 and 44 with an incomplete high school level of education living in stratum one households are more liable to be exposed to forced abortions.**

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### **Perpetrators of forced abortions against women**

- 🔥 It is estimated that **12,885 women (47.62% of forced abortions victims) were forced by family members; while 10,389 women (38.4% of the victims of this crime) were forced by unknown persons.**
- 🔥 **1,810 women (6.69% of the victims of this crime) were forced by illegally armed actors; while 987 women (3.65% of the victims) were forced by members of the armed forces.**
- 🔥 Finally, it is estimated that **987 women (3.65%) were victims of forced abortions by an unknown actor.**

### **Places**

It is estimated that **6,370 women (23.54% of forced abortion victims) were forced to have abortions in public places, while 20,688 women (76.46%) were forced in private places.**

## Frequency

It is estimated that 23,973 women (88.6%) were victims of forced abortions once; 293 (1.08%) were victims twice; and 2,454 women (9.07%) were victims of this crime three or more times.

### 1.1.5 Forced Sterilization

Forced sterilization is considered to be acts intended to impose restrictions and to force the prevention of reproduction against a woman's will.

According to the prevalence survey it is estimated that 19,422 women between the ages of 15 and 44 in 407 municipalities of the country with armed conflict, equivalent to 0.7% of the estimated total female population, were victims of forced sterilizations during the period 2001-2009.

**TABLE 16- ESTIMATES OF FORCED STERILIZATION VICTIMS BY AGE**

Age Group				
Years	15-24	25-34	35-44	Total
<b>Total</b>	10,550	5,609	3,263	19,422
<b>Percentage</b>	54.32	28.88	16.8	100

Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009, Research's Calculations

Of the total estimated victims of forced sterilizations, 54.32% (10,550 women) are between the ages of 15 and 24 years; 28.88% (5,609 women) are from the age group of 25 to 34, and 16.80% (3,263 women) are between the ages of 35 and 44.

**TABLE 17- ESTIMATES OF FORCED STERILIZATION VICTIMS BY ETHNIC GROUP**

Ethnic Group							
Ethnicity	Black	Indigenous	Mestizo	White	Other	None	Total
<b>Total</b>	3,080	0	8,793	4,518	0	3,031	19,422
<b>Percentage</b>	15.86	0	45.28	23.26	0	15.61	100

Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009, Research's Calculations

Based on this total estimate 15.86% (3,080 women) identify themselves as black; 45.28% (8,793) as mestizo; 23.26% (4,518) as white, and 15.61% (3,031 women) do not identify themselves with any ethnic group. None of the women victims of forced sterilization identified themselves as either indigenous or being from another ethnic group.

**TABLE 18- ESTIMATES OF FORCED STERILIZATION BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRATA**

Socio-economic Stratum					
Stratum	One	Two	Three	Four +	Total
<b>Total</b>	12,763	6,092	567	0	19,422
<b>Percentage</b>	65.71	31.36	2.92	0	100

Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009, Research's Calculations

According to the strata distribution of the total estimated number of women victims of forced sterilizations, **65.71% (12,763) live in households of socio-economic stratum one; 31.36% (6,092) in stratum two, and 2.92% (567) in stratum three.**

**Taking into account these estimates, with the level of education, we find that:**

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**Mestizo women between the ages of 15 and 24 with some primary schooling living in stratum one households are more liable to be exposed to this type of sexual violence.**

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### **Perpetrators of forced sterilization against women**

- ☞ It is estimated that **12,948 women (66.67% of forced sterilization victims) were forced by family members; while 3,579 women (18.43% of the victims of this crime)** were forced by an unknown person.
- ☞ None of the women victims of this crime were forced by illegally armed actors, while **987 women (5.08% of the victims)** were forced by members of the armed forces.
- ☞ Finally, it is estimated that **987 women (5.08%)** were victims of forced sterilizations by an unknown actor

### **Places**

It is estimated that **1,993 women (10.26% of forced sterilization victims) were forced in public places, while 17,429 women (89.74%)** were forced in private places.

### **Frequency**

It is estimated that **10,713 women (55.16%) were victims of forced sterilization one time; 1,652 (8.51%) were victims twice; and 7,057 women (36.33%)** were victims of this crime three or more times.

