

Official Call for Action Addressed to The Government of The Bahamas

In response to the comments made by MP for Tall Pines Leslie Miller on February 20, 2014 in the House of Assembly, Bahamas Against Sexual Violence & Child Abuse (BASV&CA) finds the following course of action necessary:

That the Prime Minister of The Bahamas issue an official written and televised statement from the Government to:

1. Denounce the comments made by MP for Tall Pines in the House of Assembly on February 20, 2014 which made the issue of domestic violence and violence against women a “joke”
2. Denounce the response made by the Speaker of the House labelling it a "joke"
3. Apologise for failure of all present to respond to MP for Tall Pines' comments in the House of Assembly at the time, and the delay in making an official remark on the matter
4. State the government's awareness of relevant statistics including:
 - a. 45% of murders in the Bahamas over the last 20 years can be attributed to domestic violence.¹
 - b. The Bahamas had the highest per capita rates of rape in the world.²
5. Commit to:
 - a. Immediate mandatory sensitivity training for the Speaker of the House and all Members of Parliament
 - b. Implementation of a conflict resolution and anti-harassment training program into the public and private school curriculum to begin in Fall 2014
 - c. Funding a widely publicised campaign utilising daily newspapers, radio ads, television ads, and street art to:
 - i. Increase public awareness the pervasive and harmful effects of domestic violence
 - ii. Advise the public of penalties for sexual harassment and assault
 - iii. Implore victims and bystanders to report all instances of sexual harassment and assault
 - iv. Equip the public with necessary resources including the contact information for Crisis Centre

Timeline

February 20, 2014 - Events in the House of Assembly suggested domestic violence is a “joke”

March 5, 2014 - The public was made aware of the events of February 20, 2014

March 7, 2014 - Representative of BASV&CA attended The Bureau of Women's Affairs' Panel Discussion to present Official Call to Action to Members of Parliament present and the general public

- Official Call for Action was sent to Minister of Social Services Melanie Griffin, M.P., via email, at her request

- Receipt was confirmed by Minister Griffin, M.P.

March 13, 2014 - Official Call for Action, having received no further response from Minister Griffin, M.P., was forwarded to The Rt. Hon. Perry G. Christie, M.P.

¹ 2012 Country Report for Human Rights Practices published by the United States Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour

² Joint UN/World Bank 2007 Report 'Crime, violence and development: trends, costs and policy options in the Caribbean' (“the Joint Report”)