

WOMEN AND CHEGA: MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS REALITY

“Chega! is a compact with victims....CAVR’s work has been a good start but much remains to be done – in the areas of reconciliation, truth-seeking, healing and justice”. Aniceto Guterres Lopes, Chair of CAVR, 31 October 2005

“Impunity must cease and victims have justice”.
Dili street banners, International Women’s Day, 8 March 2007.

“As Prime Minister I will do my best to support the dissemination of the Report (Chega!) so that it becomes a learning process for all of us, so that we don’t repeat the same errors that in part contributed to this tragedy, but also that the more concrete recommendations contained in the report... will be implemented”.
Prime Minister Ramos-Horta, November 2006

The women of Timor-Leste are major stakeholders in Chega! They suffered all the violations documented in the report, contributed significantly to the CAVR process that resulted in the report, and can rightly expect to benefit from the implementation of its recommendations. To make the recommendations a reality, however, women themselves will need to take action. Women – in Timor-Leste and internationally – can play a vital role in embedding in Timor-Leste the lessons and recommendations from Chega! on accountability, non-violence, rule of law, human rights, clear and politically impartial roles for the security agencies, participative democracy and ending impunity. These objectives are strongly supported by President Xanana Gusmao and Prime Minister Ramos-Horta.

1. Women and the conflict

When opening *Chega!* to see what it reports about women, there is an automatic tendency to turn to the section on sexual violence (Ch 7.9) and the recommendations specific to women (4.1.1-11, ES pp. 169-170). As CAVR’s public hearing on ‘*Women and the conflict*’ made clear, however, women’s suffering was not limited to sexual violence, horrific though that was. Women suffered all the violations committed during the conflict, both directly and indirectly. Women were denied self-determination, killed, disappeared, displaced, deprived of food, detained, tortured and unjustly tried. They also suffered the loss of economic and social rights in the areas of food, shelter, health and education. Women also suffered indirectly. The detention, injury or death of a husband or family member also victimised women by increasing their vulnerability and already heavy burden of care.

2. Women and the CAVR

Women contributed actively to CAVR in many ways. 12 women served as either national or regional commissioners; 172 women, including internationals, served as either national or regional staff; 39 women testified at national public hearings. In addition hundreds of women gave statements to CAVR and participated in sub-district Victims Hearings, healing workshops, and community reconciliation events. Through CAVR, these women made a significant contribution to *Chega!* and the national goals

of reconciliation, truth-seeking and human rights. Together with colleagues in the women's movement and Church, they have the potential to further that contribution by mobilising to implement the recommendations in *Chega!*, both in Timor-Leste and in the international community.

3. Women and the CAVR recommendations

Many of the recommendations in *Chega!* are directed to the community and therefore do not need to wait on a green light from the National Parliament or Government before they can be implemented. They can be acted on by NGOs now. The following is a summary of those recommendations (with references)* that are particularly relevant to women: a program of action. Women are invited to study these recommendations, prioritise them, develop them into practical programs and strategies, and work together to implement them.

** References are to Chega Executive Summary and are the same in the Tetum, Indonesian, Portuguese and English versions.*

3.1 Dissemination

Women can contribute by disseminating *Chega!* to their networks and contacts (1.1; 7.4.1-7.4.3). This can be done through the distribution of copies (full or summary text), discussion workshops, internet, and making use of opportunities that arise such as book launches, International Women's Day, election campaign meetings, travel to the districts or overseas, asking a question at a press conference and other means.

Some suggested targets (based on *Chega!*) are: women members of your organization (NGO, community group, office, church, government department, police, sports club, school, university...), women Parliamentarians, women journalists, women academics and teachers, women's organizations in Portugal and the CPLP countries (1.2), women's organizations in Indonesia and ASEAN (1.3).

Suggested action

Discuss with your organization how it can disseminate Chega. Make a list of which individual women and organizations are the best to contact and that your organization has the practical means to reach. Decide in what way Chega will be brought to their attention. Ask STP-CAVR for materials.

3.2 Memorialisation

Women can contribute to the healing of victims, their families and communities and to repairing their dignity by acting on the following recommendations in *Chega!*

- Recognising and documenting the contributions of women, both in Timor-Leste and in the diaspora, to the struggle for independence (4.1.1)
- Locating and reburying the remains of loved ones who perished during the conflict or erecting memorials to them in the case of disappearance or other circumstances (3.2.1);
- commemorating sites where women were killed (3.2.2) or detained, including buildings in Dili and other centres (3.3.1; 13.2);
- contributing names to a register of disappeared (3.2.3);
- an annual day of remembrance of the great famine of 1978-9 (3.2.4).

Suggested action

Form inter-NGO memorialisation working groups. Working groups can brainstorm and consult with the community, including in the districts, to identify and prioritise names, sites etc. Chega! contact focal points can assist. Working groups can make specific recommendations on concrete steps to be taken either by the women's movement, government or other bodies.

3.3 Reparations

The CAVR report recommends a targeted program of reparations for the most vulnerable individual and community victims of human rights violations from the period 1974-1999. Beneficiaries recommended by CAVR include women such as victims of sexual violence, widows and single mothers and communities were women suffered as a group. Other forms of reparations are also recommended.