#### **1.1.6 Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is understood to be any undesired sexual insinuation or pressure on a person to satisfy the sexual desires of the aggressor. It can happen through acts, proposals, offences, obscene gestures or sexual remarks. As such it is understood as the unsolicited and unwanted sexual intervention in the feelings, thoughts, conduct, places, times, energies and bodies of women and girls.<sup>18</sup> The Colombian penal code describes the perpetrator of sexual harassment as “the person who, seeking their own benefit or that of a third party, takes advantage of their position of superiority or authority, power, age, or sex in their social, familiar, economic or work position to harass or besiege physically or verbally with sexual purposes and without consent another person(...)”.<sup>19</sup>

According to the prevalence survey it is estimated that **175,873 women between the ages of 15 and 44 in 407 municipalities of the country with armed conflict, equivalent to 6.31% of the estimated total female population, were victims of sexual harassment during the period 2001-2009.**

**TABLE 19- ESTIMATES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT VICTIMS BY AGE**

Age Group				
Years	15-24	25-34	35-44	Total
<b>Total</b>	78,251	46,813	50,809	175,873
<b>Percentage</b>	44.49	26.62	28.89	100

Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009, Research's Calculations

Of the total estimated victims of sexual harassment, **44.49% (78,251 women) are between the ages of 15 and 24 years; 26.62% (46,813 women) are from the age group of 25 to 34, and 28.29% (50,809) are between the ages of 35 and 44.**

**TABLE 20- ESTIMATES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT VICTIMS BY ETHNIC GROUP**

Ethnic Group							
Ethnicity	Black	Indigenous	Mestizo	White	Other	None	Total
<b>Total</b>	17,123	7,480	35,321	45,210	4,810	65,929	175,873
<b>Percentage</b>	9.74	4.25	20.08	25.71	2.74	37.49	100

Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009, Research's Calculations

Based on this total estimate **9.74% (17,123 women) identify themselves as black; 4.25% (7,480) as indigenous; 20.08% (35,321) as mestizo; 25.71% (45,210) as white, and 2.74% (4,810) as belonging to other ethnic groups; while 37.49% (65,929 women) do not identify themselves with any ethnic group.**

**TABLE 21- ESTIMATES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT VICTIMS BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRATA**

Socio-economic Stratum					
Stratum	One	Two	Three	Four +	Total
<b>Total</b>	84,097	59,655	31,009	1,112	175,873
<b>Percentage</b>	47.82	33.92	17.63	0.63	100

Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009, Research's Calculations

According to the strata distribution of the total estimated number of women victims of sexual harassment, **47.82% (84,097) live in households of socio-economic stratum one; 33.92% (59,655) in stratum two; 17.63% (31,009) in stratum three, and 0.63% (1,112) live in stratum four or more households.**

**Taking into account these estimates, with the level of education, we find that:**

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**Women between the ages of 15 and 24 who do not identify themselves with any ethnic group with an incomplete high school education living in stratum one households are more exposed to this type of sexual violence.**

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### **Perpetrators of sexual harassment against women**

- It is estimated that **49,518 women (28.16% of sexual harassment victims) were harassed by family members; while 96,808 women (55.04% of the victims of this crime) were harassed by an unknown person.**

- ☛ 8,166 women (4.64% of victims of sexual harassment) were forced by illegally armed actors, while 7,103 women (4.04% of the victims) were harassed by members of the armed forces.
- ☛ Finally, it is estimated that 23,193 women (13.19%) were victims of harassment by an unknown actor

## Places

It is estimated that 101,142 women (57.51% of sexual harassment victims) were harassed in public places, while 86,902 women (49.41%) were harassed in private places. This means that 13,601 women (7.73%) were harassed in both private and public places.

## Frequency

It is estimated that 55,086 women (31.32%) were victims of sexual harassment one time; 21,468 (12.21%) were victims twice; and 98,336 women (55.93%) were victims of this crime three or more times. 0.54% of the victims did not identify the number of times they were harassed.

