



WORLD FEDERATION
OF THE DEAF

Press Release

Raising hands for the future: the WFD call the United Nations agencies, the Inter-American Human Rights System and the government of Haiti to take actions to stop Human Rights Violations Against Deaf People in Haiti

July 2, 2021

The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) is standing up to break the silence and indifference around the systematic human rights violation against deaf people, particularly deaf women and girls in Haiti. The WFD calls international, multilateral, regional and national decision-makers and agencies to stand up together and take immediate action.

The WFD has received reports that in the last five years, several young deaf women in Haiti have been gang-raped, brutally tortured, their organs extracted and murdered. Their mutilated dead bodies have been left in the open until her family and deaf friends discover them. Recently, and in the middle of the pandemic, another deaf woman was violently assaulted, and the



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hospital personnel denied her the right to access the healthcare needed just because she is deaf.

As members of the Haitian Deaf community stated: “Deaf people in Haiti are not even equal to other persons with disabilities – who still have the privilege of hearing and communicating verbally-. Deaf people are isolated and used like slaves because society knows they cannot speak up (with an audible voice). They kill us because they believe we are cursed.”

These are outrageous and egregious abuses of the most fundamental human rights of, not only deaf people, but all humanity. Combined with ruthless violations of inherent physical and psychological integrity and dignity of deaf people, particularly of deaf women and girls, these conducts constitute breaches of several international human rights treaties, as well as regional and national legislations.

Yet, these violations apparently have been ignored by the decision-makers and law enforcement officers who are obligated to prosecute, punish, and stop these systematic human rights transgressions and denial of basic access to rights, such as education, decent work and healthcare, on an equal basis with others.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the United Nation Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women



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(CEDAW), as well as the Inter-American Convention against all forms of Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (CIADDIS), all signed and ratified by Haiti, protect women and girls with disabilities against violence, abuse, discrimination, torture, and promotes their autonomy, freedom, full recognition of their dignity and rights as human and citizens.

This cannot be tolerated. The International Community must take action!

The WFD, in partnership with the NGO OFF-THE-GRID Missions and deaf people in Haiti, stand with the deaf community in Haiti and is supporting the petition in favour of a call for immediate and specific actions to the United Nations agencies, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against Women, the UNICEF, UN Women, the CRPD Committee, the CEDAW Committee, the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Human Rights Commission, the Monitoring Mechanism of the Belen-Do-Para Convention for the Elimination of Violence against women, MESECVI, and the Haitian Government, among others. The WFD will send communications to these instances to follow up on the actions required.



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Together, we can stop these systemic human rights violations. Hand in hand, we are able to show the world our commitment to humanity, equality and diversity. We can reclaim the human dignity of deaf people with their heritage of culture and language: deaf afro-descendants, deaf indigenous people, deaf women, and all these valuable human identity intersections. Only by respecting, promoting and protecting diversity can a better world be possible!

For more information: www.wfdeaf.org

The petition can be found here: <https://www.change.org/p/united-nations-help-end-horrific-human-rights-violations-against-deaf-people-in-haiti>.

The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), is the oldest international uni-disability organization and is a federation of national associations of the deaf from 129 nations representing a total of more than 70 million deaf people worldwide, most of them from the Global South. The WFD has 8 Regional Secretariats representing the five continents of the world. Its mission is to work for the realisation of the linguistic and human rights of deaf people in partnership with the United Nations and its agencies, national associations of the deaf, and relevant



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stakeholders. The WFD has extensive expertise in human rights of deaf people to support its 129 Ordinary Members through various cooperation agreements throughout the last decades.