

*Every month RESURJ members will collectively share and reflect on some news highlights affecting sexual and reproductive, environmental and economic justice from the different regions and countries we work in... [read online](#)*

### **[Egypt: A Rise in Conservatism and a Failing Justice System](#)**

Egypt remains politically unstable and human rights abuses are rampant. Even though [the President has spoken](#) out against police abuse, and there has been major movement on the street – in particular led by the [Doctors' syndicate](#) – police abuse continues at alarming trends – even towards [well-known figures](#) and [foreigners](#), both of which have never been common trends under the previous dictatorship of Mubarak. What is greatly alarming for Egypt and womens' rights activists at the moment however is the rise of conservatism not just among the ruling elite, but within different judicial institutions. Even gains in the battles against [sexual harassment](#) and [violence](#) for example have been limited by this trend.

Amongst the thousands who remain imprisoned unjustly in Egypt, is the case of child rights activist [Aya Hegazy](#) and her husband who were arrested in May 2014 and face sex trafficking charges. In 2014, Aya started a foundation to work with street children. Read more about Aya [here](#) and [here](#). This is the latest [news](#) with regards to her trial, March 23 is the next session.

### **[Honduras: Human Rights Defenders Continue to Pay the Price with Their Lives](#)**

Indigenous Land and human Rights Defender, Berta Caceres, from Honduras, was killed in her home on March 3rd. Berta [fearlessly and tirelessly defended the rights](#) of indigenous peoples and the environment against large corporations and development projects for over 25 years. She Lead the Council for indigenous Peoples of Honduras (COPINH). The level of risks, violence and threat and coercion women human rights defenders face around the world must stop. Berta's courage, resilience and commitment to justice will live on inspiring countless of activists and rights defenders against violence, repression, the tyranny of capitalism and corruption. Please [read](#) and keep raising your voice against senseless killing of women human rights defenders. #justiciaParaBerta #WHRD.

Watch: AJ+ [video](#) on Berta's assassination and [Mother of All Rivers](#) depicting Berta's struggle against growing socioeconomic inequality and human rights violations.

### **[India: Limiting Public Space for Feminist Voices](#)**

In the current political environment in India, the merits, concept and validity of free speech are being heavily debated. The question of whether people (especially young people) have the right to be political, to critique and to contribute to dissent is being seen as an attack on the idea of the 'nation state' as it is imagined in the country's religious right-wing interpretation of nationalism. This lens is often restrictive and unfriendly to diversity and plurality of any kind and further narrows the space where young women can claim feminist voices and can speak to how these intersections of control sit in their lives. Watch this [video](#) by Shirin Choudhary, a second year student of literature at Delhi University and an SRHR youth activist, as she speaks at a poetry collective in New Delhi. She is a Peer-Educator and a Fellow with The YP Foundation's Know Your Body, Know Your Rights Programme on Comprehensive Sexuality Education for young people in India. These are her words.

### **[Nigeria: Laws That Cannot Protect Adolescent Girls](#)**

Laws and Institutions are still failing to protect [this adolescent girl](#) in Nigeria. Even though Nigeria is a signatory to international agreements such as the CRC; CEDAW, Maputo protocol and has its own national Child Rights Act, institutions with the mandate to prevent child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) and trafficking of women and girls still failed to act. This brings to bear the question, is creating policies and laws enough to protect and uphold the human rights of women and girls? This case shows that more attention must be focused on the implementation of these laws and strengthening the respective agencies and institutions with the mandates to enforce the laws.

### **[Pakistan: A Step in the Right Direction of Combatting Violence against Women](#)**

A new [law combatting violence against women](#) has just come into force in Punjab. The domestic sphere has largely remained untouched by the rule of law so this is a good first step in addressing domestic violence issues. The fact that there are [implementation guidelines](#) is also very important

because the laws are often made without any clear steps for implementation. There are obvious gaps such as punishment for false accusation which can of course be used incorrectly and we know that a great deal of abuse also comes from police, courts and domestic shelters so a lot of care will need to be taken with sensitization of those involved. But it's a start and usually when Punjab does something other provinces follow.

### **Philippines: Slashing the RPRH Law: Family Planning Budget Cut**

Financing reproductive health, including family planning (FP) commodities is one of the provisions of the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health (RPRH) Law, passed in 2012, after almost two decades of lobbying by reproductive health advocates in the Philippines. But the war for sexual and reproductive health and rights continues as the Catholic Church and its allies in government remain fervent in preventing the law from its implementation – including through the Status Quo Ante Order questioning the Constitutionality of the Law in 2013, and now the battle for funds for FP commodities during the annual budget hearings in Congress.

The 2016 Budget for FP commodities was slashed by Php1 billion pesos during the Department of Health (DOH) 2016 Budget deliberations in the Senate. The President did not exercise his veto power prior to his signing of the budget law, the 2016 General Appropriations Act (GAA), raising concerns. Despite the participation of reproductive health advocates in the implementation of the RPRH Law, the whole community was caught by surprise by the FP budget cut as the process of the health budget deliberations and subsequent approval was marred by lack of transparency and accountability in the public finance process.

### **Philippines: Pacquiao and the Rising Political Power of the LGBT Community**

Philippine boxing superstar Manny Pacquiao issued a statement referring to members of the LGBT community as not normal and similar to animals. Pacquiao despite not attending sessions in the House of Representatives is running for a seat in the 2016 Senatorial elections. Pacquiao lost two million subscribers Twitter followers immediately after issuing the statement. Previously high in the senatorial election survey, he is slowly descending out of the top 12.

The Pacquiao issue is relevant because it showcases the power of the LGBT community and that it reflects that the community is not just composed of LGBT but also their family and friends. It illustrates as well that discrimination and SOGIE are issues that matters to the electorate. Unfortunately the response on this issue is not the same with regards to Pacquiao's or other politicians' statements on reproductive health, divorce and women's human rights.

### **UK: Dwindling of Social Protection Schemes Increase Burden on Women**

The dramatic increase in evictions in the United Kingdom is alarming with dire consequences for the poor and vulnerable. The new housing bill (currently at the House of Lords reading stage) will get rid of a further 80,000 council properties, 180,000 by 2020 and decrease the availability of safe housing for women trying to escape domestic violence. In a recent case, a woman was evicted with her children and the council offered her to stay in a BnB. BnBs are used to house homeless people in the UK for only a maximum of 6 weeks, but the reality is that people usually stay months, and they are notoriously dangerous and cramped. BnB homeless tenants are at the highest rate ever in the UK and this video is worth watching.

This is also a bigger issue for migrant women. Landlords are now required to check tenants' right to live in the UK before renting. For migrant women whose status already doesn't allow them to access services or get benefits in the UK, escaping domestic violence by renting a property becomes impossible.

*Also, you can watch:*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2gqui3siZdl> -  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_N1Fcy579Tw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_N1Fcy579Tw) -  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BN7ml6b-e4> -  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y1us-W4OcYI>

### **UK: Taking Steps Towards Privatization of the National Health Service (NHS):**

The government is putting together a new contract for junior doctors requiring them to work more hours for less pay, which will be dangerous for patients and would discourage women from entering the profession. Nurses will also have no support to study nursing now. The NHS is crumbling because of its very limited nursing staff. All of this is part of a larger move by the health minister to privatize the health system.