### 1.1.7 Forced Domestic Labor

Forced domestic labor is understood to be the group of actions through which a person, generally the actor that has power, forces another person or group of people to perform domestic labors that in some instances could transition to sexual acts. An example of this type of violence is when upon arrival at a civilian property an armed group demands that the members of its army are to be served by women, or when these groups temporarily kidnap persons with the purpose of making them part of their domestic labor force in their garrisons or camps.

According to the prevalence survey it is estimated that 48,544 women between the ages of 15 and 44 in 407 municipalities of the country with armed conflict, equivalent to 1.74% of the estimated total female population, were victims of forced domestic labor during the period 2001-2009.

**TABLE 22- ESTIMATES OF FORCED DOMESTIC LABOR VICTIMS BY AGE**

Age Group				
Years	15-24	25-34	35-44	Total
<b>Total</b>	17,473	15,222	15,859	48,554
<b>Percentage</b>	35.99	31.95	32.66	100

Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009, Research's Calculations

Of the total estimated victims of forced domestic labor, 35.99% (17,473 women) are between the ages of 15 and 24 years; 31.35% (15,222 women) are from the age group of 25 to 34, and 32.66% (15,859) are between the ages of 35 and 44.

**TABLE 23- ESTIMATES OF FORCED DOMESTIC LABOR VICTIMS BY ETHNIC GROUP**

Ethnic Group							
Ethnicity	Black	Indigenous	Mestizo	White	Other	None	Total
<b>Total</b>	7,835	4,301	8,337	4,851	2,271	20,959	48,554
<b>Percentage</b>	16.14	8.86	17.17	9.99	4.68	43.17	100

Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009, Research's Calculations

Based on this total estimate 16.14% (7,835 women) identify themselves as black; 8.86% (4,301) as indigenous; 17.17% (8,337) as mestizo; 9.99% (4,851) as white, and 4.68% (2,271) as belonging to other ethnic groups. 43.17% (20,959 women) do not identify themselves with any ethnic group.

**TABLE 24 ESTIMATES OF FORCED DOMESTIC LABOR VICTIMS BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRATA**

Socio-economic Stratum					
Stratum	One	Two	Three	Four +	Total
<b>Total</b>	27,859	11,499	9,196	0	48,554
<b>Percentage</b>	57.38	23.68	18.94	0	100

Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009, Research's Calculations

According to the strata distribution of the total estimated number of women victims of forced domestic labor, 57.38% (27,859) live in households of socio-economic stratum one; 23.68% (11,499) in stratum two, and 18.94% (9,196) in stratum three.

**Taking into account these estimates, with the level of education, we find that:**

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Women between the ages of 15 and 24 who do not identify with any ethnic group with a high school diploma living in stratum one households are more exposed to this type of sexual violence.

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### Perpetrators of forced domestic labor against women

- ☞ It is estimated that 35,526 women (73.17% of forced domestic labor victims) were forced by family members; while 9,388 women (19.33% of the victims of this crime) were forced by an unknown person.
- ☞ 9,388 women (19.33% of victims of forced domestic labor) were forced by illegally armed actors, while 987 women (2.03% of the victims) were harassed by members of the armed forces.
- ☞ Finally, it is estimated that 3,466 women (7.14%) were victims of forced domestic labor by an unknown actor.

### Places

It is estimated that 3,783 women (7.79% of forced domestic labor victims) were forced in public places, while 45,943 women (94.62%) were forced in private places. This means that 1,172 women (2.41%) were harassed in both private and public places.

### Frequency

It is estimated that 5,185 women (10.68%) were victims of forced domestic labor one time; 3,912 women (94.62%) were victims twice; and 38,862 women (80.04%) were victims of this crime three or more times. 1.23% of the victims did not identify the number of times they were victims of this type of sexual violence.

#### 1.1.8 Regulation of Social Life

Regulation of social life is understood to be the act or group of acts by which, through the use of force or threat thereof, the perpetrator seeks to establish social strictures for conduct and behavior. Among

these restrictions can be found the control of sexual life and regulation of relationships. Examples of this control include prohibiting women from dressing in a certain way, prohibiting women from assisting in certain public events, or from having certain relations under the threat of punishment, and establishing different forms of control over the lives of the victims with the objective of regulating, among others, their social relations and sexual behavior.

