

Name the aggressors whatever their position!

Feminist struggles have made it possible to break the taboo of specific violence against women. In an attempt to suppress this movement, attacks are continuously launched against feminist organizations that are pleading this cause and against women who dare to denounce the violence suffered. These attacks are especially virulent when a man in a position of power is denounced.

Mr. Pradel Henriquez, Minister of Culture, openly joins the ranks of those who claim to impose silence on women. In a text posted on September 12 on his Facebook page¹, the minister defends an alleged attacker - his friend and colleague Mr. Dangelo Néard, the current Director General of the National Library - and attacks women who dare to name their attackers as well as feminist organizations that support women victims of abuse. The minister would like to pass off the whistleblowers for a "laboratory of women who fabricate accusations of rape; and with "funds intended to finance false testimonies of rape". The minister goes so far as to posture as the investigating judge who concludes that a plot was hatched by "delinquents, scoundrels" and calls on the judicial police to "dismantle this gang of forgers".

Through his macho and anti-feminist rant, Mr. Henriquez is not behaving like a minister. He believes he can, on the one hand, undermine the credibility of feminist organizations and, on the other hand, intimidate and dissuade women who want to speak out against their attackers. Apparently, the Minister of Culture is unaware of the following: 1) in Haiti the mobilization to fight violence against women dates back to the American occupation (1915-1934), 2) with the resurgence of the women's movement at the fall of the Duvalier dictatorship in 1986, the campaigns against violence have been continuous and, 3) In 1994, Haiti ratified the Inter-American Convention against Violence Against Women (Belem Do Para). And, above all, the minister would like to hide the fact that more and more women are courageously publically naming their abusers whoever they are.

Violators of women's rights are found in all walks of life. The social origin of an aggressor or his links with a political authority cannot be taken into account and certainly not take away the right of women to denounce them.

Despite the pernicious attacks, feminists resolutely intend to continue to fight against gender-based and sexual violence, to counter toxic masculinity and to stand in solidarity with abused women. Breaking with denial of male violence, in particular sexual assault, remains essential in the fight for respect for the dignity of women.

September 14, 2020.

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The petitioners:

1. Kay Fanm - *Women's house*
2. SOFA - *Solidarity of Haitian women*
3. Fanm Deside - *Determined women*
4. AFASDA - *Association of Sun Women of Haiti*
5. REFRAKA - *Haitian community radio women's network*
6. GADES - *Southern Development Support Group*
7. Fanm Yo La - *The women are there*
8. Fondation Toya - *Toya Foundation*
9. Nègès Mawon - *Maroon Black Women*
10. Sabine Manigat, independent feminist

This position is supported by: Kettly Mars, author; Evelyne Trouillot, author; Antoinette Duclair, feminist journalist; Marijàn, feminist organization.

¹ "Accusation of rape: I condemn the attacks against Dangelo Néard and I denounce this new laboratory of unscrupulous women who fabricate accusations of rape".