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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...

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A question of care: personal stories of abortion in Egypt

by Nana Abuelsoud

“If we think of abortion as a choice, we have to understand the circumstances and the number of options a woman was given before calling her abortion ‘a choice’.”

I met with two Egyptian women* who had an abortion in Cairo. They drew from their experiences to imagine what post-abortion care[1] (PAC) would look and feel like if they, for a moment, forget about what it means for women to face an unwanted pregnancy in Egypt.

The first woman I met with; I will call her Sara, is 27 and had her abortion at the age of 25.

“The thing with the law is that it doesn’t change the attitudes and behaviours of service providers overnight, but it somehow lifts the un-welcomed feeling of fear. The fear of all possible scenarios; me dying aborting or going to prison if my very illegal act was discovered.

“Three months after my abortion, I broke down. I wrote a letter to that fetus and shared it with a friend who had undergone abortion herself. My friend said the letter had given her room to grieve and be sad. It validated her right to mourn. I lost a good part of my tenderness after this experience. I felt my world should pause for me to grieve, but it didn’t. I still had to work through everyday and I had a rent to pay.”

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

Can a young nation like India afford to lose its young people to unsafe abortions?

by Jasmine Lovely George

The age of consent for young people to enter in any sexual relationship in India is 18 years old, which

makes a range of sexual activities outside this age range illegal. In this context, where young people’s agency to engage in sexual relationships is not even considered legal, how do young people in India deal with issues of unwanted pregnancies?

In 2018 alone, a lot of young people and adolescents have approached medical professionals to seek medical assistance in terminating pregnancies. In a lot of these cases, they have consulted the doctors after the first 20 weeks of pregnancy. Under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971, medical abortion is legal in India up to 20 weeks of pregnancy, provided it involves a risk to the life of the pregnant woman, poses a threat of grave injury to physical or mental health, or involves a substantial risk that if the child were born, it would suffer from such physical or mental health issues.

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The elected president, the green wave, and bittersweet never-ending hope for legal abortion in Mexico

by Oriana Lopez

Since July, Mexico has been refuelled with hope. The hope that it was real and possible to have a president elected by the people’s votes and not by the usual powers. With former President Vicente Fox winning in 2000, we knew it was possible for other parties to win the election. But after Peña Nieto took over and brought back the political party PRI to Los Pinos, the fear of going back to a [dictatorship disguised as democracy](#) was latent.

The hope of many doesn’t rely on [Andrés Manuel López Obrador himself](#); he has a [group of brilliant people](#) that could mean many positive changes for

the country; economic, political and cultural. But he made some problematic alliances and [promises with the evangelicals](#). It's a bittersweet hope, with a pinch of fear.

During his campaign, he failed to [talk about gender equality](#), women's issues or women's human rights. His only position on abortion is that he wouldn't touch the current laws. Which only means he is not willing to improve the conditions of women across the country that have no real access to abortion.

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

Fighting through thick and thin to normalize abortion: My abortion advocacy story

by Chantal Umuhoza

2018 marks exactly 10 years since I embarked on this passionate and challenging journey to raise my voice and advocate for women and girls access to safe and legal abortion, wherever I am. It started in 2008 when I was a youth volunteer for an organization that worked on sexual and reproductive health in Rwanda. My journey took shape when in 2009 I was attending an international youth workshop in the Netherlands, organized by [Rutgers WPF](#) to discuss the 'Grey areas of Sexual and reproductive health and rights' along with other young people from five countries in Asia and Africa. Sexual violence, sexual diversity, and abortion were the focus of the workshop. At the end of the workshop, each national group was supposed to agree on one topic of interest that they wanted to focus on and develop a project to be implemented at the national level. I knew for sure I was going to work on abortion. It felt like it was my calling. Five other Rwandan young people and I attending the workshop had long discussions. They wanted to focus on sexual violence because it wasn't as 'controversial' while I argued the case for abortion advocacy.

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

When will Sri Lankan women have full control over our bodies?

by Sachini Perera

As the September 28th campaign approaches, I've been thinking to myself if there is anything more left to say about the abortion law reform process in

Sri Lanka[1] and the stalemate it is currently at. A lot that has been said already and I have added my own voice to this a couple of times; including [the analysis that even the proposed reforms are a far cry from the right to bodily autonomy that women and girls, in all our diversity, are entitled to](#).