According to the prevalence survey it is estimated that women between the ages of 15 and 44 in 407 municipalities of the country with armed conflict, equivalent to 11.74% of the estimated total female population, were victims of regulation of their social life during the period 2001-2009.

**TABLE 25- ESTIMATES OF SOCIAL LIFE REGULATION VICTIMS BY AGE**

Age Group				
Years	15-24	25-34	35-44	Total
<b>Total</b>	108,841	101,390	116,660	326,891
<b>Percentage</b>	33.30	31.01	35.69	100

Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009, Research's Calculations

Of the total estimated victims of regulation of their social life, 33.3% (108,841 women) are between the ages of 15 and 24 years; 31.02% (101,390 women) are from the age group of 25 to 34, and 35.69% (116,660) are between the ages of 35 and 44.

**TABLE 26 ESTIMATES OF SOCIAL LIFE REGULATION BY ETHNIC GROUP**

Ethnic Group							
Ethnicity	Black	Indigenous	Mestizo	White	Other	None	Total
<b>Total</b>	39,186	19,846	99,250	74,849	328	93,432	326,891
<b>Percentage</b>	11.98	6.07	30.36	22.9	0.1	28.58	100

Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009, Research's Calculations

Based on this total estimate 11.99% (39,186 women) identify themselves as black; 9.07% (19,846) as indigenous; 30.36% (99,250) as mestizo; 22.9% (74,849) as white, and 0.1% (328) as belonging to other ethnic groups. 28.58% (93,432 women) do not identify themselves with any ethnic group.

**TABLE 27- ESTIMATES OF SOCIAL LIFE REGULATION BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRATA**

Socio-economic Stratum					
Stratum	One	Two	Three	Four +	Total
<b>Total</b>	170,808	100,733	55,350	0	326,891
<b>Percentage</b>	52.25	30.82	16.93	0	100

Source: SSV Colombia 2001-2009, Research's Calculations

According to the strata distribution of the total estimated number of women victims of social life regulation, 52.25% (170,808) live in households of socio-economic stratum one; 30.82% (100,733) in stratum two, and 16.93% (55,350) in stratum three.

**Taking into account these estimates, with the level of education, we find that:**

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Mestizo women between the ages of 35 and 44 with some level of high school education living in stratum one households are more exposed to this type of sexual violence.

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### **Perpetrators of regulation of social life against women**

- ☞ It is estimated that **213,166 women (65.21% of regulation of social life victims) were victimized by family members; while 95,560 women (29.23% of the victims of this crime)** were forced by an unknown person.
- ☞ **35,535 women (11.18% of victims of regulation of social life) were victimized by illegally armed actors, while 7,029 women (2.15% of the victims)** were victimized by members of the armed forces.
- ☞ Finally, it is estimated that **7,987 women (2.44%)** were victimized by an unknown actor

### **Places**

It is estimated that **67,420 women (20.62%) were victimized in public places, while 293,590 women (89.81%) were victimized in private places. This means that 34,363 women (10.51%)** were victimized in both private and public places.

### **Frequency**

It is estimated that from the **326,891 women** that were victims of regulation of their social life, **58,086 women (17.77%) were victims one time; 14,446 women (4.42%) were victims twice; and 250,280 women (76.56%) were victims three or more times. 1.25%** of the victims did not identify the number of times they were victims of this type of sexual violence.

## **1.2 The use of weapons by perpetrators in cases of sexual violence against women in the context of the Colombian armed conflict**

It is estimated that **20.55%** of women victims of some type of sexual violence, meaning **100,636 women**, were assaulted and victimized using a weapon to threaten them. **79.33%** of women (**388,469**) were not threatened with a weapon, and **0.12%** did not respond to the question.

Taking into account the type of weapon that was used in acts of sexual violence, the survey finds that, **43.85% (44,143 women) were victimized with knives; 32.28% (33,493 women) were with firearms; 9.22% (9,274) were victimized with other weapons. 13.41% (13,492 women)** were threatened both with a knife and a firearm; and **0.23%**, corresponding to **234 women**, were threatened with all types of weapons.

