

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](#)

Lebanon: Homonationalism at Beirut "Pride"*

To mark this year's International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOBIT), an informal group of people organized Beirut "Pride," publicizing it as the "first" pride ever taking place in the Lebanese capital on many international, regional, and local news platforms.

Beirut "Pride" was a setback for the long history of non-normative activism in Lebanon. In the many years of organizing for IDAHOBIT, radical queer and feminists movements and activists pushed for an intersectional approach to non-normative sexualities, beyond a narrow understanding of identity politics. The week that catered to a cis, gay, Lebanese, and middle upper class audience had no political message other than "positivity" and "pride."

Not only did Beirut "Pride" adopt a stale, neoliberal approach to the concepts of pride, identity politics, and visibility, but it also obliterated years of feminist activism and resistance. It actively refused to even touch upon article 534 of the Lebanese law that criminalizes "unnatural sex acts," one of the few rallying points among various sexuality movements in Lebanon. It erased the histories of individuals with non-normative sexualities who refused to adopt identity politics because of their radical, political stance. It silenced, marginalized, and sidelined most of those who do not conform to [rich homonormative masculinities](#).

While Beirut "Pride" promoted itself as an "apolitical" endeavor, there was nothing apolitical about their perception of visibility and their ignoring of the [queer concept of ambiguous](#)

[visibilities](#). Choosing to include civil society is not an apolitical decision, especially when the organizations in question have pushed the various sexuality movements into a slow and painful process of [NGOization](#), accepting funding from and collaborating with the US department of state and other embassies in Lebanon, and monopolizing resources in the region by weakening feminist initiatives and positionalities through various means, such as appropriating feminist language and discourse.

**This is an abridged version from an article published on the [Feminist Voices blog](#). To read the full article, click [here](#).*

Mexico: The Terrorism of the State - Journalists, Women and Human Rights Defenders Murdered With Impunity

By: Oriana López Uribe

In Mexico, [it is dangerous to be a woman](#), a [journalist](#) or a human rights defender. While in other parts of the globe, people talk about terrorist attacks, in Mexico, we are used to seeing people [killed, threatened or illegally detained](#).

So, why is it that we don't call them terrorist attacks? Maybe because the majority of these actions are done by the State or allowed and hidden by the State.

Human rights defenders and [journalists are killed](#) because of their work against powerful people, which include many of those currently or previously in office and with links to the private sector, to [drug cartels](#) and/or to human trafficking networks. Our

State is selectively killing, silencing the voices of those who challenge their power, through ordering killings and/or by the [impunity that these actions have](#). That for me is terror.

[Femicides exist because men think they can dispose of us](#). We are less valued in this misogynistic society. Men get angry, furious, for no reason, and instead of taking care of their emotions as adults, they kill women. Because they can't control us, or we don't love them, or to teach us who's the boss. They rape us, then they kill us. The judicial system [forgives](#) them, which encourages their behaviour. The judicial system [blames the victims](#). This for me is terror.

Nigeria: The Politics of Identity, Power and Control

By: Fadekemi Akifadenrin

Nigeria's past and present center around the concept of identity politics. The British during colonial times deliberately played on and fomented differences in Nigeria that were largely responsible for the persistent internal conflict experienced in the country in recent times. [The division of Nigeria along religious lines has been the root cause of stagnation](#) in terms of the country's development.

This strategy, married with ethnic divisions, takes root in many conflicts that have plagued the country. A true examination of the agitations of different groups in Nigeria reveals that they are not just because of religious or ethnic differences but rather [a clamor for social, ecological and economic justice](#). The Nigerian government's response to these agitations has been an increased use of military force against open conversations about power, disenfranchisement, exclusion and inequality. Sadly but honestly, the conditions for civil war in Nigeria are in place, we just hope that we never find the "igniter".

Just like in our colonial history, I have noticed that women's rights and feminist organizations are applying the same divide and conquer approaches to women and girls' lived-realities; forcing women and girls to choose what needs should be met first.

The power dynamics from colonial times are being replicating in our work and activism within Nigeria and the continent at large.