Women's organizations can help make this important recommendation a reality in the following ways:

- Reading and discussing the case made by CAVR for reparations and related recommendations (12.1- 12.13);
- Advocating adoption of the program by the Timor-Leste government and contributions from governments and corporations mentioned in the Report (1.7; 4.1.2; 10.16-10.17; 12.10);
- Referring women who continue to suffer physically and emotionally from violations for professional assistance (3.3.2);
- Challenging prejudice against women who have been victims of sexual violence (4.1.4);
- Acting to clear the names of activists and former political prisoners who were wrongly accused (10.13-15).

Suggested action

As a first step, it is suggested that a seminar be convened to discuss the meaning, rationale and feasibility of reparations. In addition to women's organizations, it is suggested that the Government, UN and organizations involved in related service delivery also be invited to participate. The seminar could also discuss the proposal made by the former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, that a solidarity fund be established and a proposal from Indonesian NGOs for people-to-people reparations.

3.4 Advocacy

Women can use their resources and networks, both in Timor-Leste and internationally, to be a vigilant watchdog and strong voice in favour of the following principles and actions recommended in Chega!:

- Discussion of Chega! and its recommendations by the National Parliament, especially by lobbying women MPs;
- The establishment of an independent follow-up institution to CAVR which will address conflict prevention, conflict resolution and human rights (8.1-8.5);
- The preservation of the ex-Balide Comarca (CAVR office) as a heritage site and its use as a national memorial centre for victims and human rights (13.2);
- Education in human rights in the schools, church, security agencies, members of political parties and elsewhere (3.6.1; 3.7.2; 3.7.3; 3.5.5);

- Education in non-violence, the effects of violence on children and others, and alternatives to violence (3.4.6; 4.2.2);
- Religious Orders of women teach human rights and non-violence in the schools, clinics, orphanages, youth groups and other programs they run (3.7.2; 3.7.3);
- The political impartiality of the police and army (6.2; 6.3) and prohibiting an internal security role for the military (6.3.3);
- That the five historic parties – Apodeti, Fretilin, Kota, Trabalhista, UDT – respond to Chega! and to the recommendation that the historic parties address human rights violations committed in the past by their members or those linked to them (9.5);
- That all political parties and their members conduct their political activities and public statements in a strictly non-violent and peaceful way (9.3);
- Rejection of amnesty for crimes against humanity and war crimes in Timor-Leste that involved sexual violence against women (4.1.3);
- Accountability for crimes committed 1974-1999 (7.1.1-7.1.12; 7.1.6, 10.8-10.11).

Suggested action

Some of the above recommendations are straightforward and can be added to the daily agenda of women's NGOs, religious congregations of Sisters and other organizations active on human rights. For example, to lobby the Parliament to debate Chega it may be enough to write a letter or meet with MPs. Other issues will require a longer-term commitment. Where organizations are already active on the same issues, it is suggested that they situate their advocacy on these issues in the context of Chega! Other organizations should consider adopting one or more issues and appointing a staff person to act as the internal and external focal point on these matters.

3.5 Equal opportunity

To maximise their contribution, including in support of the values in Chega!, women must have equal opportunity and the means to participate in public life in Timor-Leste. The following recommendations based on Chega! can help increase women's participation and contribution:

- Reviewing the participation of women in fields such as Parliament, public service, church, police, military, media, NGOs, education and sport and urging increased support for representation by women (5.2.1);
- Instituting annual awards to women who make an outstanding contribution to the community in their chosen field, such as community service, sport, journalism (3.6.3; 3.5.4; 5.1.1);
- Promoting positive role models for girls and young women (4.2.3);
- Lobbying for adequate resources for women's health, including resources for sport and physical fitness (4.2.2), and education on the relationship between environment and health (3.8.4);
- Promoting literacy and non-formal education services amongst women (3.7.4);
- Increasing access to information on reproductive health and family planning (4.1.9; 4.2.5).

Suggested action

A first step will be to obtain information in relation to some of the above suggestions (progress in gender equality, availability of information on family planning, sporting opportunities for girls and women etc) from sources such as the Gabinete Promosaun Igualdade, UNIFEM, government departments etc. Original research might be needed where the information does not exist. The next step will be to discuss how this information can be used to advance the Chega recommendations.

4. Resources and coordination

The full Chega and summaries are available in multiple languages at <http://www.cavr-timorleste.org> or from the Bookshop at the Post-CAVR Technical Secretariat (STP-CAVR).

Staff at STP-CAVR are also available to assist in any way.

Contact: Jaimito da Costa, Coordinator, Socialisation Team

jaimitodacosta@yahoo.com HP 723 4916

STP-CAVR has also established Chega focal points in all districts. For details of the focal points in your area, contact Jaimito da Costa.

To facilitate coordination please inform Jaimito at STP-CAVR of your activities and proposals. STP-CAVR has a data base and will keep a central registry of who is doing what.

You are welcome to call and visit the Post-CAVR Technical Secretariat and to use the facilities for workshops and meetings.

Address: Ex-Balide Comarca, Rua de Balide, Dili.

Telephone: (+670) 3311263

Website: <http://www.cavr-timorleste.org>

5. Organizations in Timor-Leste active on women's issues

Alola Foundation

APCTL

CAUCOS

Feto Democratico

Feto Iha Partido Politik

Fokupers

Gabinete Promosaun Igualdade

GFFTL

NGO Forum

OPMT

Oxfam

Progressio

Rede Feto

UNFPA

Unidade da Diversidade

UNIFEM

UNMIT Human Rights Unit