## **1.3 Denouncing the crimes by the women victims of sexual violence in the context of the Colombian armed conflict**

The research estimates that **82.15%** of the **489,678 women** victims of sexual violence, meaning **402,264 women**, did not report the abuses committed against them; while only **17.73% (88,841 women)** reported any of the abuses of which they were victims. **0.23%** did not respond to the question of whether or not they had reported the abuses.

With regards to the State agencies that the victims of sexual violence reported to, it is estimated that **34.50% (24,964 women) reported the abuses to the Attorney General's Office;**<sup>20</sup> **31.74% (27,566 women) reported the abuses to a police station;** **23.08% (20,041 women) reported the crimes to a family inspection unit.**<sup>21</sup> **With less frequency are the 6.53% or 5,671 women who denounced the abuses in courts. 2.18% of women (1,894) denounced the abuses to the Institute of Family Welfare;**<sup>22</sup> **1.17% (1,016) to the local government representatives,**<sup>23</sup> **and finally 0.79% of women (689) denounced the abuses to the Ombudsman Office.**<sup>24</sup>

The most common reasons for not denouncing the crimes, according to the women that didn't report the abuses, are: **"she rather left it as it was" 46.70% (187,846 women); had fear of retaliation, 28.46% (114,474); "did not know how to report the abuses" 8.54% (34,343); "don't believe in or trust the judicial system" 7.31% (29,422); and 5.87% (23,598) did not want their family members to find out.**

With less frequency, **2.53%, 10,165 women felt ashamed and humiliated; 0.31% (1,255) stated that the place to report is far away from their residence; and 0.29% (1,161 women) didn't possess the economic means to denounce the abuses.**

In addition, it is also estimated that **73.93%** of the women from the **407 municipalities**, meaning **2,059,001 women**, consider that the presence of armed actors constitutes an obstacle for reporting cases of sexual violence in the municipalities.

By crossing the question of if you consider that the presence of armed groups is an obstacle when trying to report sexual violence with the data of women who declared themselves as being victims of sexual violence, the results show that:

**68.59%** of the women that did denounce the abuses (**59,568**) consider that the presence of armed groups constitute an obstacle to denouncing the acts of violence. **80.84%** of the victims that didn't report the abuses believe that the presence of the armed actors is an obstacle that limits the possibility of denouncing the abuses.

As way of conclusion, the prevalence of sexual violence in the Colombian municipalities with a presence of armed actors, the victim's lack of knowledge of the different types of sexual violence, the continual abuse in both private and public places by both legally and illegally armed and civilian actors, and the obstacle that the presence of armed actors entails for women when trying to denounce cases of sexual violence, contribute to this crime remaining invisible and unpunished in Colombia.

## Recommendations

Taking into account these realities and the commitments of the Colombian State at the national and international level, we recommended that:

### **The Colombian government and local authorities:**

- ✦ Fully comply at both the national and regional level with the recommendations set forth by the International Human Rights System and the Inter-American Protection System regarding prevention, elimination, and prosecution of sexual violence cases against women in the context of the Colombian armed conflict
- ✦ Design and implement an access to justice public policy that seeks to remove the obstacles that women have to face when denouncing sexual violence cases. It should standardize the information systems; facilitate the effective, uniform and transparent investigation of the cases; guarantee technical, infrastructural and financial resources; create specialized investigation units within the framework of law 975 of 2005; strengthen disciplinary controls over all public officials from the judicial sector with a zero tolerance policy to any type of action that re-victimizes women; guarantees psychological support for the victims during the judicial processes and implements reparation measures that guarantee the reestablishment of the violated rights and the right of non repetition.
- ✦ That local authorities in their development programs include programs and allocate resources to carry out projects to prevent, eliminate, and prosecute sexual violence against women as it is stipulated in law 1257 of 2008.
- ✦ That the Attorney General's Office as well as the regional AGO's offices develop protocols for the investigation of sexual violence cases against women in the context of the Colombian armed conflict.
- ✦ That the Ombudsman Office strengthens the public defense that is offered to women victims by including legal advice and psychological support during the judicial proceedings.
- ✦ That the Colombian government and the Congress include within the victims law international standards for truth, justice and reparation for women victims of sexual violence.
- ✦ That the Colombian government promotes at the national and regional level care and protection mechanisms for women victims of sexual violence.
- ✦ That the Colombian government complies with the Constitutional Court recommendations

set forth in the Court Order 092 of 2008 relating to gender risks, and Sentence T-496 of 2008; and in general with the promotion of protection programs for victims and witnesses, where the risk assessment, the protection measures, and its monitoring include the particular situation of women victims of sexual violence.