During the recent advocacy activities on Nigeria's potential gender equality bill that aims to domesticate CEDAW, there was a significant focus by activists on the issue of equality in the political and economic arena and less on health, including the SRHR needs of women. The division within the women's rights movement is highly influenced by donors and the overall funding environment. For example, the European Union is providing funding to some women's organization to push for the passage of a "watered down" version of the Gender Equality Bill that would make no real impact on the lives of Nigerian women and girls. The funding landscape has pushed many women's rights or women-focused organizations to take labels.

We as feminists need to challenge the political climate that is centered on the social construct of identity.

**This is an abridged version from an article published on the [Feminist Voices blog](#). To read the full article, click [here](#).*

Pakistan: Confronting stigma by bringing child sexual abuse into the Pakistani public eye

Par: Sheena Hadi

In 2015, the largest child sexual abuse scandal to have ever been uncovered in Pakistan became headline news. [According to reports](#), over 280 children were abused in Hussain Khanwala village in the Kasur District of the Punjab province over the course of several years in order to market child pornography locally and internationally. The "Kasur Incident" as it came to be known caused ripples throughout Pakistan in part because of the scale of the abuse, but also because of the collusion of local law enforcement, the silence of community members who had knowledge of the abuse, and the attention drawn from the highest seats in government.

While the Kasur incident sparked dialogue, it also dramatically highlighted that stigma still surrounds sexual abuse. With nearly 300 families involved, no one reported the abuse for several months partly because of the shame that will be brought down on the families of those that have been abused.

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) collected [statements during an investigation](#) that provided evidence that many families paid extortion money to conceal their children's involvement. The Kasur incident shed light on the critical need for protection and rehabilitation policies and facilities for survivors of child sexual abuse, and the lack of state attention and resources that have been attributed to child protection. In early 2016, [the parliament passed a law](#) criminalizing sexual assault against minors, child pornography and trafficking. Yet, we know that globally, putting down legal measures [without addressing the root causes](#) of sexual violence or the secrecy within which it is still shrouded, will do little to decrease incidences.

It was in the aftermath of Kasur and the weak response of the state, that [Aahung](#) focused attention on developing an awareness campaign on child sexual abuse to address stigma and lack of awareness, using a series of gifs, articles, blogs and video clips. The response to the campaign has been largely positive, and the content provided caregivers with information they are lacking. However, addressing social discomfort around sexuality and challenging power structures is always complicated, particularly in a society where there are misguided notions of honor and the sanctity of the family holds unquestionable value. Perhaps the most encouraging outcome of the campaign has been the dialogue it has created between those that resist the realities of child sexual abuse and those that want to use their experience to create potential for a new generation of children to escape the violence they endured.

Sri Lanka: What do women's rights have to do with the SDGs and the Internet?*

By: Sachini Perera

Statistics show that while the digital divide is gradually closing (though penetration rates are still very low in developing and least developed countries), the gender gap in access to the Internet is getting wider. The global Internet user gender gap grew from [11% in 2013 to 12% in 2016](#). This means that as Internet penetration increases in countries, it is mostly men's access that is increasing while the number of women who have no or limited access remains the same. It is important that we investigate some of the reasons behind this widening gender gap.

Women are not a homogenous group and our access to technology is also affected by a number of other factors such as age, class, caste, race, ethnicity, income, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, abilities, urban or rural locality, etc. Therefore, we have to overcome multiple discriminations in order to gain access. These include, but are not limited to, the high cost of devices, the high cost of connectivity, lack of infrastructure, cultural and religious restrictions, geographical location, language barriers, etc.

Even when we overcome those barriers, often [women and girls' increased access to the Internet is directly proportional to the increase of violence against women online](#). Many a time, rather than address the structural causes of violence, the possibility of violence is used as a reason to restrict women and girls' access to the Internet and censor their freedom of expression and right to bodily integrity. Or, [as we've seen in other countries in our region](#), laws that purportedly address cyber crime are put in place to grant the State sweeping powers to restrict people's, and especially women's, right to information, freedom of expression, sexuality, sexual rights, right to bodily integrity, etc.

Therefore while the Internet and ICTs may hold a lot of potential to achieve sustainable development, we need to acknowledge that unless structural inequalities are acknowledged and addressed,

women as well as other marginalized groups are not going to reap equal benefits that are truly transformative. It is also important that we don't put all our eggs in the ICTs basket.

*This is an excerpt is from an article published on the [Feminist Voices blog](#). To read the full article, [click here](#).