

MPs in RMI Take Action to End Violence Against Women

Regional Republic Of The Marshall Islands Ending Violence Against Women

November 25, 2016

Project name: Support to the Pacific Community Regional Rights Resource Team

Outcome area: Ending violence against women

Project partner: Pacific Community Regional Rights Resource Team (SPC RRRT)

Total funding: \$3,000,000*

Funding timeframe: 2015–2017

Members of the Nitijela (Parliament) of RMI put strong recommendations to the President on ending violence against women following the 2016 Human Rights Dialogue facilitated by SPC RRRT, supported by the European Union and Pacific Women.

The MPs heard from speakers who have been at the centre of Pacific responses to violence against women. Justice Stephen Pallaras, QC and former justice of the High Court of Solomon Islands encouraged the MPs to influence the nation's policy to eliminate violence against women: 'During my time in court and the 40 years of practice in criminal law, I have heard all the excuses. Some will say it's traditional, cultural; we've always done it this way. Some men have told me I have the right to beat my wife, have sex with her, I have paid the bride price and therefore she is mine. Other men have told me that they are entitled to have sex with my daughter because I am the man. The scale and dimensions of this problem are not simply personal, they are financial, they are social, they are national, they are international and more, they are human. It will take people with leadership, vision and courage. Are you one of them?'

During the consultation, the MPs developed a set of recommendations for the President, including taking steps to progress and monitor the Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection Act 2011; to promote awareness of national leaders on issues of violence against women; to strengthen preventative measures in legislation and policy; and to support organisations that are acting to address violence against women.

Mr Mark Atterton, SPC RRRT Director (at the time) observed that ‘it was clear that the members of the Nitijela, old and new, were outraged by the statistics we presented and committed to support local NGO, Women United Together Marshall Island, in their service for a women’s counselling centre and shelter accommodation. This was a great outcome of the induction programme.’

As part of its commitment to RMI, Pacific Women has also been working closely with WUTMI the leading voice against violence against women and girls in the nation.

Justice Pallaras underscored the role that leaders of RMI need to play: ‘Don’t tell me it’s not your problem. Don’t tell me it’s a women’s problem. It is a national problem about which the citizens are entitled to look to and expect their leaders to be working their absolute hardest to resolve.’

This Story of Change was originally published in the [Pacific Women Annual Progress Report 2015-2016](#). All values are consisted with that reporting period. For the most up-to-date value of activities, visit our [interactive map](#).

*This activity is part of a larger program.