- ✿ That the national government and local authorities design and implement an educational campaign towards the recognition of the multiple types of sexual violence against women in the context of the armed conflict, and the need for a culture of zero tolerance against these violations.

### **The International Community:**

- ✿ That in bilateral relations with Colombia should include policies that guarantee the rule of law and zero tolerance against human rights violations, especially sexual crimes committed against women in the context of the armed conflict. This zero tolerance should include the request to investigate and prosecute those responsible, and to compensate women victims of this type of violence.
- ✿ Strengthen their cooperation with organizations that defend human rights, women's organizations, and victims associations that offer support to the women victims of sexual violence in the context of the armed conflict; and work in the investigation and construction of public policy proposals for its prevention, elimination, and prosecution.
- ✿ Make use of bilateral and multilateral diplomatic means to monitor and request accountability on the advances in complying with the recommendations directed to the Colombian government in the previous section.

## Footnotes

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1. Generalized can be defined as “massive, frequent, large scale action, carried out in a collective manner with considerable gravity and with a multiplicity of victims”. Ad Hoc Tribunal for Rwanda. Case Akayesu. Sentence of September 2 1998, paragraph 580.
2. The prevalence can be defined as the number of women that share the same characteristic or a specific event (in this case being victims of sexual violence) at a specific moment of time. (HAUPT and Kane;2003).
3. The definition of the women’s age range for the implementation of the survey took into account four different criteria. First, a quantitative criterion that responded to the fact that the majority of victims of sexual violence are between the ages of 5 and 45. The second criterion was operational; it had to attend to the need to carry out the survey in a personal and individual manner, which meant limiting the age to 15 in order to guarantee the reliability and validity of the answers. The third criterion included methodological considerations, as international studies on sexual violence against women set group ages between 15 and 49 or 22 and 44 years (ELLSBERG, et. al 2001:2). Finally, the fourth criterion took into account legal and ethical considerations: not only is it difficult to know about an act of sexual violence against a girl under the age of 15 and not report it to the authorities, but also legally speaking to not report it could be considered a crime. In addition, carrying out a survey with girls under the age of 15 implied designing a different methodology to the one used in the prevalence survey, and would also require the consent of the parents or legal guardians.
4. Ombudsman Office, 2007.
5. Within these municipalities the research was carried out in the central towns. As it was being conducted in municipalities with an active armed conflict, it was of a great difficulty to guarantee the security of the teams in rural areas.
6. This information was used within the adjustment of the sample’s size that was calculated with a 95% reliance, 5% maximum permissible estimated error, a 20% no answer margin and a prevalence of the phenomenon of interest of 6% (PROFAMILIA;2005). According to these percentages the calculation for the size of the survey was 2177 women. It is important to clarify that the total number of surveyed women was 2,693 not 2,177. The variation in the number is due to the fact that the information gathering operations were designed to have in mind the number of women per square block in each of the municipalities of the sample, and the number of square blocks per municipality provided by the National Planning Department. However, when in the field the number of women did not coincide with the estimate based on the official data. As a result it was necessary to redefine the square blocks that were going to be surveyed. Thus when carrying out the survey for the total number of women in the selected square blocks, the number of surveys increased by 516 with regards to the sample.
7. The design of the survey’s questionnaire was an exhaustive work that started with the discussion of how to reach out to the women, how to inquire and ask questions in a way that the surveyed women and the women surveyors became subjects of a learning process that had effects for them and other women. Difficulties also arose from conducting a door-to-door survey, which didn’t guarantee privacy and environments that would motivate women to disclose their painful experiences. The survey’s design sought to remedy this complex relationship by introducing the questions in a progressive manner.
8. This theory seeks to explain and interpret the different types of violence against women as an expression of the relations of oppression, subordination and social injustice that women are subjected to, and as a power mechanism that the socio-sexual patriarchy system utilizes to maintain, recreate and reproduce these relations.
9. (RADFORD and RUSEELL; 1992:34)
10. In the context of this research the category “illegally armed actors” refers to paramilitaries (including the groups that, after the demobilization process, are known as emerging bands) and guerrillas (FARC and ELN).
11. The statistic of prevalence is produced by dividing of the number of women within the age range that have been victims in the period 2001-2009 of some type of sexual violence, by the total number of women in the age range that could be victims of sexual violence during the same period of time. Taking into account that there are no official projections desegregated by sex, age group,

