

# WALKOUT FOR WOMEN

#IWDWALKOUT

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 1.03.2021**

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## **INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY WALKOUT**

***#WalkoutForWomen***

**Port of Spain:** The violent murders of 18 year-old Ashanti Riley and 23 year-old Andrea Bharatt has brought Trinidad and Tobago to a tipping-point of social action and demands for justice. Ordinary citizens across the country have led protests, marches, rallies, motorcades, strikes, and candle light vigils over the past weeks, demonstrating the type of courage that is required by our leaders in this time of crisis. The Alliance for State Action to End Gender Based Violence has described the situation as a “national emergency” and we support this call for our Government to take URGENT ACTION!

In honouring the momentum of these events, 15 women's rights, LGBTQ+ and social justice organizations will come together on March 8th International Women's Day to host an **INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY WALKOUT**. This symbolic, nation-wide walkout will see 'people of all walks' *walkout* from their offices, homes, or wherever they might be, to gather at the capital city's major transportation hub—City Gate. This walk will conclude outside the Parliament/Red House where we will call on our Government and Opposition for immediate action against gender based violence. In the spirit of IWD's 2021 theme **#ChooseToChallenge**,

the collective efforts of our WALK OUT will challenge the conscience of our leaders to implement measures to create a safer T&T for women.

Specifically, **Our Demands**, which were expressed during the Day Without Women campaign T&T and included in the 6 Demands from the Alliance for State Action to End GBV include:

**1. Safer transportation for women and children** - All registered public transport vehicles must be equipped with digital tracking systems and surveillance cameras to ensure greater safety.[i] We support the initiative by the Attorney General to regulate the public transportation system, ensuring that every number plate will have a radio frequency tag.

**2. Invest in and implement social reformation programmes** to facilitate cultural change by teaching nonviolent communication approaches, investing in social service provision, and public education campaigns.

**3. Approve the National Strategic Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence:** Ayanna Webster-Roy, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Gender and Child Affairs, stated in November 2020 that the Government was committed to “the elimination of all forms of family violence and discrimination”.<sup>[ii]</sup> This Strategic Action Plan to End GBV, which provides a comprehensive approach to do this, has been in front of the Cabinet since 2016 and is yet to be approved.

While IWD is a day to celebrate women’s social, economic, cultural, and political achievements, how can we wholeheartedly uplift our women when they are murdered, raped, and kidnapped in our country? In 2017, 52 women were murdered, 43 of which were related to domestic violence.<sup>[iii]</sup> In 2020, 21 out of 46 women murdered were killed as a result of domestic violence.<sup>[iv]</sup> Just as astonishing as the number of deaths is the rate at which women **experience intimate partner violence** in this country, which is pegged at **one in every three women**.<sup>[v]</sup> It would be an injustice not to recognize the women and girls who no longer have the opportunity to celebrate life. In their names, on IWD 2021, we will remind our leaders once again, as we successfully did on the day of Andrea’s funeral, that the protection of women must be a national priority. It is unacceptable that **women comprise 43% of this nation’s**

**workforce**<sup>[iii]</sup> and yet do not feel safe using public transportation to go to work, the site where they are expected to be valuable contributors to the economy. The country has failed to ensure the right to life, liberty and security of the person to *all women*.

Our women must be able to **walk free, not brave!** We Remember: *Andrea Bharatt, Ashanti Riley, Nicole Jaggan, Roberta Patterson, Rachel Ramkisoon, Devika Lalman, Gail Durity, Leah Lammy, or Sammy Lobai* who were all victims of taxi-related murders. We will call their names, never forgotten, in front of the Parliament as we demand a safer and more peaceful Trinidad and Tobago.

**Let's ALL Act to Change T&T!**

**The following organizations have partnered to bring you the IWD WalkOut:**



**END.**

### **List of References**

- [i] Alexander S., 2021. Dear editor: 'Women and children deserve to feel safe!' Three ways to address gender-based violence - Wired868. [online] Wired868.
- [ii] 2021. *Bolder action needed on gender-based violence*. [online] Available at: <<https://newsday.co.tt/2020/11/30/bolder-action-needed-on-gender-based-violence/>>
- [iii] Dixon, B., 2021. *Domestic violence demon far from dead*:. [online] Guardian.co.tt. Available at: <<https://www.guardian.co.tt/life/domestic-violence-demon-far-from-dead-6.2.934387.f50e39f943>>

[iv] Boodram, K., 2021. *2020 a violent year for women*. [online] Trinidad Express Newspapers. Available at:  
 <[https://trinidadexpress.com/news/local/2020-a-violent-year-for-women/article\\_6a79c384-4650-11eb-9d65-eba440d77703.html](https://trinidadexpress.com/news/local/2020-a-violent-year-for-women/article_6a79c384-4650-11eb-9d65-eba440d77703.html)>

[v] Doodnath, A., 2021. *IDB study: 1 in 3 women victims of Intimate Partner Violence in T&T*. [online] Looptt.com. Available at:  
<https://www.looptt.com/content/idb-study-1-3-women-victims-intimate-partner-violence-tt>  
 Referencing Cecile Pemberton and Joel Joseph, Inter-American Development Bank, National Women's Health Survey for Trinidad and Tobago: Final Report, Washington, DC, 2018  
<https://publications.iadb.org/en/national-womens-health-survey-trinidad-and-tobago-final-report>

## **Event Details**

<b>EVENT NAME:</b>	INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY WALK OUT
<b>DATE:</b>	Monday 8th March (International Women's Day) 2021
<b>MUSTER POINT:</b>	City Gate, Port of Spain
<b>START TIME:</b>	2 pm
<b>DESTINATION:</b>	Parliament
<b>END TIME:</b>	4 pm
<b>WALK WITH :</b>	Water, chalk, signs, markers
<b>LIST OF PARTNERS:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Conflict Women Ltd.</li> <li>● Act to Change TT</li> <li>● WOMANTRA</li> <li>● Women Working for Social Progress</li> <li>● Network of NGOs of T&amp;T for the Advancement of Women</li> <li>● The Shelter</li> <li>● Women of Substance</li> <li>● CAISO: sex &amp; gender justice</li> <li>● I Am One TT</li> <li>● The Silver Lining Foundation</li> <li>● Trinidad &amp; Tobago Transgender Coalition</li> <li>● FEMINITT</li> <li>● CIWIL</li> <li>● SHIIDAA Sustainable Development Solutions Ltd.</li> <li>● Cedaw Committee of Trinidad &amp; Tobago</li> </ul>
<b>CONTACT PERSONS:</b>	<p>Samantha Juman   Act to Change TT   754 6383</p> <p>Asiya Mohammed   Conflict Women Ltd.   721 9852</p> <p>Jacque Burgess   Network of NGOs of T&amp;T for the Advancement for Women   678 7549</p>