

1st Global Ministerial Conference to End Violence Against Children, Bogotá, Colombia 2024

Demands of Survivors and Allies for the Bogotá Call to Action to Eradicate Sexual Violence Against Children

The 2020 Global Report on the Status of Violence Prevention Against Children indicates that worldwide, one in two children between the ages of 2 and 17 is a victim of violence¹. One in five girls and one in thirteen boys are victims of sexual violence before they turn 17 years old. Over 120 million women under the age of 20 have experienced forced sexual intercourse. As survivors of one of the most atrocious forms of violence against children, we have been silenced and marginalized for too long, suffering in the shadows while this crime continues to be committed with impunity every day. We know that sexual violence against children can be prevented and ended. We raise our voices to ensure that our experiences, knowledge, and decades of fighting this abominable crime are used to guarantee children's rights to live free from sexual violence and to access justice.

These demands have been developed by survivor-activists who suffered sexual violence in their childhood or adolescence and who have invested decades of education and specialization in acquiring degrees, masters, and doctorates to pave the way for prevention, justice, and healing. Together with allies, they present the following demands in response to the Call to Action. Our goal as survivors is to ensure that our demands and our central role have a transformative impact on the commitments made by our leaders in public and private sectors (education, churches, sports, business) and governments around the world in Bogotá, Colombia, in November 2024.

Legal and policy frameworks

1. Become a pathfinding country that includes the proposals of INSPIRE². Governments should make a public and formal commitment to end all forms of violence against children through comprehensive action, including the implementation of INSPIRE strategies³. These strategies are based on proven evidence to reduce violence against children and include the implementation and enforcement of laws, changing norms and values, creating safe environments, supporting parents and caregivers, improving the economic stability of households, providing response and support services, and ensuring that children develop personal and social skills through education.

Governance and coordination structures

2. Create National Councils of Survivors.⁴ Governments should create a national council of survivors that guarantees a central role for survivors of sexual violence in key oversight processes in the judicial system and in political decision-making, the development of laws and public policies, and other actions related to prevention, justice, and healing in cases of sexual violence. By creating these councils, governments commit to ethically and meaningfully engaging survivors as strategic allies and experts in all actions related to the prevention of sexual violence against children, the implementation of due diligence, and access to healing spaces.

3. Develop and make publicly available a unique inter-institutional pathway and its respective protocols, focused on the survivor, with perspectives of intersectionality (especially gender and generational), informed by trauma and comprehensive for the prevention and response that integrates all relevant government agencies, programs, ministries, and departments. This protocol should foster an integrated approach to prevention and response, involving multiple levels of government, including agencies, programs, ministries, and departments. It should specifically involve key individuals from the Department of Justice, Department of Health, Department of Education, Department of the Interior, survivors, and other relevant entities. The protocol must adhere to the highest standards for child protection and

¹ Organización Mundial de La Salud 19 de septiembre de 2022: <https://www.who.int/es/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/child-maltreatment>

² The Pathfinding Initiative is a special initiative of the UN Secretary-General's Global Partnership and Fund to End Violence Against Children. See <https://www.end-violence.org/pathfinding-countries>.

³ UN World Health Organization (WHO), INSPIRE: Seven Strategies for Ending Violence Against Children, July 2016

⁴ The German Republic's Independent Commissioner for Child Sexual Abuse Issues (UBSKM) Survivors' Council is a first-of-its-kind Council that provides a political platform for survivors to bring the concerns and expertise of survivors of childhood sexual violence.

safety, ensuring that all interventions are sensitive to the needs of survivors and are sufficient to address the complex nature of trauma.

Minimum standards and oversight

4. Become signatories and ratify the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (The Lanzarote Convention) to ensure full compliance with the human rights of children.

5. Conduct national-scale research on child sexual violence and make the findings publicly available. Promote research and collect data on the dynamics, causes, nature, impact, and consequences of sexual violence against children in all its forms with the aim of promoting and implementing data-based prevention and response programs and policies.

6. Ensure full compliance with the new human rights standards and with enhanced due diligence. Take integrated and comprehensive measures to prevent sexual violence against children, including strengthening and applying the right of access to justice, reducing impunity, and reparations for victims. This will work towards a justice system centered on the survivor and childhood. This includes legal reforms such as: 1) the elimination of the statute of limitations, 2) including incestuous sexual violence in penal codes, 3) basing sexual violence crimes on consent.

6.1. Align national legislation with the most advanced international human rights norms and standards through at least three specific legislative reforms⁵

6.1.1. Elimination of provisions in criminal law that have discriminatory effects on the victim's right to access justice (e.g., provisions on statutory rape, prescription of crimes)

6.1.2. Adapt all criminal, administrative, and/or disciplinary regulations that sanction sexual exploitation and violence against children and adolescents in accordance with the concept of consent developed by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

6.1.3. Criminalize incestuous sexual violence as an autonomous and separate penal provision.⁶

6.2. Ensure that the judicial process takes into account the particular situation of vulnerability and the needs of child victims, integrating a gender and intersectional perspective and maintaining the enhanced standards of protection to which child victims are entitled.

Response and support services

7. Require specialization and certification in trauma-informed and sensitive handling for justice system operators who interact with child victims of sexual violence in line with international human rights standards.⁷ This certification should encompass the most recent advances in neuroscience and best practices in trauma management. All state actors involved in handling cases of sexual violence against children must possess this certification that guarantees fundamental specialization.

8. Ensure forensic interviews with high standards of quality, properly specialized and certified personnel, and with appropriate contexts and methodologies, including video recording, Gesell chamber, or closed circuits.⁸

Human/ Financial and infrastructure resources

9. Develop a special government fund dedicated solely to the prevention and repair for cases of sexual violence against children guided by a National Annual Plan for Prevention, Healing, and Justice. By establishing a fund dedicated to this purpose, governments will offer the public a level of budgetary transparency that inspires confidence in the government's efforts to address this public health crisis.

⁵ See CortelDH Caso González y otras ("Campo Algodonero") Vs. México. Excepción Preliminar, Fondo, Reparaciones y Costas. Sentencia de 16 de noviembre de 2009; Caso Fernández Ortega y otros Vs. México. Excepción Preliminar, Fondo, Reparaciones y Costas. Sentencia de 30 de agosto de 2010; Caso Guzmán Albarracín y otras vs. Ecuador. Excepción Preliminar, Fondo, Reparaciones y Costas. Sentencia de 24 de junio de 2020. Caso V.R.P., V.P.C. y otros Vs. Nicaragua. Excepciones Preliminares, Fondo, Reparaciones y Costas. Sentencia de 8 de marzo de 2018. Caso Angulo Losada Vs. Bolivia. Excepciones preliminares, fondo y reparaciones. Sentencia de 18 de noviembre de 2022.

⁶ Violencia sexual Incestuosa se define como cualquier interacción sexual que un adulto de la familia tenga con un menor de edad.

⁷ See Caso Angulo Losada Vs. Bolivia. Excepciones preliminares, fondo y reparaciones. Sentencia de 18 de noviembre de 2022, párr 119

⁸ La Entrevista Forense a Niños, Niñas, Y a Adolescentes Víctimas de Violencia Sexual. 2024