So I'll keep this succinct because this is not a discussion that requires new angles or hot takes.

Decriminalizing abortion comes down to treating women as people capable of making decisions about our bodies because we know that social, cultural and legal norms already assume and deem cisgender heterosexual men to have such capacity. It is about acknowledging women as people with agency and not patronizing us and putting our lives in danger by criminalizing decisions related to our bodies or relegating decision making about our bodies to doctors, judges, religious leaders, policy makers and men.

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

Reaching the Age of Joy in Abortion Stories

by Mari-Claire Price

For abortion activists and people who have had abortions, it often feels like we are continually taking a defensive position in responding to discussions around abortion. We are well versed in the rights-based arguments for abortion and post-abortion services, the devastating health impacts of illegal or unsafe abortion, and the need and evidence for decriminalization. Some of us go even deeper. We share intersectional analyses of access to abortion for marginalized women; reflections on poverty disparity in accessing these services; or the interlinkages between the criminalization of abortion and racial, social and economic justice. We share our own abortion stories or share the stories of other women; of unsafe abortion and mortality where abortion is criminalized, illegal, or inaccessible; of the lack of access, stigma, discrimination, and violence faced by young women and adolescent girls; stories of hard decisions, and fear.

It is true that these are the realities for many women across the world, and these stories are at the heart of our calls to action, and our fight for abortion rights. But have we done justice to the stories of positive experiences of abortion? The

joyful experiences? Or even the mundane? Are we sharing these stories in the same way?

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

Repealed: reflections from Ireland's abortion rights movement

by Grace Wilentz

On May 26th, in a landslide victory, the Irish electorate voted to repeal Ireland's near-total Constitutional ban on abortion: the 8th Amendment. Since 1983, the 8th Amendment has forced more than 170,000 women and girls to travel to other countries to access abortion services that should have been their right at home. Countless more self-administered abortion pills accessed through online providers. However, if the government delivers on its promise to pass legislation to guarantee access to safe abortion in Ireland, the burden of accessing abortion services could finally shift from women to our public health system, ending decades of unnecessary suffering.

It's not every day that the women's movement changes the constitution. Though to many change seemed to come about quite quickly, the resounding 'yes' vote came about through decades of grassroots campaigning. At the heart of it were the women and girls who came forward to tell their abortion stories. It was their bravery that turned the tide of the national conversation about abortion in Ireland. Indeed, [polling conducted by Raidió Teilifís Éireann](#) (RTÉ), found that 77% of voters reported that the way they voted was most influenced by the experiences of people they knew or by personal abortion stories covered in the media.

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#SeraLey

by Pamela Martín García

Estos pequeños relatos son una porción de todo lo vivido, desde mi perspectiva y mi experiencia en la Campaña Nacional por el Derecho al Aborto Legal Seguro y Gratuito - en adelante la Campaña - y la enorme marea verde en la que nos abrazamos con las latinas, las caribeñas y con las compañeras feministas del resto del mundo en un grito global por nuestros derechos humanos.

#SeVaACaer

Faltan pocos minutos para las 4am del día 14 de junio de 2018. Llevo más de 20 horas despierta. Horas llenas de emoción, tensión, ansiedad, nervios y sororidad. No es una madrugada cualquiera. Aguardamos todas, somos un millón en las calles, en todo el país, miles alrededor del mundo por un Sí tan esperado, tan manoseado y vapuleado sobre la salud pública de todas las mujeres y personas gestantes de Argentina. Hasta nos tomamos el trabajo de responder la encuesta que el diputado había confeccionado y en la que basaría su voto. Adelanto que por muy poco margen le encuesta resulto favorable a la despenalización y legalización del aborto.

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

None of us should give up

by Bruna David

Abortion has always been a hot topic in Brazil and in the context of the upcoming election, a bargaining chip between candidates. Whether positive or negative, there are strong arguments on both sides. However, no argument should be considered more important than that all lives matter.

All, really. We are talking about women who are able to pay for almost dignified abortions, even if they are clandestine, and therefore not totally safe. We are also talking about women who cannot afford to pay for safe, albeit clandestine, abortions in reliable clandestine clinics, often leading to their death if not during the procedure – [as victims of a social and political system that silences women in their search for help, in their search for relief from their predicament](#).

