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America: It's time to end violence against women.

"Violence against women cannot continue to be ignored or treated as only 'a woman's problem'. We cannot continue to put off finding a solution and treating the issue as though it were not a priority," said Amnesty International, on publishing a new briefing about the situation of American women, on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

During 2003, Amnesty International documented dozens of cases of violence against women in the region. Although the international and national legal protection framework for women has been strengthened, impunity prevails in the great majority of cases.

"The wall of impunity can only be flattened by the massive mobilization of civil society," stressed Amnesty International, citing the example of Ciudad Juárez, Mexico.

In August, Amnesty International, along with Mexican human rights organizations, launched a campaign appealing for justice for the women of Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua, where dozens of young women have disappeared and been found murdered since 1993, many of them with signs of sexual violence and cruelty.

The few investigations that have been conducted into these cases have been plagued by irregularities or are at a standstill. Under pressure from local and international human rights organizations, the federal government committed itself to intervening directly and the president nominated a commission to look at the case.

"Regrettably, only a few cases of violence against women receive this level of publicity and attention. Gender violence is a widespread and daily event in all contexts, in war and peace, inflicted by state officials and private persons, in the family and on the streets of the community," stressed Amnesty International.

The organization will commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women with activities in all parts of the world, some focused on the cases of Ciudad Juárez y Chihuahua.

For more information on violence against women in America, please see:
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/eslamr010132003> (Spanish)

Public Document

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