and geographic area (in this case for the central towns) for 2009, the probability sample allowed us to estimate the total number of women in the age range that reside in the 407 municipalities that are part of the scope of the study (in this case the population in the central towns) for 2010. This data was taken to calculate the prevalence, taking into account that it is reliable and very close to the year of interest.

12. In Colombia there are a series of studies that measure violence against women including: 1- The National Health and Demography Survey of 2005 carried out by ProFamily that inquired about rape within the life cycle of women, concluding that 6% of women were victims of rape by a person other than their partner or spouse, and 11.5% of women were raped by their partner or spouse. It is important to highlight that these percentages cannot be added because there are cases of women that were raped by an unknown person and by their partner or spouse, and adding them will distort the percentage. 2-The Sexual and Reproductive Health Survey in marginal zones of 2005 by ProFamily that inquired about rape in the vital cycle of women, concluding that 8.2% of women were victims of rape by persons other than their spouses or partners, and 13.2% by their partner or spouse. The data of the two surveys cannot be compared to the results produced by the SSV due to the fact that the SSV includes different types of sexual violence besides rape against women between ages 15 and 44 and covers the period 2001-2009.
13. The victim's description is made taking into consideration age, ethnicity, level of education, and socio-economic stratum. Although in the research the marital status, position within the household, and economic activities were also considered, these were not developed in this report.
14. The socio-economic stratum is a tool utilized by the Colombian State to classify households according to their level of poverty or wealth and access to public services (gas, electricity, water and sewage). This classification is made from 1 to 6, 1 being the stratum with the highest levels of poverty and lack of or poor access to public services.
15. Family member is understood to be a person that belongs to a group united by bonds of kinship, including the father, mother, sons and daughters, grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, stepmother, stepfather, the spouse or partner.
16. According to the title VII Chapter Seven, Article 216 of the 1991 Constitution, armed forces include the national police, army, navy and the air forces.
17. The category of unknown actor was adopted in the survey to allow women to acknowledge that their aggressor was an armed organization even though they were not comfortable recognizing the direct responsibility of paramilitary groups or guerrillas. In addition this category allowed the grouping of unidentified armed actors such as criminal bands, gangs, drug bands, etc under one category.
18. WISE, Sue and STANLEY, Liz (1992). *El Acoso sexual en la vida cotidiana*, Mexico: Editorial Paidós. P.81
19. Law 1275 of 2008 (Article 29) established for the first time sexual harassment as a criminal conduct with the inclusion of Article 201A in the Colombian Penal Code.
20. The Attorney General's Office is an agency of the judicial branch with full administrative and budget autonomy, that is in charge of investigating crimes, establishing criminal responsibilities, and initiating legal court proceedings against the responsible parties. This can be done by its own initiative or by a third party denouncing a criminal conduct.
21. The Family Inspection Units are local agencies within cities, municipalities or territorial entities with an administrative and interdisciplinary character, that are part of the National Family Welfare System and whose mission is to prevent, guarantee, re-establish, and repair the rights of the members of a family group violated as a result of violent situations within the family structure.
22. The Colombian Family Welfare Institute is the agency in charge of directing the National Welfare System, and is in charge of providing attention and protection to minors and the family structure. Its functions include coordinating and implementing the State's public policy regarding family welfare, and guaranteeing children's rights and the strengthening of the family structure.
23. In Colombia the local government representatives are in charge of guarding and promoting human rights, as well as monitoring and protecting the public interest and the maintaining vigilance and observance of the conduct of public officials.
24. The Ombudsman Office was created by the Constitution of 1991 with the purpose of promoting and protecting human rights through actions of prevention, observance, protection, defense, promotion of human rights, and encouraging respect for international humanitarian law among the fighting parties.

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