In Brazil, and in the world in general, the discussion about abortion is much more about controlling the female body, than about individual personal will. We must remember that in Brazil, abortion is only allowed – or legal – in case of rape or incest and where there is a threat to the life of the pregnant person, and since 2012 for pregnancies with anencephalic fetuses. Nonetheless, there is hope for a change soon.

This excerpt is from an article published on the [Vecinas Feministas](#) blog. To read the full article, click here [in English](#) and [in Portuguese](#).

Chile y la situación actual en torno al aborto

by Línea Aborto Libre

En Chile, al [aborto terapéutico se encontraba regulado en el código sanitario](#), donde, en el año 1931, se promulga sólo una reforma en el Artículo 226 del decreto de ley 2263

Durante 1988, es que José Toribio Merino, - jefe del poder legislativo durante la dictadura militar de Augusto Pinochet- sanciona al aborto en todos los casos -hasta los abortos con fines terapéuticos, consagrados en la legislación de ese entonces-. El cambio se produce bajo la Ley 18.826. Los que encabezaban esta reforma fueron los miembros de la Junta de Gobierno de Pinochet.

Artículo único.- Reemplázase el artículo 119 del Código Sanitario por el siguiente: Artículo 119.- “No podrá ejecutarse ninguna acción cuyo fin sea provocar un aborto.”

Es el 21 de agosto del año 2017, que el Tribunal Constitucional después de 27 años, repone el aborto con restricciones, en tres causales: violación, inviabilidad fetal y riesgo vital de la madre, lo cual empezó a operar en el mes de enero del presente año.

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

Acompañar la decisión de abortar, me transformó la vida

by Verónica Vera

Desde tiempos inmemoriales abortamos, pero no todas lo hemos hecho en condiciones iguales. En Ecuador, la posibilidad de acceder a un aborto seguro está marcada por el dinero que se tiene y los contactos que te permiten conocer en medio de la clandestinidad, cómo interrumpir tu embarazo. Sin embargo, son miles de mujeres las que abortan cada año, solo en el 2016 se registraron 1102 abortos en niñas y adolescentes de entre 10 a 14 años y entre las adolescentes de 15 a 19 años se registraron 20.632[1], estos son los abortos que se registran, pero en un país en donde puedes ir a la cárcel hasta por dos años por abortar las cifras oficiales se quedan cortas.

Acompañar la decisión de las mujeres de abortar, ha transformado mi vida. Empecé a trabajar por el acceso de las mujeres a información sobre aborto seguro con medicamentos hace más de 10 años, sabía que había muchas mujeres que tomaban la decisión de interrumpir sus embarazos pero este

tema era un poco lejano, ninguna de mis amigas o conocidas me había contado que abortó, era un tema del que se hablaba poco o nada en mi familia.

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

Despenalización del aborto en Paraguay: Deuda de la democracia con la mujeres

by Mirta Moragas

Paraguay tiene una de las legislaciones más restrictivas en materia de aborto. La única excepción a la penalización se da cuando existe un riesgo para la vida de la mujer. Fuera de esta excepción, se encuentra penalizada en todos los casos, con penas que pueden ser de hasta 2 años (para el caso de las mujeres que se practiquen un aborto), o hasta 6 u 8 años de privación de libertad en los casos agravados, cuando la vida de la mujer fuera puesta en peligro con la realización del aborto.

El reciente debate parlamentario en Argentina colocó el tema también en el debate público en Paraguay. El Ministerio de Salud informó que al año hay al menos 20.000 abortos clandestinos y que registran un promedio de 16 muertes de mujeres anuales por aborto. De todas maneras, estas cifras oficiales no representan necesariamente la realidad de las muertes pues muchas son registradas como muertes por hemorragia, toxemia o sepsis, por lo que muy posiblemente la cifra sería mucho mayor.

La penalización del aborto no impide la práctica sino condena a las mujeres a realizarse el procedimiento de manera insegura. Una investigación cualitativa sugiere que el “castigo” de las mujeres que abortan es pasar por el proceso de investigación, ya que por el marco penal, la gran mayoría accede a medidas alternativas a la prisión bajo condición de “aceptación” del hecho. Adicionalmente, se encontraron numerosas violaciones de derechos humanos e irregularidades en el procedimiento penal y en el trato del personal de salud.

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