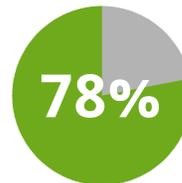


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56 girls scream



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SUPPORT PLEDGED



IBEROAMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

56 girls cried out enough already in the so-called Safe Home of the Guatemalan government. "Enough already" was the cry against the dishonor of those who were obligated to take care of them and instead were trafficking with them. 56 shouted, open the prison that plays with our girl bodies. They lit their cots on fire, demanded to be released. Those who at night took them out to the streets and trafficked them, closed the padlocks. That day, on March 8, 2017, 41 of the 56 burned to death. One year after that double crime of state against children, the Ecumenical Christian Council of Guatemala launched the campaign called the 56 yell out, a rolling exhibition that raises awareness of childhood violations.

Heidy, the coordinator of the women's ministry of the Ecumenical Council says, as women, mothers and citizens we are outraged and hurt to see that they degrade the bodies of women as instruments, and that those most affected are always the poor, the nobodies, the vulnerable.

When we set up the exhibition at the Santiago Apostol Episcopal Cathedral, these words came to me, which I shared with my Guatemalan episcopal brothers and sisters:

56 SHOUT

A girl raped,
a scream that tears us up
A murdered girl,
A people who get up.

Not one,
56
Fifty-six names
41 dead
scorched
15 alive
56 disgraced.

Padlocks to honor
Streets to dishonor

56 call out
Like you on the cross:
abandonment.
Like you in life:
Justice
Like you raised
they demand
tie the beast
violator
trafficker,
tie it
throw it
imprison it.
Your kingdom come,
a humane one

that dignifies
nourishes
frees

To you, the one cut off from the cross,
we have not forgotten you.
To you, the 41 murdered in the Safe Home
on March 8, 2017,
we do not forget you
To you, the 15 survivors
of that massacre,
we honor,
in the memory of your pain,
we got up.
in the memory of your burning scream,
we demand justice,
in your memory,
we demand justice,
that's what we came for,
to ask
that together
let's demand justice.

I preached at the sweet-fifteen birthday celebration of Cynthia, one of the survivors. That day, I heard from the girls and their families their pain. A family told me that they took their daughter to that home to protect her from a gang member who wanted to make her his woman; and it hurt me. And it hurts me that the pro-life groups do not defend the life of girls against abuses of power and that they do not condemn the offenders. And I remembered Hagar who was insulted and humiliated in the house of the patriarch, but God heard her, and blessed her.

These 56 girls, the living ones and the dead ones, demand our commitment, call us as Hagar, mother of the Arabs (Gen. 16: 1-16), to be bridges for dignity, justice, and peace of today's wounded people.