

## **Violence Against Women (VAW)**

The statistics on VAW demystifies the myth that Filipino women have already broken free from oppression and inequality. Women are still victims of domestic violence, comprising 76.2% of all reported cases.

In 2007:

- one woman is battered every one hour and 50 minutes
- one woman is raped every seven hours and 30 minutes
- every 18 hours and 50 minutes, there is a woman victim of sexual harassment

Poverty makes women very vulnerable to prostitution and trafficking within or outside the country. Every year, about 300,000 persons are victims of trafficking worldwide. Victims are usually women and children from Southeast Asia like the Philippines. Worse, more trafficking victims end up in jail than repatriated.

Since 2001, there has been a decline by 14.4% in the number of cases reported to PNP and by 0.7% to DSWD. There is a need to assess the causes of this decline. One hypothesis is the existence of Republic Act (RA) 9262, or Anti-Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC), wherein VAWC cases shall be reported to all *barangay* centers. However, there is still a need for systematic evaluation and assessment in its implementation in the *barangay* level, such as: in the number of cases facilitated, in the number of cases resolved or filed in court, and even in the level of awareness of *barangay* residents about the provisions in RA 9262.

In the Department of Justice Task Force (DOJTF) that handles cases of VAWC, two were dismissed, of the 24 cases filed since 2005. Twenty-two (22) are still in preliminary investigation and one still to be filed in the courts. Since 2003 until 2006, 186 cases of trafficking of women have been filed in DOJ yet only seven cases were resolved, convicting the perpetrators with violation of the Anti-Trafficking of Persons Act (RA 9208).

On the other hand, Gabriela has been receiving an increase number of VAW cases. Compared to the 284 cases reported to them in 2006, it reached 573 in 2007.

## **Violence Against Children (VAC)**

Alarmingly, victims of violence are getting younger. Every 42 minutes, a child is a victim of violence in 2007. Domestic violence remains the most common form of violence against children (VAC), which accounts for 48.32% of the 12,584 VAC cases in 2007.

In 2007:

- one child is battered every one hour and 26 minutes
- one woman is raped every two hours
- for every nine hours, there is a child victim of sexual harassment

## **State-sponsored Violation**

Women and children have experienced violence committed by state authorities as well. Since Arroyo assumed power in 2001 until October 2007, there were 4,969 incidents of state-sponsored human rights violations (HRVs). There were 1,010 women and 303 children victims of HRVs. As women become more assertive in fighting for their rights, they are more vulnerable to violence.

From January 2001 to October 2007, there have been:

- 98 woman victims of political killings
- 14 woman victims of torture
- 8 cases of military rape

At present, there are 235 women political prisoners jailed in different parts of the country. 204 of them were jailed under Arroyo's term.

The Arroyo administration boasts that it was able to decrease the number of cases of extra-judicial killings in 2007. The decrease however, should be attributed in part to the active condemnation of the international community and the unwavering vigilance of the Filipino people.

(Data Sources: Department of Social Welfare and Development, Philippine National Police-Women's Desk, Gabriela, Karapatan)