

Coalition to End Gender-based Violence & Discrimination

April 7, 2014 Proposal | Re: Violence & Crime

Gender-based violence (GBV) violates human rights and presents a significant public health challenge with civic, social, political, and economic consequences for individuals, communities and societies. GBV causes physical and mental harm, limits access to education, incurs medical and legal costs, reduces productivity, and lowers income. It undermines the safety, dignity, health, and human rights of the millions of individuals who experience it, and the public health, economic well-being, and security of nations.

***WHEREAS**, police statistics have shown that 45% of all murder over the last 20 years are attributed to domestic violence and as of today's date, the annual country murder count shows a 36% increase above last year's;*

In response to the recent spike in reported murders of women and in an effort to reduce the amount of gender-based violence in The Bahamas, we propose the following:

- A series of meetings with law enforcement officials throughout The Bahamas to plan action on the ground which may or may not include:
 - Gun amnesty for a set period (*as in Oct 2011*)
 - Defense force marine deployment to assist with the crime fight (*as in Sept 2013*)
- Quarterly meetings attended by the Prime Minister, Minister of National Security, Minister of Social Services, senior public officials and the *Coalition to End Gender-based Violence & Discrimination*

In an effort to educate and re-condition the mindset of the nation, we propose the following initiatives:

- Upgrade the current Family Life Curriculum in high schools to include gender-based violence awareness and anti-harassment module and implement in Fall 2014
- Support a widely publicised campaign utilising daily newspapers, radio ads, television ads, billboards and street art to:
 - Increase public awareness of the pervasive and harmful effects of domestic and gender-based violence
 - Advise the public of penalties for sexual harassment and assault
 - Implore victims and bystanders to report all instances of sexual harassment and assault
 - Inform the public of resources available to combat gender based violence.

We also support the proposal for the establishment of a separate court for Sexual Offenses and the following stipulations:

- Closed court for victims to give evidence.
- Treatment for juvenile sex offenders.
- Supervision orders for discharged sex offenders.

We also propose the exploration of:

- Mandatory arrests for statutory rape where physical evidence exists
- Mandatory conviction for failure to report any form of abuse against a minor
- Amendment of the current Sexual Harassment Law to address Sexual Harassment outside of the workplace.

We are ready and willing to participate in ongoing dialogue in order to establish a timeline for action with measurable results.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to receiving your response before Monday, April 14, 2014.

Sincerely,



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Coalition to End Gender-based Violence & Discrimination is comprised of:



[Bahamas Against Sexual Violence & Child Abuse](#)

BASV&CA acts as a catalyst to bring together the voices of concerned citizens and supporters far and wide.

For too long Bahamians have sat back and not taken the steps required to make protecting the rights of our women and children the priority that it should be.



[Hollaback! Bahamas](#)

Hollaback is a movement to end street harassment powered by a network of local activists around the world. We work together to better understand street harassment, to ignite public conversations, and to develop innovative strategies to ensure equal access to public spaces. Our vision We envision a world where street harassment is not tolerated and where we all enjoy equal access to public spaces.



[Bahamas Women's Watch](#)

To initiate a national dialogue on the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) U.N. convention as a tool for advancing women's issues, in all aspects of Bahamian society.



[Bahamas Urban Youth Development Center](#)

Since its inception, BUYDC has focused its efforts on HIV/ AIDS Prevention information to middle and high school students, through its empowerment trainings that teach HIV/ AIDS Prevention Education.



[Families of All Murder Victims](#)

FOAM is a non-profit organization seeking to help the kids who parent/ parents were murdered through offering professional counseling, home visits, care packs, and school supplies.